The World Wide Web

Location: Central Library, 99 Clinton Street, Schenectady, NY 12305
Visit Schenectady County Public Library at www.scpl.org

(The following document adapted from information found on http://www.google.com)
Searching the World Wide Web

Finding Information
There are basically three ways to locate information on the World Wide Web:
1. Enter the web address (the “URL” or Uniform Resource Locator)
2. Links on a Web page
3. Search engine

The Internet: URLs

Every document on the Web has an address which is called the URL (Uniform Resource Locator). The URL to locate GOOGLE is: http://www.google.com

http:// and https:// identifies the document as a Web page (no need to enter this part)
www. World Wide Web (not all websites require this anymore), include the dot “.”
google host name (website owner)
.com domain name (identifies the category of the page) – the dot must be included.

Other typical domain names include:
• .gov - Government agencies
• .edu - Educational institutions
• .org - Organizations (nonprofit).
• .mil – Military
• .com - commercial business
• .net – Network Organizations
• .ca – Canada / .uk – United Kingdom

Links on a Web page
Links are words or images on a web page that point to other web pages. When you move your arrow cursor over a link, a hand will appear. The link usually will become underlined and highlighted in a distinctive color. Clicking once on a link with your mouse will automatically take you to a connecting page.

Since the Web is ever changing, some links may point to pages that no longer exist or have moved to a new location. When this happens, the computer will post a “file not found” message. Your computer remembers where you were, letting you click on a “back arrow” to return to the previous page or pages.
Search Engines
Search engines are web sites that allow you to type in a few key words and then present you with a list of possible links that might have the information you want. Although search engine is really a general class of programs, the term is often used to specifically describe systems like Google, Alta Vista and Excite that enable users to search for documents on the World Wide Web.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Engine</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td><a href="http://www.google.com">http://www.google.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogpile</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dogpile.com">http://www.dogpile.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo!</td>
<td><a href="http://www.yahoo.com">http://www.yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bing</td>
<td><a href="http://bing.com">http://bing.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excite</td>
<td><a href="http://www.excite.com">http://www.excite.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lycos</td>
<td><a href="http://lycos.com">http://lycos.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask</td>
<td><a href="http://ask.com">http://ask.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebCrawler</td>
<td><a href="http://www.webcrawler.com">http://www.webcrawler.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Searching Methods and Language
Searching the Internet can bring the information from around the world into your home or office it can be an incredibly frustrating and time consuming disaster.

Here are some strategies that will increase the likelihood of finding relevant information:

- **Analyze your topic – what are you looking for?** Searching for very broad subjects, such as history of the United States, will produce a huge number of “hits” and be very confusing. Determine what you really want to know – a particular period in U.S. history, a list of democratic presidents, inflation rates during the 20th century, etc.

- **Select keywords for your topic** - The keywords you choose may or may not bring you the results you want. Be prepared to used similar words for your topic

- **Spelling help** – Most search engines will show you results for the topic it thinks you are most likely to want even if you are not sure of the spelling. As you type, a list of possible topics will appear.

Keyword Phrase searching – use quotation marks around words you want searched as a phrase. The – in front of a word (with no space) excludes that word from the results.
MORE SEARCHING TIPS AND TRICKS

Tip 1: Start with the basics
No matter what you're looking for, start with a simple search like: closest airport
You can always add a few descriptive words if necessary.

If you're looking for a place or product in a specific location, add the location.
For example: bakery seattle

Tip 2: Search using your voice
Tired of typing? To search with your voice, select the Microphone.

Tip 3: Choose words carefully
When you're deciding what words to put in the search box, try to choose words that are likely to appear on the site you're looking for. For example, instead of saying "my head hurts", type: headache because that's the word a medical site would use.

Tip 4: Don’t worry about the little things
- **Spelling**: a search engine’s spell checker automatically uses the most common spelling of a given word, whether or not you spell it correctly
- **Capitalization**: a search for New York Times is the same as new york times

Tip 5: Find quick answers
For many searches, the search engine will do the work for you and show an answer to your question in the search results. Some features, like information about sports teams, aren't available in all regions.
- **Weather**: search weather to see the weather in your location or add a city name, like weather schenectady to find weather for a certain place
- **Dictionary**: type define in front of any word to see its definition
- **Calculations**: enter a math equation like 3*9123
- **Unit conversions**: enter any conversion, like 3 dollars in euros
- **Sports**: Search for the name of your team to see a schedule, game scores & more
- **Quick facts**: search for the name of a celebrity, location, movie, or song to find related information
- **Food calories**: type the food egg calories to get the nutrition information

Expert Search tips:
- **Exclude words from your search**: put - (the minus symbol) DIRECTLY in front of a word you want to leave out. For example: jaguar speed -car
- **Search for an exact match**: put a word or phrase inside quotes "tallest building"
- **Search for wildcards or unknown words**: put a * in your word or phrase where you want to leave a placeholder. For example: "largest * in the world"
- **Create advanced searches**: Settings / Advanced Search
Case sensitivity - Most search engines ignore case. Generally, enter your search terms using lower case. It is quicker and will give you more results. However, if you are looking for a specific person, place, title, capitalize the first letter of each word.

Boolean searching – Click on the Advanced Search option.

Generally speaking, search engines will have an advanced search feature that will automatically construct a Boolean logical search statement for you.

Clicking on Advanced Search in Google will bring you to a screen that prompts you with how to complete a Boolean type search.

Notice the “ ” around New York Giants and that the words did not have to be capitalized in the search field. Google searched for websites that had the three words next to each other. Advanced search queries can help you narrow/refine your search.
Evaluating your sources
It is very important to evaluate the validity of your information. *Just because it appears on the Internet does not mean it is true, accurate, or reflective of any kind of reliable scholarship.* The UC Berkeley Library has the following eight-point evaluation checklist:

- What can the URL tell you?
- Who wrote the page? Is he, she, or the authoring institution a qualified authority?
- Is it dated? Current - timely?
- Is information cited authentic?
- Does the page have overall integrity and reliability as a source?
- What's the bias?
- Could the page or site be ironic, like a satire or a spoof?
- If you have questions or reservations, how can you satisfy them?

Using the Web Safely

**Secure Websites:** You may decide to shop online, pay your bills online, or you may need to provide personal information for a job application. Be cautious! NEVER send personal information to an unknown or unsecure website. Too good to be true is always too good to be true. Look for websites that have an “s” in the url and a lock icon. Information you enter on a secure site will be encrypted so it cannot be “captured” by someone eavesdropping on your connection. Be especially vigilant in using public wireless connections. There are ways for people to scan the information you’re sending. Don’t hand someone your credit card by using an unsecured connection!

**Scams:** Don’t be a victim of modern day scam artists. Be alert to fraudulent emails and bogus pop-up messages. Your bank will never ask for personal information via email. Pop-up advertisements from what appear to be reputable sources or “warnings” regarding your computer should be met with suspicion (block many pop-ups through your Tools settings). These are ways to get you to send these people your personal information or sell you something.
Investigate possible scams using the following sites: [http://snopes.com](http://snopes.com) and [http://OnGuardOnline.gov](http://OnGuardOnline.gov)

**Viruses:** Viruses are malicious software programs designed by other computer users to cause destruction and spread themselves to other computers. Viruses are loaded to your computer without your knowledge. Protect your computer using a virus safety software. Some popular brands are Norton and McAfee.

An example of a freeware program is AVAST:
Now You Try It!!
Exercises for Searching the Internet

1. You want to research the history of the U.S. White house. Enter *White House* as your search term. Are the results specific to your topic? How many Results are listed? Now try *history White House*. Are the Results more relevant?

2. Click Images. You know Larry Hart has a wide selection of pictures of the history of Schenectady. What search terms would you enter? View images using your key words.

3. Click Maps. Enter your address. If a picture of your house appears on the map, click “street view” under the picture.

4. Click More Finance Enter *GE* for the latest stock quote.

5. Explore the popular YouTube feature under the More menu.

5. Click Search. Enter SCPL Click on the library homepage link. Click on “Research” on the left of the page. Explore the “Selected Internet Links” section.

6. Compare search results using Bing.com, Google, and a search engine from [http://www.thesearchenginelist.com](http://www.thesearchenginelist.com) for a simple search on your favorite food.

Here are a few popular sites to explore:
The White House [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)
CNN [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)
Postage & zip codes [www.usps.gov](http://www.usps.gov)
Weather [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)
Union College [www.union.edu](http://www.union.edu)
Library of Congress [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)
Fodor’s restaurant guide [www.fodors.com](http://www.fodors.com)
Amazon (books, music, etc.) [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)
ESPN [www.espn.com](http://www.espn.com)
E-bay [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)
Craig’s list [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)
Free downloads [www.shareware.com](http://www.shareware.com)
Games [http://games.yahoo.com](http://games.yahoo.com)
Searching the Internet tutorials

http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html
Finding Information on the Internet: a Tutorial. Copyright (C) 2008 by the Regents of the University of California.

http://www.refdesk.com/factbeg.html
Internet’s Beginner’s Guides & Tutorials. An assortment of 25 different links covering basic WWW to a mouse tutorial (not all links are currently available).

http://www.googleguide.com
Google Guide is an online interactive tutorial and reference for experienced users, novices, and everyone in between. Not affiliated with nor endorsed by Google.

http://www.internettutorials.net
Easy to understand information on Boolean logic, search strategies and tools.

http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Search Engines.html
Interesting comparison of three search engines by UC at Berkeley.

BEGINNERS: (excellent website)

www.askabbystokes.com
Excellent guides, resources, and videos especially created for those who are new to the Internet.