

Internet Research by Jeanetta R. Chrystie, Ph.D.

Search Expression

The word or phrase you enter might include instructions that tell the search engine how to search. The “search” is a search of THAT search engine’s own database of web pages, it is not a search of the entire web. The same search expression or query in a second search engine will produce different results.

1. Start with a specific question, not an exploratory question.
2. Identify the key terms in your question. These are terms that should appear on every web page that contains the information for which you are searching. Do not include articles, prepositions, or other common words.
3. Select several search engines that cover the topic.
4. When you obtain the results of the search, examine them and decide whether they provide you with the information you were seeking.
5. Go to another search engine and do the search again if necessary.

Evaluating the Quality of Web Research Resources

Information published on the web is seldom subjected to the level of review (by peers, editors or experts) that has become standard practice in print publishing. When you search the web for serious research questions, you run the risk of being misled by ill-informed web sites.

1. **Author Identity and Objectivity** – Identify the author and evaluate his or her credentials and objectivity.
2. **Content** – Examine the content of the web site. A date on the page helps identify timeliness. To what depth is the subject covered? Have important topics or considerations been omitted?
3. **Form and Appearance** – Look for poor grammar, spelling errors, loud colors, graphics that do not add to the content of the page. All these are indicators that suggest a low-quality resource.

Some Tried and True Search Engines (last checked and updated on 3/23/05)

<http://www.hotbot.com> recently ranked well (20+% of Web catalogued).

<http://www.altavista.com> offers advanced search (Boolean and keyword) capabilities

<http://www.northernlight.com> has advanced searches, recently ranked in top 4 in % catalogued.

<http://www.search.com> accesses 250+ different search engines, good at advanced searches.

<http://www.metacrawler.com> uses other search engines & combines results into one list.

<http://www.google.com> the leading general search site.

<http://www.yahoo.com> catalogues popular topic sites, reputation of being easy to use.

<http://www.excite.com> catalogues popular topic sites, recent favorite of “boomers.”

<http://www.dogpile.com> catalogues popular topic sites, recent favorite of young people.

<http://www.askjeeves.com> a popular natural language search engine interface.

New Entries to the Search Engine List

<http://www.alltheweb.com> , <http://www.looksmart.com> , <http://search.msn.com> ,

<http://www.snap.com> , <http://www.lycos.com>

Add Your Other Favorite Search Engines: ??