

Briefing document: How to search on the Internet

The Internet is huge, with billions of pages. Searching it for research purposes can be very time-consuming unless you do it efficiently. The best way is to use a search engine.

Examples of search engines

- Google (www.google.com) is the largest search engine although it does not reveal how large it actually is. Research has shown it probably only searches half the web.
- Yahoo! is probably the next largest (search.yahoo.com). It claims to have access to over 20 billion web objects (including websites, images and other files).
- Ask.com (www.ask.com) has two billion fully indexed pages and can often find material that Google doesn't find. This is because each engine has its own database and there may only be 20% of shared content – that is, the chances of a search engine finding the same page is one in five.
- Because there is so little overlap in content, it is worth searching with Google first and then using either Yahoo! or Ask.com as well. However, you may find everything you need using just one search engine.

Using a search engine

- Search engines use something called Boolean logic. This simply means you can use operators like 'AND', 'OR' and 'AND NOT' to streamline or narrow your search (Note that Google doesn't like AND NOT – if you want to narrow your search you have to use a minus sign (-). This is explained later). So if you were looking for two main things in your search, you could put an AND in between the two. However, most search engines assume the AND is there even when you just put in two words. When using the AND operator, all the sites that come up in the search will have both search terms in their content.

Example

Web Images Maps News Shopping Mail more ▾

Google Search [Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)

Search: the web pages from the UK

Web

[Hank Garland's Jazz and Country Music](#)
Official site with biography, photographs, audio samples, CD ordering, and links.
[www.hankgarland.com/](#) - 25k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[Western Swing And Country Jazz CD United Kingdom](#)
Western Swing And **Country Jazz** music CD United Kingdom album \$25.65 in stock at CD Universe, enjoy top rated service and worldwide shipping.
[www.cduniverse.com/search/xx/music/pid/6830015/a/Western+Swing+And+Country+Jazz.htm](#) - 13k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[Blues, Jazz, Country, Gospel, and Hip Hop Music](#)
The Cybro Radio Station is an Independent, Internet Radio Station, Streaming, Podcasting, Blogging and Broadcasting Blues, **Jazz, Country** Gospel and Hiphop ...
[www.cybroradio.com/](#) - 5k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

When searching for 'jazz country' and 'jazz AND country' the result is the same

Google actually tells you that the AND operator isn't needed and that it assumes that all search terms are separate. However, all the sites listed have both jazz and country mentioned in them.

Web Images Maps News Shopping Mail more ▾

Google Search [Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)

Search: the web pages from the UK
The "AND" operator is unnecessary -- we include all search terms by default. [\[details\]](#)

Web

[Hank Garland's Jazz and Country Music](#)
Official site with biography, photographs, audio samples, CD ordering, and links.
[www.hankgarland.com/](#) - 25k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[JAZZ AND COUNTRY WESTERN](#)
Its melodic lyricism stands in contrast to the strong and heavy rhythms of jazz. The lyrics of all **country-western** songs speak of lost loves, lost homes, ...
[www.geocities.com/yamataro670jazzcountrywestern.htm](#) - 35k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[Jazz/Blues/Country, Four Dogs Music](#)
More from the amazingly talented **Jazz** legend John Coltrane who died in 1967. This collection features Blue Train, one of his best known tracks ...
[www.fourdogsmusic.co.uk/_S_182_jazzbluescountry/](#) - 50k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[Amazon.co.uk: R. Crumb's Heroes of Blues, Jazz, and Country, Books...](#)
Amazon.co.uk: R. Crumb's Heroes of Blues, **Jazz, and Country**. Books: R. Crumb, Terry Zwigoff by R. Crumb, Terry Zwigoff.

- If you wanted to find sites that had either jazz or country in them, then you would use the OR operator.

Example

Web Images Maps News Shopping Mail more ▾

Google Search [Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)

Search: the web pages from the UK

Web

64 results stored on your computer - [Hide](#) - [About](#)
[How to search on the Inte...](#) - **country** and **'jazz AND country'** the result is

[Jazz - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
Jazz is an original American musical art form which originated around the ... [1] During its early development, **jazz** also incorporated music from New ...
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz](#) - 150k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[List of countries - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
Such inclusion criteria means the list does not treat the word **'country'** as synonymous with Main articles: Lists of countries and Lists by **country** ...
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries](#) - 268k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)
[More results from en.wikipedia.org >](#)

[BBC NEWS | Country Profiles](#)
Select a **country**, territory or international organisation from the menus below. ... **Country** profiles are compiled by BBC Monitoring ...
[news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm](#) - 93k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[theJazz](#)
Friends and figures from the **jazz** world paid tribute to the late UK **jazz** pioneer Tommy McQuater at the trumpeter's funeral ... more> ...
[www.the-jazz.co.uk/](#) - 31k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

In this case the list of websites coming up includes sites that have just jazz or just country mentioned.

- You can reduce the number of hits you get by excluding those that are not relevant. So if you found a lot of pages coming up that weren't really relevant to your search, you could reduce them by asking the search engine not to list them. Supposing I wanted to find websites linked to nirvana – but I was interested in the Buddhist meaning of nirvana, not the Nirvana that featured Kurt Cobain. If I put 'nirvana' into Google, most of the sites I get are related to the band Nirvana:

Web Images Maps News Shopping Mail more ▾

Google nirvana Search Advanced Search Preferences

Search: the web pages from the UK

Web

6 results stored on your computer - Hide - About

[How to search on the Inte...](#) - websites linked to **nirvana** –but I was MySpace.com - Daniel - 21... - david bowie, **nirvana**, joni mitchell, fishbone

Nirvana (band) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
This article is about the American grunge band. For the UK-based rock band, see **Nirvana** (UK band). For other uses, see **Nirvana** (disambiguation). ...
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Nirvana**_(band) - 105k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

Nirvana - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
This article is about the philosophical concept. For the American grunge band, see **Nirvana** (band). For other uses, see **Nirvana** (disambiguation). ...
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Nirvana** - 77k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this
More results from en.wikipedia.org >

[NFC: The Internet Nirvana Fan Club]
One of the largest **Nirvana** websites on the net. Features hundreds of pictures, sound clips, exclusive interviews, rare articles, **Nirvana** Quiz, ...
www.nirvanaclub.com/ - 8k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

NIRVANA! - Rare, Exclusive **Nirvana** Band/Kurt Cobain Media ...
Complete **Nirvana** resource, including rare and exclusive pictures and sounds, full-length music videos, accurate **Nirvana** lyrics and tabs, high quality ...
www.nirvana-music.com/ - 26k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

- By using '-Cobain' in Google, it will remove all the pages that have a reference to Kurt Cobain. However, it still doesn't really show me all the pages about the Buddhist meaning of the word nirvana. So by adding 'buddhism' to the search, and keeping the '-Cobain' gives me lots of pages that are relevant to the search:

Web Images Maps News Shopping Mail more ▾

Google nirvana buddhism -Cobain Search Advanced Search Preferences

Search: the web pages from the UK

Web

Buddhism: Nirvana
Nirvana is the supreme state free from suffering and individual existence. It is a state Buddhists refer to as "Enlightenment". It is the ultimate goal of ...
library.thinkquest.org/28505/**buddhism/nirva**.htm - 5k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

Nirvana - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
1.1 Overview; 1.2 **Nirvana** and samsara; 1.3 **Nirvana** in **Buddhist** commentaries ... In Mahāyāna **Buddhism**, calling **nirvana** the "opposite" of samsara or implying ...
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Nirvana** - 77k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

Howstuffworks "How Nirvana Works"
Introduction to How **Nirvana** Works. 2. **Buddhist Nirvana** ... **Nirvana** is mainly associated with **Buddhism**, which was born out of Hinduism back in the 5th ...
science.howstuffworks.com/**nirvana1**.htm - 42k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this

- The key to a successful search is to use the key words for the sites you are looking for. If a lot of pages come up that aren't relevant, and you can use a word that describes these, narrow the search by using the '-' function on Google.
- Google also has an 'Advanced Search' option at the top of the page next to the Search box. This lets you put in lots of different words, and excludes ones you don't want. It also allows you to specify exact phrases, which can narrow the search even more.
- Another feature that Google (and other engines) offer is a search for particular media. So you can search Google for images, books and journal articles.