

Searching and Search Engines

There are many search engines available to locate information on the WWW. Each search engine operates differently and offers different services and features. Below are some of the most popular and widely used search engines available. Take the time to explore these and others to find out which one you like best.

Searching Tips for most Search Engines:

- Use specific words (example: use *poodle*, not *dog*).
- Use quotation marks around phrases (example: “*macaroni and cheese*”) so the engine knows to search for the phrase and not the separate words.
- Try using the + and – signs to improve your results on multiple words (example try *macaroni + cheese*).
- Check the help pages of each search engine for the best hints and tips.

Alta Vista

www.altavista.com

Alta Vista has several special features, such as multimedia searches that allows you to search for sound files, images, and videos. Alta Vista is excellent for keyword searching and complex searches.

Tips for using **Alta Vista**:

- The *Advanced Search* settings allow you to limit your search by date, region, and language.
- **Alta Vista** will translate web pages from the hit list into other languages.
- Don't be concerned about looking at every page on the hit list. Find something that looks right and go with that.

Ask.com

www.ask.com

Ask.com is one of the web's most popular search engines. It allows you to ask plain-text questions like “Who shot JR?” If ask.com fails to find a match, it will search through other search engines.

Tips for using **Ask.com**:

- Use plain English when asking questions.
- Explore the results carefully. Ask.com will not always be able to directly answer you questions, but it can provide links to a page that might.

Google

www.google.com

Google is one of the most accurate and user-friendly search engines out there. It searches the most complete number of web sites available. It also gives you the *I'm Feeling Lucky* button, which will take you to first web page on your search's hit list.

Tips for using **Google**:

- **Google** ignores all common words and phrases, so to include them in your search put a + in front of them (example *Charles +I* to look for Charles I).
- **Google** also provides an expansive web directory organized by subject. This is a great place to go if you get stuck.

Lycos

www.lycos.com

Lycos is the product of Carnegie Mellon University. This search engine also provides links to people and yellow page searches. The Advanced Search option allows you to choose whether or not to block offensive content in your search results list.

Tips for using **Lycos**:

- **Lycos** will by default search for all your keywords, meaning that each hit must contain all the keywords you entered.
- **Lycos** will also give you an option for a second opinion (from the Hotbot search engine) at the bottom of each page.

Metacrawler

www.metacrawler.com

Metacrawler is a meta-search engine, which means it will run your search on several search engines at the same time. It allows you to search on any or all of the keywords you use, as well as search for phrases written in plain text.

Tips for using **Metacrawler**

- Be as specific as possible when searching.
- Use the standard search query symbols (+, _, "") for best results.

Yahoo

dir.yahoo.com

Yahoo is the best example of a subject directory, where actual people evaluate the sites and then assign them to categories. This is a great place to start your searches or to do general searching.

Tips for using **Yahoo**:

- Try following **Yahoo**'s subject links; sometimes this is easier and faster than using keywords.
- Choose keywords based on the subject since **Yahoo** is subject based! (example: if you want a recipe for macaroni and cheese try *recipes + macaroni* instead of "*macaroni and cheese*")

**For more information on search engines visit the
PC Center's Searching and Search Engines page at
www.carnegielibrary.org/locations/pccenter/helpsheets/search.html**

PC Center
at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
www.carnegielibrary.org/locations/pccenter
412-578-2561 – Main Library
412-363-6105 – East Liberty

