

BASIC INTERNET SEARCHING

Poudre River Public Library District
Our web address: www.poudrelibraries.org

I. Browsers

Browsers are software programs that let you see the contents of the World Wide Web. Netscape and Internet Explorer are two commonly used browsers.

Tips for Using Browsers

1. **Window Title Bar**—Tells you the title of the current Web page.
2. **Menu**
File—Click on File to get a drop-down menu.
Print Preview—lets you see how many pages are in a document and how the document will look when printed. *It is very important to use print preview when printing in the library, since you are being charged per page.*
3. **Toolbar Buttons**
Back—Takes you back to a previous Web page.
Forward—Undoes the back button. You can only use **Forward** after you have gone back in the history list.
Print—Prints the current document.
Home—loads the page you have set to be the default page when the browser loads.
Search—Brings up a list of World Wide Web search tools in Netscape and MSN Search in Internet Explorer.
Stop—Stops the transfer of information. If a page is loading very slowly, try clicking on **Stop** and then click on **Reload** in Netscape and **Refresh** in Internet Explorer.
4. **Location** (in Netscape) or **Address** (in Internet Explorer)—Shows the URL, or address of the current page. Type in a URL here to go directly to the Web site.
5. **Scroll bar**—The bar on the right side of the screen that lets you move up and down in a document.
6. **Progress Bar**—The bar at the bottom of the screen. The URL, or address of a link, appears here when you hold the pointer

over a link. Information about the status of a currently loading document also appears here.

7. Other Tips for Using Browsers

- Colored and Underlined text indicates a link to other pages.
- When the pointer changes to a hand, it indicates that it is over a link to other pages.
- When the pointer changes to an hourglass it indicates the computer is working, trying to connect to a site.

II. Some Things To Know About a URL (Uniform Resource Locator)

1. The URL is the unique address of any Web document or page.
2. The URL offers clues as to the source of the document:

http://www.whitehouse.gov

protocol://server.sub-domain.top-level-domain

http=protocol
www=server
whitehouse=subdomain
gov=top level domain

Top Level Domain Names

.com commercial
.edu colleges and universities
.net Internet service provider
.org miscellaneous organizations such as non-profit organizations
.gov United States Federal Government
.mil United States Military
.us .uk .il .jp Two letter country codes

personal home pages may have:

/personal name
/users/personal name
/people/personal name

Tip: If the top-level domain is **.com** and you are using Netscape 2.X or higher, you can just type in the **subdomain** name; i.e., you only need to type **yahoo** for **http://www.yahoo.com**.

III. How to Make the Most of Your Search Engines

1. Using a Subject Directory

If you are looking for broad topic areas such as travel resources, medical information, book reviews, investors' information or lists of online newspapers, start with a subject directory. Use subject directories if you just want to browse.

Selected Subject Directories

Librarian's Index to the Internet <http://lii.org>

This is an excellent subject directory of 8000+ Internet resources. If you don't see your subject listed on the contents page, use the search option to find sites. Any resources found here have been reviewed by librarians for quality and usefulness.

Yahoo <http://www.yahoo.com> or <http://dir.yahoo.com>

Yahoo is another subject directory. Its database contains about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ million pages. Web sites are selected by people at Yahoo. The web sites chosen for each topic are official sites for an organization or company or top level sites for a particular topic.

Things to notice in Yahoo:

- Numbers in parentheses - the number of sites you will find listed under that category.
- New - a site that has been added to the category within the last week.
- Sunglasses - Yahoo indexers think the site is "cool".

Internet Public Library <http://www.ipl.org>

Subject directory with a reference center of broad topic categories that can be searched or browsed. Also has magazines and newspapers, a teen section, and a youth section.

2. Using a Keyword Search Engine

Keyword search engines are comprised of much larger databases than subject directories, but still no search engine indexes the entire Web. Use keyword search engines if you have a specific, well-thought-out search in mind.

General Tips

- Read the help section for the search engine you are using.

- Choose keywords for your search.
- Think about what terms best describe what you need. Pick unique terms, if possible, and try to be specific.
- Don't use common words such as: a, and, the, of, from or similar words.
- Scan the first two pages of results. If you don't see what you need, try to think of words that better describe your topic. Look at some of the sites you retrieved to get ideas for other words to use in a search, or words to exclude.
- Use more than one search engine.
- Use +, -, capitals, and phrases.
 - Use capital letters for proper names (Search engines are frequently case sensitive.)
 - + results must contain the word. Don't put a space between the sign and the word.
 - +Chinook +wind
 - +Pawnee +Grasslands
 - - results must **not** contain the word. Don't put a space between the sign and the word.
 - + dolphins -football
 - " "allows searching for an exact phrase. Identify any phrases in your search.
 - + "coupon directory" +Colorado
 - "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
 - + "Civil Disobedience" +Thoreau
 - "Children learn what they live"
- If you don't find what you're looking for, try to think of other words that better describe your search.
 - +Israel +flowers
 - +Israel +flora
 - +Israeli +flora
- Think of spelling variations: fly fishing, flyfishing, fly-fishing.

Selected Keyword Search Engines

Google <http://www.google.com>

This highly touted search engine has an easy to use interface that searches the Web and delivers very targeted results based on relevance and importance. This is currently the largest search engine with over 1 billion indexed web pages.

- "I'm feeling lucky" will pull up the most relevant site, often the website of a corporation, institution or organization.

Alta Vista <http://www.altavista.com>

AltaVista is very powerful in its searching capabilities and indexes millions of pages.

It also has a translation tool and an excellent image search.

AskJeeves <http://www.askjeeves.com>

- Just type a question and click "Ask!"
- Built by humans, not computers.
- Uses natural language to interpret and answer your question.

Try to find out what time it is in Lithuania.

HotBot <http://www.hotbot.com>

HotBot has many features besides its search engine, such as a directory of Web sites to browse. It also provides access to online white and yellow pages and news stories. HotBot is affiliated with Wired Magazine, so you will find a lot of features about technology. HotBot has a database of about 80 million pages.

- Use the pull-down menus to form your search.
- **Look for:** select from this pull-down menu to limit your search to all the words, exact phrase, etc.
- **Date:** use the pull-down menu to set the date limits.
- **Language:** select from the pull-down menu to limit your search to a particular language.
- **Image, Video, MP 3, JavaScript:** make a checkmark in the boxes to limit your sites to those with these features.
- For more options, click on advanced search.

Tip!

- ❖ Search **google** using the phrase "*find in a library*" (in quotes) and a ***title*** or an ***author***.
- ❖ The search results will bring up the Open WorldCat results close to the top
- ❖ Click on this and enter Open WorldCat
- ❖ **Type in your zip code and find a list of libraries closest to you with that author/title.**

There are hundreds more search engines to choose from on the WWW. Find the one or two that work best for you and learn them well.

Evaluating Web Sites

Authority	Yes	No
1. Is the author's name on the page?		
2. Does the author list their experience, position, or education?		
3. Is the author's e-mail address on the page?		
Currency		
1. Is there a date that tells you when the page was made?		
2. Is there a date when the site was last updated?		
Design		
1. Is the web site easy to use?		
2. Can you easily find information?		
3. Does the page take a long time to load?		
Content		
1. Is the information correct?		
2. Is the information easy to read and understand?		
3. Are there links to more information?		
Conclusion		
1. Does this web site provide better information than you would get from books or other sources?		
2. Is the web site interesting and engaging?		
3. Overall, is this web site helpful for your project?		