**Search Engines, Search Directories and Meta Search Engines**

Internet stands for interconnection of different computer networks spread across the world. The Web is one of the services available via the Internet which interconnects documents and other resources by hyperlinks. Because of ease of use and varied features, the web became the most popular service on the Internet. The web contains billions of pages and it doubles the size every 2 years. There are three basic tools to locate information on the web:

1. Search Engines
2. Search Directories
3. Meta Search Engines

**Search engines** use small programs called spiders/ robots that search the Internet, follow links, and bring back this information to the search engine’s index. When you use Google you’re not actually searching the Web, you’re searching Google’s index of the Web. Search engines use complex algorithms to determine which Web pages are most likely to answer the questions you pose and return these pages on the search engine results pages. Examples of search engines include Google, Bing etc.

**Directories** are a collection of web sites that are organized by broad subject categories. When you search a directory, you are only searching the web sites identified and included in that directory. Directories may be broad (covering all subject areas), or subject specific (focusing on a particular subject). Directories are created by people. People have identified web sites and then organized them for you. A good directory will also evaluate web sites for quality and reliability before including them in the directory. The Examples include: GoGuides, Incrawler, Family-Friendly etc.

A **MetaSearch Engine** is a type of search tool that will allow a user to conduct a search across 2 or more search engines and directories in one step. These tools do not index sites and compile their own databases; instead they search the databases of other search engines simultaneously and retrieve information. The major advantage of using a meta-search engine is that it allows the user to search several search engines simultaneously. MetaSearches provide a quick way of finding out which engines are retrieving the best results for you in your search. Examples of meta-search engines include meta crawler, dogpile etc.