Getting started with

Online searching tips & tricks

Library and Information Services supports the Teaching and Learning goals of the Institute by delivering a service that empowers, informs and leads.
What is truncation?

Truncation is a search method that allows you to find documents containing variations of your search term; truncation is often performed by putting a * at the end of the shortened term (although some databases and search engines vary).

Examples of this are as follows:
· Aborigin* - will select Aborigines, Aboriginal, Aboriginals
· comput* - will select computers, computing
· sport* - will select sport, sports, sporting

What is a wild card?

A wildcard is a character that may be used in a search term to represent one or more other characters and they are very useful when you are not sure what spelling to use.

Examples of this are as follows:
· organi?ation - will select organization, organisation
· colo?r - will select color, colour

How do I use a phrase?

Results for a phrase search may differ in different databases. Try using quotation marks to specify a phrase
· child care or “child care”

Why choose a specific field or tag?

When searching selecting a field or tag (like author, title, subject, etc.) can improve your search results as it creates a more focused search.
What is Boolean searching?

Boolean searching is a method that allows you to combine words and phrases using the words explained below to limit, widen, or define your search:

- **AND** combines your keywords. Your results will have both keywords.
  - Indigenous AND health

- **OR** groups your keywords
  - Indigenous OR Aboriginal

- **NOT** excludes your keywords
  - abuse NOT sexual

How can I build a search strategy?

Before you can search for any information you must first develop a search strategy. A search strategy is a plan that helps you look for the information you need.

**Search Strategy Tips**
- Identify the key concepts.
- Determine alternative terms for these concepts, if needed (the search tips listed here can help with that)
- Refine your search to dates, subjects, etc., as appropriate.

Remember that learning search strategies can take time and that strategies and styles will differ according to personal choice and what you are studying.
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