

## Research on the Internet

Got an essay, research paper or thesis to write? Want to research using the Internet? Good luck. Here's a brief guide to get you started.

There are two main methods of looking for information – Using Search Engines and Directories.

### Search Engines.

There are many search engines and they “search” slightly different areas of the web so to begin with choose one of the popular engines like Google <http://www.google.co.nz> or Yahoo <http://search.yahoo.com/>.



### Basic Search

Internet searches are conducted in the same manner you would use for an online catalogue at the library. In order to begin your search for relevant resources, it is important to identify the **keywords** in your topic. Keywords or phrases identify the **main ideas** or **concepts** in your topic: e.g.

**New Zealand national identity**  
(context, place) (search topic)

### Additional search terms

If your topic is too broad, it may be necessary to narrow your search by adding additional search terms. For this topic on New Zealand national identity, some of the following terms may be helpful: history, Maori, music, tradition, sport, culture, icons, flag, and ethnicity. These search terms are typed into the box along with “New Zealand” “National identity”.

You can also use Boolean Operators in a basic search. . Boolean operators are words such as "or", "and", and "not. Search engines may differ in their use of these. The Google search engine assumes the “and” between all words. Follow this link to find out more about tips for using Google. <http://www.google.com/help/basics.html>

Synonyms are also useful in expanding your search terms. Synonyms are words that have the same or similar meaning as another word or other words. For example, Aotearoa is a synonym for New Zealand, and culture could be used as a synonym for national identity.

Phrase Searches: Sometimes you'll only want results that include an exact phrase. In this case, simply put quotation marks around your search terms.

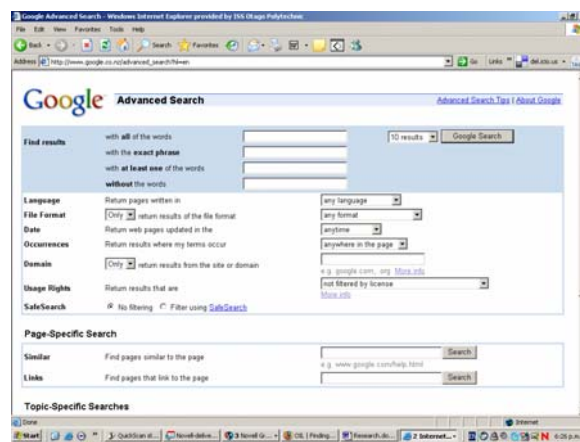
"the long and winding road"	Google Search
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Phrase searches are particularly effective if you're searching for proper names ("*George Washington*"), lyrics ("*the long and winding road*"), or other famous phrases ("*This was their finest hour*").

### Advanced Search

Advanced features of search engines such as date limitations, format restrictions and Boolean operators allow searches to be narrowed.

The following is a picture of the advanced search page in Google:



### **The Deep Web**

Search Engines such as google can be a place to start but you'll only be searching a fraction of all of the resources available to you. Google can only index the visible web, or searchable web. But the invisible web, or deep web, is estimated to be 500 times bigger than the searchable web. The invisible web comprises databases and results of specialty search engines that the popular search engines simply are not able to index.

The following website lists search engines that specialise in scouring the invisible web for results: <http://oedb.org/library/college-basics/research-beyond-google>. It also lists specialised databases. One of the sites it lists is The Librarians Internet Index which is a search engine (or directory) listing sites deemed trustworthy by actual human librarians, not just a Googlebot: <http://www.lii.org/>

### **Directories**

Web directories are part of the deep web and provide an alternative way of searching the WWW to that provided by Search Engines. Internet directories provide links organised by subjects that cover a wide range of topics and can be a useful place to start any search. Yahoo, and the Open Directory Project (ODP) are examples of general Web Directories. Some web directories such as the NZ Environmental Education Directory are specific to a selected subject or topic. Others are limited to specific countries such as the Te Puna Web Directory, and the SearchNZ Web Directory which are limited to New Zealand web sites only.

Directories differ from search engines because they are organised by people, rather than computer programmes (spiders). They collect, select and update specific information and then organise them into different categories. There are several Directories and below are some of the more popular and well organised

MSN Network: <http://specials.msn.com/alphabet.aspx>

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

Excite: <http://www.excite.com/>

### **Free tutorial on searching the internet:**

<http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/detective/index.html>

### **The Bill Robertson Library Website**

<http://www.library.otago.ac.nz/billrobertson/>

Click on databases and article searching databases.

### **Other good internet tutorials:**

1. This is a very good site for tips on searching the net and **understanding the internet**.  
<http://www.internettutorials.net/>
2. This is a very informative site about **information literacy**. This means it covers the process of writing an essay from knowing your topic through to referencing and plagiarism:  
<http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/infolit/index.html>
3. The Learn the Net site has a wealth of information about the Internet. You can find out about the history of the internet and how to surf the net, download files, build your own website, and join newsgroups, access internet archives and much more.  
Found at: <http://www.learnthenet.com/english/index.html>
4. This is a tutorial on the Annotated Bibliography and covers doing research in the library and on the Internet: <http://oil.otago.ac.nz/oil/module2/> :

### **Other places to find information on the internet**

Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

Learning Centre Resources: <http://www.otagopolytechnic.ac.nz/>