



Using the Web for Research: Basic Search Features of Many Search Engines

Launch site: <http://www.ccsf.org/Library/reference>

I. Four Main Ways to Find Information on the Web

1. You have a specific URL to type in the Location box. (Review from the “Internet Basics” workshop)
2. You know an organization or person whose Web site you want to find.
3. You don’t know anything specific, but you want to browse a Web subject directory like **Yahoo**.
4. You have keywords or topics that you want to do a search for, so you can use a search engine like **AltaVista** or a metasearch engine like **Metacrawler**.

II. Common Search Features for Many Search Engines

Ways to Focus or Obtain Fewer Results:	Examples:
1. exact phrase searching, use quotation marks	“san andreas fault”
2. combine keywords to require both terms or phrases be found, use AND or +	“san andreas fault” AND earthquake +”san andreas fault” +earthquake
3. eliminating keywords or phrases, use NOT or AND NOT or -	+”san andreas fault” +earthquake -1906 “san andreas fault” AND earthquake AND NOT 1906
4. limit keyword or phrase to a specific part of the Web page	title:”san andreas fault” title:earthquake url:earthquake
Ways to Broaden or Obtain More Results:	Examples:
1. use synonyms for keywords, connecting with OR	earthquake OR tremor OR aftershock
2. use asterisk (*) to truncate a keyword so that variations of the keyword are found	(earthquake* OR tremor*) AND “san andreas”

III. Tips

- Some search engines are sensitive to capital letters, so to avoid problems, don’t use capital letters.
- Some search engines let you search within your results, such as Northern Lights (www.northernlight.com) and Infoseek (www.infoseek.com). Useful for narrowing results.
- Try different ways to do the search; try different search engines; ask a Reference Librarian for help

Learning More: To learn more about these Web search tools, go to the excellent Web tutorial developed by the Teaching Library at the University of California-Berkeley,

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html>