EFFECTIVE INTERNET SEARCHING

Which Search Engine?
- The most widely used search engine (at the moment) is Google (www.google.com). But it is a good idea to try other search engines as well if you are not finding what you are looking for.
- Examples are: au.altavista.com/, search.yahoo.com/, www.bing.com/, www.ask.com/
- You may also like to look for a specific search engine ie typing ‘music search engine’ into Google.
- If you prefer a particular search engine, it is worth spending time on the sites tips and FAQ sections.

KEY WORDS: The first step is to brainstorm what you are trying to research and work out what your key words should be. Think of all the words related to the topic. Then brainstorm all alternate terms that could be used (eg “greenhouse effect” or “global warming”). Then decide which combination of words best represents what you are trying to find out. You might try different combinations to see which give the most useful results. Make sure the search terms are precise, specific and capture the essence of what you are looking for.

WHAT MIGHT INFO LOOK LIKE: But don’t just type those words in and see what comes up! Instead think how the information might appear on the page, what the title of the page might be or how the information would be listed.

MAKE IT SIMPLER: When you think you have worked out what your search terms should be, think whether you could say it in a shorter or more descriptive way.

REMEMBER THESE TIPS:
- Enclose “exact phrases” in quotation marks if you want a specific phrase with the words in that order. For example, typing in “pink ballerina” will find pages that have this exact phrase whereas if you didn’t put the quotation marks you may get pages where pink is on one page of the page and ballerina another. You need to be really sure of your search terms though.
- Leave out common words, such as the, in and at.
- Many search tools look for word variations, including single and plural terms e.g. australia will match to australian, australia’s, australians etc.
- Google is not case sensitive ie no need for capital letters.
- In Google if you type: define word eg define transcendent it will look up definitions for you.
- You can ask questions in Google using * (wildcard) eg: Lightbulb was invented by *
- If you want to search for a keyword and its synonyms - words that have the same or similar meaning - add the tilde (~) sign immediately in front of your keyword. For example, to search for food facts as well as nutrition and cooking information, type in “~food ~facts”.
- Because Google ignores common words like ‘and’, ‘is’, if you need that word or number or symbol to be included then put a + sign in front of it eg World War +1
- If a word has more than one meaning and you only want one of those meanings then use the – sign to exclude the other meaning eg bass –music will not find info on bass as a musical term but instead the other meaning (fish).

USING ADVANCED SEARCH FEATURES:
Most search engines allow you to click on a link that will allow you to restrict your search further.
- A single term limited to the TITLE of a page, rather than ANYWHERE ON A PAGE, is more likely to result in relevant material.
- Use domains to limit your search to material on a specific country's website, e.g. .uk or .au (note, a shorter way rather than clicking on Advanced Search is to type in your search then the country domain eg music .au will search for music sites that end in .au)
- Use the advanced search features to limit your search by including conditions such as AND, OR, NOT in your search.
  France OR Germany – Gives results with either just France on the page, or just Germany, or both France AND Germany – Only gives results with pages that have both France and Germany on them.
  France NOT Germany – Gives results with France on the page but excludes the pages that also have Germany on them.