

DUGGAN LIBRARY INSTRUCTIONAL SCREENCASTS

10 Tips for Better Google Searching

#1: Phrase Searching



The single most powerful tool in web searching (Google or otherwise) is...

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Phrase searching works best with the “discriminating phrase” – the phrase that in common or technical vocabulary describes the concept you are searching.

“affirmative action”
“nuclear proliferation”
“family bed”
“antibiotic resistant bacteria”

#2: Words the Way You Want Them

- ❖ Words are automatically STEMMED

search **kite flying** and get matches on **kite, kites, kiting** and **flying, fly, flies...**
turn it off with + or " "

+kite +flying or **"kite flying"**

- ❖ STOP WORDS are automatically ignored

the, in, a, and, of... etc.
turn off with + or " "

snake +in +the grass

"snake in the grass"

#3: Word Order Matters!

Google's RANKING algorithm favors pages with your terms

- ❖ in PHRASES
- ❖ CLOSE TOGETHER
- ❖ IN THE ORDER TYPED

grass snake
snake grass
snake in the grass
snake +in +the grass
"snake in the grass"

all retrieve different result sets

#4: OR Searching



OR searching requires capitalized OR
can be used between single words or phrases enclosed in quotes

california OR oregon OR "pacific coast"

#5: Exclude the Words You Don't Want



The MINUS SIGN can be used to eliminate unwanted words

bats texas -baseball

(NOTE: this feature does not always work reliably)

#6: Punctuation Matters!



Apostrophe ('): **peoples**, **people's** and **peoples'** are searched as DIFFERENT words

Hyphen (-): **same-sex** retrieves *same-sex*, *same sex*, and *samesex*

Asterix (*): whole word wild card. **george**bush** retrieves *George Bush*, *George W. Bush*, *George H.W. Bush*, *George Herbert Walker Bush*...

#7: Number Ranges



NUMBER RANGE (number..number)

example: find pages mentioning Babe Ruth between 1921 and 1935.

"babe ruth" 1921..1935

#8: Set Limits



Require terms to occur in specific parts of the page or get pages from specific domains.

- ❖ **intitle:** words must appear in <title> field of page
- ❖ **site:** limit to a particular site or type of domain

site:gov retrieves *only* U.S. federal government sites

-site:com retrieves sites from .edu, .gov, .mil, .org, etc. *but NOT .com*

#9: Search by Document Type



Limit to a specific type of document

❖ **filetype:** pdf, doc, xls, ppt and more

Combine Strategies



Examples

- ❖ Find fact sheets and reports about the death-rate for malignant melanoma in the U.S.

filetype:pdf death-rate malignant melanoma "united states"

- ❖ Find PowerPoint presentations from reputable universities in the U.S. about the impact in China of its one-child policy

filetype:ppt site:edu china one-child policy

#10: The Lost Obvious



- ❖ Don't forget the second... or third... (or beyond) page of results!

For More Information...



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