**Tips for Smart Searching Online**

1. **Search using unique, specific words whenever possible.**

   *Accordion binding* will give you far more specific results than a more general term such as *bookmaking*.

2. **Can’t find what you want? Try a different word, or a broader search.**

   Try using a synonym. Can’t find it with a search for *glue*? Try *adhesive*.

   You can get more results, by using a broader term. For example, if you searched for *Ms. Matty Cocke* and didn’t find what you needed, try broader: *Hollins history*.

3. **Don’t always accept the first result: be flexible and curious.**

   Don’t just click - look through the page of results, notice the links and descriptions. The first result isn’t always the best: did you know Google’s search formula (its algorithm) rewards size, the number of links on a webpage, advertising revenue and several other things that have nothing to do with relevance? The proof is Wikipedia: often the first result, it isn’t always the best or more relevant - just the biggest.

4. **Look at who & where your results are coming from.**

   Does the URL or web address end in .com (business), .edu (educational institution), .org (organization), or something else? Who is responsible for the website – can you find “About,” “Contact” or other information for the site’s creator?

5. **Beware of entering too many words at once.**

   Did you know that the more words you add to your search, the fewer results you’ll get – unless you put *or* between them? Think about it: if you look for a date who has brown hair, dark eyes, a great smile, a good sense of humor and a master’s degree in psychology, your choices are far fewer than if you looked for someone who has brown hair, *or* dark eyes, *or* a great smile, *or* a good sense of humor ....you get the point.

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Google works the same way: the more words you add, the fewer results you will get because Google looks only for pages that have all of those words - not just some of them.
You can test this: a Google search for china india russia france brazil congo gets about 11 million results, while searching for china or india or russia or france or brazil or congo gets you more than 75 million!

6. Results you don't want? You can delete results from your search.

You can eliminate web pages with a certain word from your results, by putting – (the minus symbol) in front of a word. Try it:

- Search for Hillary
- Now search for Hillary -Clinton

7. Put phrases in quotation marks, and they will be searched only as a phrase.

If you’re searching for the lyrics of “This is how we do” and put that title in quotation marks, you reduce the number of irrelevant results.

8. Search within a site, or a domain such as .edu, .gov, etc

Search within a site by using the site: tool. By putting site: (site with a colon, no spaces between) directly before all of part of a web address in a Google search, you can search within that site or web domain.

For example:

- Miss Matty site:hollins.edu searches only within the Hollins website.
- Bookbinding site:org finds organizational pages dedicated to bookbinding.

Maryke Barber, Arts Librarian, Wyndham Robertson Library. www.hollins.edu/library