



Tips for Online Research

Trying to find information about your issue, a corporation, person, or something else on the web? You're likely to experience a problem that is only getting worse over time: the internet provides too much information instead of too little. The hardest task in searching for information on the web today isn't getting results; it's wading through the overwhelming quantity of data and finding useful results!

Google 101 : How to use Search Operators

Google has built a very powerful web search tool that uses specific "operators," instructions that you give to Google to narrow down your searches. You can tell Google to search for precise phrases, for specific combinations of words, to exclude specific words or phrases, to look on particular web sites, to look for certain kinds of files, and much more!

Suppose you found that George W. Bush's former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was a Chevron board member at one time. Now you want to find all the information you can about Rice's connection to Chevron. To find web sites that mention two or more distinct terms, use the AND operator like this:

"Condoleezza Rice" **AND** Chevron

The quotes around her name tell Google to only look for that exact name. Google will look for everywhere where the two names are directly next to one another. Now suppose you just want to compile information about Condoleezza Rice that is available on Chevron's web site. Use the SITE: operator to narrow down like this:

"Condoleezza Rice" **SITE:**<http://www.chevron.com>

Now suppose you want to look for other corporate, academic, foundation, NGO, or other boards on which Condoleezza Rice has held a seat. Use the AND function again, but also use quotation marks to narrow search results to pages that mention the specific phrase "board of directors."

"Condoleezza Rice" **AND** "board of directors"

After searching these functions and sorting through results you may have noticed that Condoleezza Rice is also a professor at Stanford University. Perhaps you want to know more about Chevron's other links to Stanford. You can again use the simple AND operator to combine the terms "Chevron" AND "Stanford," but a lot of the results will be about Condoleezza Rice. A way to exclude Condoleezza Rice from these search results is to use a minus operator sign like this:

"Chevron" **AND** "Stanford University" -"condoleezza rice"

Go to google.com/advanced_search for more ways to refine your search. Also, it's a good idea to try other search engines as they will often produce different results.



Language and Research: Choosing the Right Terms

Search engines take your words literally, and will look for them in documents. If you use **movement language**, you are likely to find movement information sources. If you put your research question in **mainstream language**, you are more likely to find academic, government, and industry sources.

Sometimes your opposition will use their own terms. For example, a news article may talk about the police, but the police describe themselves as peace officers.

You can use the different kinds of language strategically. Here is an overview of the types of information you can find and how you can use it in your campaign.

	Examples:	What you'll find:	Potential uses:
Movement Terms:	cops, action, environmental justice, gentrification, prison industrial complex, police brutality, living wage...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement analysis and political context • Potential allies • Critical information that makes your case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sharpen your understanding of an issue • To identify new allies • To learn about similar struggles in other communities
Mainstream Terms:	police, demonstration, conservation, revitalization, criminal justice system, welfare reform...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic reports and studies • Reports from liberal think tanks • Data from government agencies • Opposition's analysis of issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find statistics and analysis that add credibility to your campaign • To mobilize a broader base • To understand your opposition's rhetoric and have an effective response