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Tips to help you search smarter

When you do a search for information online, the words and phrases that are typed into a search bar (search terms) are not enough for a search engine to determine what you want. It will give you results that have any/all the words/phrases in your search, not necessarily what you typed.

Google is a helpful tool and should be used as a starting point for research. The library/librarian should be your ending point. Here are a few tips that can help produce more helpful results when using the internet (these tips work for searches on the internet or in databases).

Tip 1: Be specific
* To find exact wording, put it in quotes “you can’t always get what you want”
* To find information on an author, type: author: james patterson
* To find information from a specific site, type: site:nytimes.com
* To find information with the word in the title, type: intitle: ebola
* To find information in a specific filetype, type: filetype: jpg (or :pdf, :doc, :gif, etc.)
* To exclude a term from a search, type: - (example: bass -fishing)
* To get definitions, type: define: extracurricular

Tip 2: Be broad
* To find words that are similar to a word/phrase, type: ~ (example: ~nutrition)
* To fill in missing word or phrase, type: * (this is an asterisk) (example: Dr. * will range from Dr. Suess to Dr. Oz, to Dr. Dre to Dr. Martens) (example: salt * pepper will give results for ‘salt and pepper,’ ‘salt and pepa,’ ‘salt n pepa,’ etc.) (example: why does * will give results from “why does the universe exist” to ‘why doca my stomach growl’; anything that starts with why does…..)
* To find information in a range, type: .. (example: NCAA results 2009..2014)

Tip 3: Use advanced search
* Type your search in Google
* Click on the gear box in the upper right hand corner
* Select “Advanced Search”
* Fill in the appropriate information in the appropriate boxes (use some of the tips above too)
* This is where you can narrow down by domain (.gov, .edu, .mil, .com, .org, etc.)
Tip 4: Go deeper
* Search Google’s DeeperWeb for another chance to find good results
http://deeperweb.com/

Tip 5: Still stuck?
* Try a variety of search terms using synonyms/antonyms/slang
* Type a question as an answer (instead of how many people live in China? try population of China)
* Ask a librarian or a teacher. Having another person’s perspective can help

Good to know:
These tips also work for the databases EBSCO and GALE
* Suggestion: try putting your search in quotation marks first
* Refine results using the limiters/qualifiers on the left hand side (choose a date, subject, publication type, etc.)
* Also try an Advanced Search

Courtesy of:
http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2014/01/google-search-tips-poster-for-your-class.html