

Searching with Google

Carol LaRow - Handout

How Do I Cut Down On All the “Hits” I Get When I Do A Google Search?

1. Use keywords; choose words that are specific enough to narrow the search down to your topic
2. Type exact phrases to narrow topics down; put phrases inside quotation marks; the search engine will return the exact results if it finds them; examples:
 - “council on foreign relations”
 - “nothing to fear but fear itself”
3. Use quotation marks; put terms inside quotes that go together; example: “President George Washington.” This forces the search engine to render results that contain George Washington and President, eliminating findings such as George Washington University or George Washington Carver
 - “President George Washington” → yields the President
 - George Washington (without quotes) → can yield:

the state of Washington	Washington, DC	Washington Monument
Washington University	George Washington School of Medicine	George Washington Carver

4. Use Boolean operators: AND, OR, +, -
5. A + sign before a word indicates that it must be contained in the search results
6. A – sign before a word indicates that it must be omitted from the search results
7. The word OR (typed in capital letters), tells the search engine to look for either of the two words it’s typed between; example jam OR jelly
8. A ~ at the beginning of a word tells the search engine to find synonyms for the search word; example: ~cabin can yield: cabin, chalet, cottage, chantey, shack
9. If you type in two or more words, the search engine “assumes” the word AND is between them; thus, it returns pages that include ALL of the search terms
10. Order counts; the order in which you enter search terms affects results
11. Typing more terms in a search narrows the search down and renders fewer hits
12. Most search engines have an advanced search section; use it to narrow searches. The example below allows users to choose “exact” words, one or more words, and file types. It even allows users to restrict results to specific sites.

