

## Tips for Searching on the Web

### Basic Search:

Many search engines allow you to type in a phrase or sentence. The search will then strip out things like the, those, a, these. The result may be better than if you just typed in one word. Still, the result will probably be way too large.

### Understanding the results:

Search engines will return results rated from highest to lowest for the information you requested. The higher the result the better the chance of finding the information you require.

### Possible error messages:

**no DNS** - Your browser couldn't find the web site or the site isn't listed. Check your spelling.

**404 File not found** - The page is no longer on the web or moved and didn't leave a forwarding address.

**Server error / Server busy error** - The computer you're trying to contact crashed, isn't on, or is busy. Try again in a little while.

### Improving the search:

If your results were too broad, try adding more descriptive words. Try different key words. Check your spelling or try alternate spellings. See Refine search below.

### Refine the search:

Use **+** to require words or **-** to exclude them. Example; Dallas +Texas -cowboys will find information about Dallas, Texas, but not the Dallas Cowboys football team.

Use **\_** (the underscore), to tie two words together. Example; Dallas\_Cowboys will give you documents in which the words Dallas Cowboys appear next to each other.

Use the Boolean operators. These are **AND**, **OR**, **AND NOT**, and **( )**. They must be in **ALL CAPITALS** or they will not be recognized as Boolean operators. See examples under Boolean.

Increase the weight of a word with **^** to move documents containing that word higher up in the list. Example; Michaelangelo sculpture^2

**Boolean operators:**

**AND** - documents must contain all the words connected with AND. Example; oranges AND grapefruit AND lemons will return documents that contain all three fruits within the document.

**OR** - documents must contain either one of the words. Example; oranges OR grapefruit OR lemons will return documents that contain any one or all of the three fruits within the document.

**AND NOT** - documents will not contain the word following the term. Example; oranges AND grapefruit AND NOT lemons will return documents containing oranges and grapefruit, but not any with lemons.

**( )** - parentheses can group parts of a Boolean search together for even more refined searching. Example; fruit AND (grapefruit OR oranges) will result in documents containing the word fruit and either the word grapefruit or the word oranges.