

Searching the Internet

Now that you have explored a bit about the web and browsing, you are probably looking forward to finding something specific. Without a search engine, there is no way to find anything. Search engines scour web pages for you, and you then look through their results.

First, find a search engine. Here are some possibilities:

<http://www.lycos.com>

<http://www.altavista.digital.com>

<http://www.yahoo.com>

<http://infoseek.go.com>

<http://www.excite.com>

<http://www.metacrawler.com>

for kids: <http://www.yahooligans.com>

You should try different search engines, and find what you like the best.

How do you conduct a search?

Use a “keyword” (what you are really looking for, like “bicycle”) and type it into the search field. Type return or press the search button, and look through the results. You will probably get a lot of web pages, or hits!

Narrowing your search:

It’s a bit overwhelming when you search for something, like “bicycle”, and get over 10,000 hits. How can you check through them all? Is that feasible?

We all know that, no, it isn’t feasible. Here are some ways to narrow your search:

- Search using more than one word. Use quotations marks around the words, and the search engine will only return pages with both words together. ex: “bicycle horn” or “cashmere t-shirts”
- Use Boolean operators: AND, OR or NOT
ex: bicycle AND horn, bicycle OR horn, cats AND dogs NOT birds
- Use power search options.
- Skim the hits you receive. You don’t have to look at every single one.
- Use the URLs. Look at the endings: if it is .com, it is commercial but if it is .edu, it is educational. If you are looking for free resources, you probably won’t need to look at a .com site. However, you never know. As you learn more about the Internet and searching, you will get a better feel for what is helpful to you.

If you want a detailed discussion of the merits of different search engines, look at <http://www.nueva.pvt.k12.ca.us/~debbie/library/research/adviceengine.html>. It is a great site!