Boolean Searching

LIBR 1105 Online
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AND - OR - NOT
What & Why

• Boolean terms help us to efficiently & effectively utilize a search engine or database to find information
• Boolean logic helps narrow a search and reduce the number of bad “hits”
• Reduces the amount of time you have to spend weeding through large hit lists
AND

- Requires that all search terms be present
- Narrows search results

Example: behavior AND biology
Example: senior citizens AND diet
Example: ice cream AND additives
OR

- Requires that **any** one of the terms show up in search results
- Broadens the search results
  
  Example: behavior OR behaviour
  Example: teenagers OR adolescents
  Example: bipolar disorder OR manic depression
NOT

• Excludes terms from the search
• Used to narrow a search
• Use with caution - may eliminate things you really want

Example: behavior NOT biology
Example: cloning NOT sheep
Example: psychology NOT clinical
Adjacency

• Combines terms using their relative positions: this example uses quotation marks: “ ”

• Most commonly used to find phrases

• Used to find hits that include the words near to each other

  Example: “communication theory”
  Example: “right to die”
  Example: “chronic fatigue syndrome”
Truncation

- Used to search for similar terms
- Not always available
- Many databases automatically truncate to the right of the final word
- May be indicated by: ?, *, #, etc.

**Example:** psycholog?

- Finds: psychology
- Finds: psychological
- Finds: psychologist
Points to Consider:

- Think about your topic creating keywords and concepts that might be related and/or synonymous.
- Write down these key terms to use in various combinations; the more you create improves your chances of finding the information you need.
- Utilize boolean operators when constructing your searches.
To get another sense of how boolean operators are used watch this video

Boolean Video
Practice, Practice, Practice