

TIPS FOR SEARCHING DATABASES

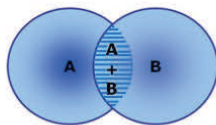
BOOLEAN OPERATORS

Usually when you do a search, the information you want is too specific to be found by entering a single search term. You therefore need to use several search terms, combined with search operators.

The most widely used operators are the Boolean operators AND, OR and NOT. Most electronic databases, search engines, directories and subject guides allow you to refine your searches using Boolean operators.

How to reduce the number of results with AND?

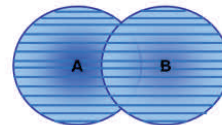
AND: only results that apply to both A and B.



AND limits the result. It produces a smaller number of hits compared to a single word search.

HOW TO EXPAND MY SEARCH RESULT WITH OR?

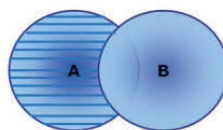
OR: results that apply to either A OR B or both



OR enlarges the search output. (you get more hits compared to a single word search).

How to reduce the number of results with NOT?

NOT: NOT: you get the results that apply to the first term, but not to the second term.



NOT limits the output by excluding a certain search term.

CHARACTERS FOR EXACT PHRASES

Sometimes, it is helpful to search on a particular combination of words, or search phrase; this results in a more specific search.

Example:

If you search on "**Quantum Theory**", you will only get hits that contain that precise combination of words. Note! Various search systems may use different characters for an exact phrase.

PROXIMITY OPERATORS: Searching for words that occur in close proximity to each other

You can search for **words that occur within a specified number of words of each other** by using the proximity operator. These differ by bibliography, thus we advise you to check the 'help' function of the bibliography you are going to use.

ABI/INFORM

W/#: Find documents where these words are within # number of words apart (either before or after).

Example: computer W/3 careers

Business Source

Near Operator (N#): Finds the words if they are within # words of one another regardless of the order in which they appear. Example: type 'tax N5 reform' to find results that would match tax reform as well as reform of income tax.

WILDCARDS: Searching for several words at once

By using wildcards, you can look for related words with a single search. A wildcard is a character that represents any other character or characters at the relevant position in the word or sentence.

Truncation: is the process of replacing one or more letters at the beginning or end of a word by the wildcard character * (or sometimes ? or \$).

Example: Agronom * ---> Agronom **y** , Agronom **ic** , Agronom **ist** etc.

Masking: is the process of replacing one or more letters in the middle of a word by the wildcard character ? (or sometimes # or !). This is useful when a word can be spelled in different ways (e.g. US English and British English variants).

Examples: Organi ? ation ---> Organi **s** ation, Organi **z** ation

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