

## Research Tips for the Internet

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***Here are a few tips that will help you find what you need on the web more efficiently!***

***Take the time to try them out.***

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1. **Consider what you need to find then start with that type of resource.** If you need *web pages* you will start with a *search engine*. If you need *periodical articles* you need to use a periodical *database*. If you need books you will need to find the library catalogs online. Remember that NOT EVERYTHING is on the Internet, and sometimes, it is easier and faster to get your information from a book.
2. **Use a Meta Search Engine.** Meta engines will allow you to use several different search engines simultaneously. This is particularly helpful since no two engines search the same part of the Internet. A meta engine which returns excellent results is at : <http://www.clusty.com>. Another excellent meta search engine with a graphical interface is at: <http://www.kartoo.com>.
3. **THINK about the words you need to search with.** Don't just start with the most obvious terms. Take the time to consider alternative terms, synonyms, plural and singular versions of key words. Sometimes names or dates will be significant too. *For example:* when searching for information on this topic I used the following words in the same search – *immigrants, immigration, America, United States*.
4. **Use the search engine short cuts!** Every engine and meta engine uses short cuts to insure you get the right word combinations – AND, OR, and NOT. Find out what cuts YOUR engine uses. HINT: Toolkit suggests you put a + sign in front of each word you must have on the web sites which it finds for you, and each term is separated by commas. (*+immigrants, +immigration, +America, +United States*)
5. **Always consider the source of the site's information.** Is it valid? Is the author reliable? Where did the information come from originally – is it documented? If you have ANY doubts on any one of these questions, find another site. Also, read the hit summaries carefully for clues of site usefulness. Words like "book", "Visa", "Mastercard", etc. are good clues that it's NOT what you want unless you are in the market to BUY something.
6. **If you find a great site write down the following information:** its URL, the keywords and engine used to find it, and the date you found it. You can also print out the first page of the site which will have SOME of that information. (This printing option also proves that you actually found the site!)
7. **Watch out for sites that lead you to other good sites!** Once in a while you will discover a site that contains links to other sites that are on your topic. Make sure you keep a record of that web site page of links. (You can also bookmark your results page on your search engine so you won't lose your place on that list!)
8. **If your hit list doesn't produce good sites revise your search.** Switch the order of the words, change the words, consider your topic again. Are you using the most appropriate words?
9. **If you want to find a word on a page fast, use "Find In Page."** You will discover this very useful tool under the "Edit" command on the toolbar at the top of your browser. Just click to get the "find" box, enter one of the keywords you need to locate, and click "find". If your word is on the page it will be instantly highlighted or you will be told "Search string not found!"
10. **Before you print, ALWAYS look at PRINT PREVIEW.** Web sites are deceptively long. You may think you are only printing one or two pages which appear on the screen. However, the printer may print out thirty or forty pages! Highlighting what's on your monitor and then going to PRINT does NOT print what is highlighted! Print preview allows you to designate which pages of your site actually get printed.