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Basic Computer Skills Mastery: Internet Skills Skills and Tips

Directions: Below are listed

1. basic skills
2. two sets of internet search tips

**Go to www.cesu.k12.vt.us/profdevelopment/basicskillsforteachers/internetpracticeassessment.doc to
get a practice assessment.**

Skills:

- Define url in layman's terms
- Recognize the differences between common extensions (.com, .edu, .net, .org)
- Save a site in Favorites or Bookmarks, and use it later
- Copy text from a website and paste it somewhere else, for example, in a word document
- Copy a photo or graphic and paste somewhere else.
- Save a photo or graphic to your folder
- Open new windows and toggle between the windows
- Searching
 - Identify major search engines
 - Identify the number of results or "hits" a search yields
 - Narrow a search using Boolean arguments (AND, OR, NOT)
 - Use quote marks for exact expressions
 - Use an asterisk (*) in stemming
 - Differentiate between a simple search engine, a multi-engine search tool and a directory search

Introduction to the Internet

Quick Tip Sheet:

Searching the World Wide Web:



Tips to Remember:

1. Try to type the obvious address in the browser's **LOCATION** box at the top. Press ENTER to access the site. Keep in mind the extension names:
 - COM = COMMERCIAL (ex. www.landsend.com)
 - ORG = ORGANIZATION (ex. www.redcross.org)
 - GOV = GOVERNMENT (ex. www.whitehouse.gov)
 - EDU = EDUCATION (ex. www.uvm.edu)
 - NET = NETWORK (ex. www. Dover.net)

2. When using a Search Engine (AltaVista, Excite, etc) keep in mind the Keyword Search Operators. Operators are the rules or specific instructions used for composing a query in a keyword search. While each search engine has its own operators, some operators are used in common by a number of search engines. The following are among the most used operators:
 - **BOOLEAN:** employs AND, OR, NEAR and NOT to connect words and phrases in the query where:
 1. AND requires that both terms are present somewhere within the document being sought
 2. OR requires that at least one term is present.
 3. NOT excludes a term from a query.

When using these operators, remember to capitalize them as shown above.

Query Example: civil AND war

Query Example: bengal AND tiger NOT Cincinnati

 - **Plus / Minus Signs:**
 1. Employs + before a term to retrieve only the documents containing that term. It is similar to the Boolean AND.
 2. Employs – before a term to exclude that term from the search. It is similar to the Boolean NOT.
 3. Do not leave a space between the operator and the term that follows.

Query Example: civil+war+memoirs

 - **Quote Marks:**
 1. Indicate that the words within the quote marks are to be treated as an exact phrase, or reasonably close to it. It is similar to the Boolean NEAR.

Query Example: "civil war memoirs"

 - **Stemming (Truncation):**
 1. The ability of a search to include the stem or the main part of a word (e.g. sing is the stem for sings, singer, singing, and singalong). Stemming can be automatic, or it may require use of a wild card, symbolized by an asterisk (*) to initiate.

*Query Example: sing**

 - **Case Sensitive:**

1. Adjacent capitalized words are treated as a single proper name, e.g. George Washington.
2. Commas separate proper names from each other.

Query Example: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson

- *Operators may seem complex to the beginner at first, but become understandable with use. For more detailed information on using operators, go to the HELP Sections of the search tools. AltaVista provides the most detailed operator help section; Hotbot's help page is among the most concise.*

3. Simple Searches:

- For single terms or proper names, use a keyword search engine such as AltaVista or HotBot. These search engines rate high for completeness and currency.
- For phrases, use quotes to enclose the phrase. This will reduce the number of hits considerably and improve their relevancy.

4. Moderately Complex Searches:

- For a quick and efficient search, begin with a multi-engine search tool, (***Dogpile, Mamma, Jeeves***, etc.) using the above common operators. These generally provide many more hits, and the hit list is more likely to be shorter and of higher relevance.
- *Hits will be ranked according to their relevance, so the first 20 to 30 hits are likely to contain the most useful references.*
- *Marilyn's favorite! Start here and eliminate the frustration.*

5. Directory Searches: (Yahoo, Magellan, OneKey, etc.)

- Use Directory Searches for subject searches, beginning with broad subject categories, and proceeding to increasingly more specific subject matter. Follow the search path and at each stop, examine the hits provided. (*ex. Travel → States → Vermont → Burlington → lodging*)
- Some directory search tools provide an option for switching to a keyword search at stops along the way. This allows you to narrow the search field and simplify your search.
- *Directories can take weeks to update their database contents, whereas Search Engines collect and update web sites automatically, usually within one or two days. This is of particular value when being current is important. But there is a trade-off. Search engines respond with a much larger number of hits of generally less relevance.*

Internet Searching Tips



Are your students quickly and efficiently finding the best information on the Internet? If they're spending too much time finding only mediocre, or even "way-off" hits, read on...

Good searching involves a combination of skills. Good searchers plan; they use good search strategies; they continually reflect upon and refine their searches; they choose their tools strategically; and they keep up to date on what's available.

Help on Basic Searching:

Choose the best search tool. Google's great! It offers incredible scope and relevant results. But options abound! Your search toolkit should include *subject directories*, *search engines*, and *subject-specific gateways*.

- ❖ If you don't have a serious command of the subject you are exploring or when you are conducting a general search, you should probably begin in a **subject directory**. Though their scope is more limited than a typical search engine, the expert guidance, annotations, and organizational structure may help users recognize subtopics that might otherwise be missed in a general search. Here are some of the best:

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

INFOMINE: <http://infomine.ucr.edu>

Academic Info: <http://www.academicinfo.net/>

About.com: <http://about.com>

KidsClick!: <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick!/>

Multnomah Library's HomeworkCenter: <http://www.multcolib.org/homework/>

BigChalk's Homework Central: <http://bigchalk.com>

- ❖ **Remember the Invisible Web.** This large part of the web is generally inaccessible through the search engines. It contains material contained and searchable through Web-based databases and files not in html text format. Examples include the historic documents contained in the Library of Congress' American Memory Collection and the wealth of images available at the National Gallery of Art. A number of search tools specialize in identifying databases and subject-specific resources. Among them are these:

- **Invisible-Web:** <http://www.invisible-web.net/>

- **Invisible Web.com:** <http://www.invisibleweb.com/>

More on the Invisible Web :

- **Complete Planet:** <http://www.completeplanet.com/>

- **Genius Find:** <http://www.geniusfind.com/>

- **Incy Wincy:** <http://www.incywincy.com/>

- **Pinakes:** <http://www.hw.ac.uk/libWWW/irn/pinakes/pinakes.html>

- **AlltheWeb:** <http://www.alltheweb.com/>

An important search refinement strategy called **horizontal searching** was introduced several years ago. This will present the millions of search results in an organized manner, sorting results into categories, and even subcategories. It identifies and groups cluster of links, helping you focus on a particular detail. Here are some search engines to try:

Visimo: <http://vivisimo.com/>

Guidebeam: <http://www.guidebeam.com/>

WiseNut: <http://wisnut.com>

Teoma: <http://teoma.com>

iBoogie: <http://iboogie.com>

Ixquick: <http://ixquick.com>

Turbo10: <http://turbo10.com>

Scirus (Science only): <http://www.scirus.com/>

Bottom Line:

Don't get stuck in a search tool rut. Use a variety of search engines and directories. They each work in different ways and will yield different results.

Search with peripheral vision...look through the results for other words, phrases, or vocabulary that might yield a more targeted search

Don't just settle for the first few results on your hit lists. Make sure to evaluate sites for credibility, authority, accuracy, and relevance. As they say, garbage in...garbage out.

Use CARRDSS to evaluate your sources:

CREDIBILITY : Who is the author? What are his or her credentials?

ACCURACY: Can facts, statistics, or other information be verified through other sources? Based on your knowledge, does the information seem accurate?

RELIABILITY: Does the source present a particular view or bias?

RELEVANCE: Does this information directly support my hypothesis/thesis or help to answer my question?

DATE: When was this information created? When was it revised? Are these dates meaningful in terms of the subject matter?

SOURCES BEHIND THE TEXT: Did the author use reliable, credible sources?

SCOPE: Does this source address my hypothesis/thesis/question in a comprehensive or peripheral way? Is it a scholarly or popular treatment?

For more information, plus rubrics, activities, lessons, and much, much more, check out Online Activities Promoting Information Literacy: <http://mciu.org/~spjvweb/libscav.html>