**Search Engines**

**What is a search engine?**

* A search engine, such as Google or Yahoo!, uses computer algorithms to search the Internet and identify items that match the characters and keywords entered by a user.

**Why use a search engine?**

* Search engines are useful for finding information produced by governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. Examples of reliable information you can find through a search engine include freely available statistics published by a government agency or a freely available article published by a reputable news outlet.
* Note: It is more challenging to narrow results effectively, find relevant material, and assess the legitimacy of information in your search results when using a search engine.

**How do I know when I should use a search engine and when I should use a database?**

* It depends on what type of information you are hoping to find and how you plan to use it. If you want credible, scholarly articles, you will have more success finding relevant sources in a library database free of charge. If you want Census data, it is more efficient to find that through a search engine that guides you to the appropriate government website