

## Online Searching - Key Concepts

- **Web Browser:** Application that allows you to view and interact with information on the World Wide Web.
- **URL (Uniform Resource Locator):** Web addresses entered into the web browser. Typically the addresses start with `http://` and end with one of the following: `.com`, `.net`, `.edu`, `.gov`, `.org`.
- **Search engines:** Tools that help you find information in a variety of online resources. Search engines such as Yahoo, Google, and Hotbot are used to find information on the World Wide Web. Search engines are also used in Informational databases such as EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Faulkner FACCTs.
- **Keywords:** Word(s) used to describe the information you are looking for when using an online search tool, including search engines and databases.
- **Phrase Searching:** A search for web sites that contain the exact sentence or group of words entered into the search engine. You can perform a phrase search in most search engines by surrounding your phrase with quotation marks (" ").  
Example: "telecommunications act of 1996"
- **Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT) and Shortcuts ( + , - ):** Methods for adding or removing results from your search. See opposite side of this handout for more information.
- **Domain Searching:** The top-level domain identifies the type of organization responsible for a web site. For example,

- .com -- commercial organization
  - .edu -- educational institution
  - .gov -- government
  - .org -- typically used for non-profit organizations

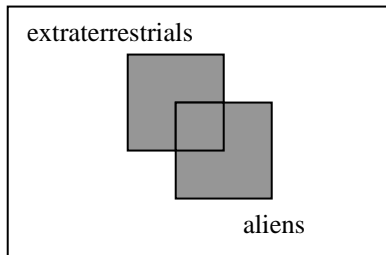
Some search engines allow you to limit your search to specific domains.

- **Wildcards:** placeholders in words that allow you to search for word variants. Some wildcards take the place of one letter others can take the place of multiple letters. Example:
  - finan\* (to search for *finances*, *financial*, etc.)
  - advertis\* (to search for *advertising*, *advertisement*, etc.)

Different search engines use different symbols as wildcards, and some do not use them at all.

## Online Searching – Boolean Searches

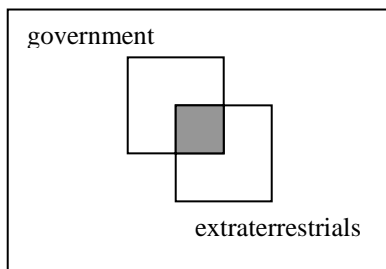
- **Boolean Operators: AND, OR, NOT** (in some cases **NOT** may be replaced with **ANDNOT** or **AND NOT**); Use these operators to tell the search engine which terms you want to include or exclude from your search results. By default most search engines will perform an **AND** search regardless of whether or not you use the **AND** operator.



### OR search

Use **OR** if you want to get more results – for example, if there are multiple words or terms to describe what you’re looking for. If you wanted to find information about extraterrestrials, which are often referred to as “aliens,” you might use this search:

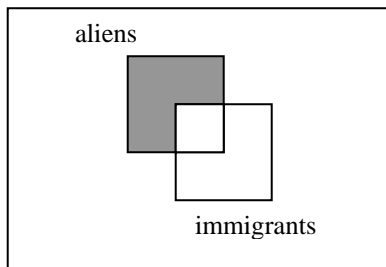
extraterrestrials **OR** aliens



### AND search

Use **AND** if you want to get fewer, more specific search results. For example, if you wanted to find information or articles about both the government and extraterrestrials, use this search:

government **AND** extraterrestrials



### NOT search

Use **NOT** if you want to exclude websites or articles that include terms associated with one of your keywords. If you were looking for information about *extraterrestrial* aliens, but not about *immigrant* aliens, you might use this search:

aliens **NOT** immigrants

- **Boolean Shortcuts:** Some search engines recognize a short hand method of expressing Boolean operators. Instead of using the **AND** operator you can include + in front of the words that you want the search engine to include in your results. For example, government **AND** extraterrestrials is the same as +government +extraterrestrials. Instead of using the **OR** operator you can place **parenthesis** around the words. For example, extraterrestrials **OR** aliens is the same as (extraterrestrials aliens). Instead of using the **NOT** operator you can place a - in front of the word you want to exclude. For example, aliens **NOT** immigrants is the same as aliens -immigrants.