

This Is Your Library

Finding information on the Web is as simple as one, two, three. Or is it? Most library patrons today are fairly comfortable in searching either Web based catalogs or library catalogs in order to seek the information they desire. However, are all searches equal?

In the domain of search concepts or phrase searching, which includes the use of natural language and Boolean logic, it may be confusing to know which is most effective or less cumbersome in narrowing down a search term.

Phrase Searching

Including a phrase in quotation marks as separate keywords can produce significantly fewer results and in some cases more focused search results. In a Google, Bing, Yahoo and Ask.com search, a search for Des Moines River is actually a request to locate pages that include the strings of text: Des AND Moines AND River, anywhere in the document, and in any order. A search for the phrase “Des Moines River” is a request to locate pages that include a string of text: “ Des Moines River.” With the later, the search is considerably shorter.

Natural Language

Natural language searching is simply the use of our basic English language structure as the basis of a general search. Instead of thinking in terms of subject headings, subject terms, phrases or descriptors, a patron enters a question or phrase just as they would ask or write the text on paper. Unsurprisingly, with all of the major refined search engines available to users on the Web, this is now one we see patrons using often when it comes to perusing the Web for information.

Boolean Operators-AND, OR, NOT

Boolean may be least familiar to the common patron based search. Boolean operators connect search terms in a way that either deliberately narrows or broadens the results. For example, note the default search for *chronic* and *bronchitis* and *infection*, as compared to compiling *chronic bronchitis infection*. The advantage of using the “AND” coupled with each added term helps retrieve more focused results.

Using “OR” is a good idea when you need to clarify the meaning of words with multiple meanings. This can be seen when using the word *jersey*, which may designate a kind of fabric or it may be used to represent a state, or it may even be used as an expression to describe a product line.

The Boolean operator “NOT” isolates specific terms from the results which can help when a common term has several unrelated meanings. In a search for *marlins* “NOT” *fish*, the operator provides a slightly different mix to the outcome, producing all sites with references to Marlins the baseball team as opposed to an ocean fish.

Exploring the world of broader search concepts, Web users may gain a far more diverse learning experience as opposed to using standard search options, reducing time and hassle in getting their information needs met.

Capra,R. & Perez-Quillones (2004). Using Web Search Engines to Find and Refind Information, 27th Australasian Computer Science Conference, Volume: 26, Pages: 9-10.

Weare, Jr., W (2008). Find It on the Web Using the Search Concepts You Already Know, Library Media Connection, Volume: 26, Issue: 6, Pages: 56-58.

Activities at the Library

Practice Your Spanish at our **Introduction to Conversational Spanish** class on Monday, Feb. 6 from 4 until-5 . Free to the public.

Discover the world of photography at the library on Tuesday, Feb. 7 from 3 until 4. Free to the public.

Our **Anime Club** is hosting a “**Best of Anime**” **contest**. Join the fun Thursday, Feb. 16 from 6 until 7 in the Teen Center.

Puppets are the Best Fun at Read to Me, January 27th from 10:30-11:30 Story Time Room.

For updates and the latest on other events at the library go to our Website at: www.sslibrary.org or follow us on Fac”e-book” and Twitter.

New Arrivals:

America’s Constitution: A Bibliography by Akhil Reed Amar

The Beekeeper’s Apprentice by Laurie R. King

The Patriot’s History Reader by Larry Schwekart, Dave Dougherty and Michael Allen

Lone Star Law: A Legal History of Texas by Michael Ariens

Then Everything Changed by Jeff Greenfield

American Nations by Colin Woodard

Private #1 Suspect by James Patterson & Maxine Paetro

The Fear Index: Robert Harris

