



USING GOOGLE: STRATEGIES FOR SEARCHING THE WEB

Compiled by Joseph Helms, Reference Librarian
Shake Library, Vincennes University
Revised September 2009

INTRODUCTION TO GOOGLE

If you don't already know the address of a web page, you can use search engines like Google to locate Web pages by topic. There are perhaps hundreds of search engines each with strengths and weaknesses. Many search engines use common search commands that will help you create a more specific search (be aware that occasionally a search engine will require alternative or unfamiliar commands). The following can be applied to the Google search engine. Hopefully, the exercise accompanying this guide will help you learn to search more effectively using a major search engine.

Using Google

GOOGLE (<http://www.google.com>) is a top choice for Web searchers because of its large database of Web material. Google makes heavy use of link analysis as a primary way to rank pages in its database. This can be especially helpful in finding good sites in response to general searches such as "cars" and "travel" because users across the web have in essence voted for good sites by linking to them. The system works so well that Google has gained wide-spread praise for its high relevancy. Google is highly recommended as your first research tool to use in finding information on the Web.

Databases and search engines commonly use terms called **operators (and, or, not, etc.)** to assist searchers in locating information. Below is a Google cheat sheet showing different search examples.

1. Using Boolean Operators “AND” or “OR”

Search examples:

- By typing in **ruby programming language**, Google automatically finds pages containing the words **ruby AND programming AND language**.
- By typing in **laptops OR netbooks**, Google finds pages containing either the word **laptops** or the word **netbooks**. **The word OR must be capitalized.**

2. Phrase Searching

To search phrases, place all the words inside double quotation marks. By typing in “**computer crimes**,” Google finds pages containing the exact phrase **computer crimes**.

3. Searching Words within the Title of a Page

Search examples:

- (Single word) By typing in **intitle:ubuntu**, Google finds pages with the word **ubuntu** within the title of the page.
- (More than one word) By typing in **allintitle:ubuntu operating system**, Google finds pages with the words **ubuntu operating system** within the title of the page. This functionality is also available from the **Advanced Search** page under **Where your keywords show up**. From the menu box, select **in the title of the page**.

4. Searching a Specific Website or Domain (Site Search)

This search function gives the searcher the option of searching a topic within a given site or domain.

- (Website search) By typing in **servers site:www.dell.com**, Google searches the site for Dell Computers about information on servers. Use this if you know the website address you want to search but aren't sure where the information is located within that site.
- (Domain search) By typing in **cyberterrorism site:gov**, Google searches gov domains providing information on cyberterrorism. This functionality is also available from the **Advanced Search** page under **Need more tools?**, and then select **Search within a site or domain**.

Be sure to include the word **site** after your topic and before the site's URL or domain abbreviation.

5. Searching for Pages That Link to a Specific Website

By typing in **link:www.apple.com**, Google searches pages that have linked to the Apple website. This functionality is also available from the **Advanced Search** page under **Page-specific tools**, and then select **Find pages that link to this page**.

6. Searching for Information about Movies

- (Movie title) By typing in **movies all about Steve**, Google searches for information about the movie *All About Steve*, including reviews.
- (Location search) By typing in **movies Vincennes IN** or the location's zip code **movies 47591**, Google searches for movies playing at local theaters, including reviews for each movie currently playing in Vincennes.

7. Searching for Music-Related Information

Google offers a music search function where by typing in keywords that describe musicians, songs, albums, etc., the searcher can quickly locate music-related information on their topic.

Search examples:

- **Music Madonna** – searches for information about the singer Madonna
- **Music Korn Follow the Leader** – searches for information about the album *Follow the Leader* by the musical group Korn

8. Searching for Definitions of Words

Google has a built-in dictionary you can access quickly to search for definitions of terms.

Search example: define blog

9. Searching for Weather-Related Information

Google's weather search function allows the searcher to search for current weather information for any locality in the United States.

Search examples:

- **weather Honolulu HI** - city name and abbreviation for state

- **weather 94301** – zip code

10. Currency Conversion

Google's currency conversion function allows you to easily convert one currency into another currency.

Search examples:

- **1000 USD in Chilean pesos**
- **500 Euros in USD** or **500 Euros in US dollars** or **500 Euros in US\$**
- **currency of Mexico in British pounds**
- **100 Canadian dollars in Mexican pesos**
- **Russian money in Italian money**

11. Calculations

To use Google's built-in calculator function, type in the calculation into the search box.

Search examples:

- Use the plus sign (+) for addition: **144 + 119**
- Use the minus sign (-) for subtraction: **144 – 119**
- Use the asterisk symbol (*) or the letter x for multiplication: **144 * 119** or **144 x 119**
- Use the slash symbol (/) for division: **144 / 119**
- Use **% of** for finding percentages: **44% of 119**
- Use **^** for raising a number to a power: **3^5** (3 to the 5th power)
- Square root 1600 or **sqrt(1600)**

12. Unit Conversion

Google will convert many different units of measurement of height, weight, and volume among many others.

Search examples:

- **10.5 cm in inches**
- **10 lbs in kg**
- **6 ft in inches**
- **72 inches in feet**
- **200 pints in gallons**
- **5000 kilometers in miles**
- **60000 seconds in minutes**
- **100 acres in square feet**
- **5000 kilobytes in megabytes**

13. Using Google's Local Business Search

Google's local business search allows you to search for local businesses and services in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Search examples:

- **Computer repair Evansville IN**
- **French restaurants Washington DC**

14. Time Search

Google's time search allows you to see the time in many cities around the world. To do a time search, you type in the word **time** followed by the name of the city. You may also type in the name of the country after the city's name.

Search examples:

- **Time Mumbai India**
- **Time Lagos Nigeria**

15. Public Data

To search trends for population and unemployment rates of U.S. states and counties, type **population** or **unemployment rate** followed by state name or county name.

Search examples:

- **Population Florida**
- **Population Monroe County IN**
- **Unemployment rate Indiana**
- **Unemployment rate Elkhart County IN**

16. Using Google's Advanced Search

