

Web Research: Tips and Tricks for Expert Searching

BROAD SEARCHING			
	FUNCTIONS	NOTES	EXAMPLES
OR	Connects keywords to retrieve results using terms on either side	Excellent strategy to retrieve results for synonyms or words that are closely related in meaning	avian OR bird
~	Use the tilde (~) to find words with similar meanings.	Does not work consistently for all words.	~cellphone
()	Enclose each concept in parentheses, with OR connecting similar words.	Google search for the terms within the parentheses first before combining with terms outside the parentheses.	(flu OR influenza) (avian OR bird) (outbreak OR incidence OR case)
TARGETED SEARCHING			
“ ”	Enclose multiple words in quotation marks to search those exact words in that exact order.	Phrase searching works well for names, titles and terms that include multiple words.	“stem cells”
*	Use the wildcard operators (*) asterisk to fill in the blank if the intervening word is unknown.	Works well when one doesn't know if a person uses a middle initial. Again, check the Help or Tips links to verify the wildcard symbol that should be used.	(influenza OR flu) (avian OR bird) "charles * smith" Typing teen* will find teen, teens, teenage, teenager, teenagers.
• •	Connect two numbers with two dots to search for a range	Quick way to find more recent pages.	2005..2009 (influenza OR flu) (avian OR bird)
intitle:	Finds words in the titles of Web pages.	No space between intitle and the colon.	intitle:china
site:	Limits search results to those in certain domains.	Common domains include edu, com, org, gov, country codes (uk, ca, etc.).	(flu OR influenza) (avian OR bird) (outbreak OR incidence OR case) site:cdc.gov ; site:edu
-	Minus sign excludes keywords from search results.	Can also be used to exclude domains, e.g., site:edu.	football –dolphins rugby -filetype:doc
filetype:	Use to retrieve only certain file types	Common file types include doc, xls, jpg, ppt, pdf, etc.	filetype:pdf site:cdc.gov (flu OR influenza) (avian OR bird) (outbreak OR incidence OR case)