

# TOP 10 INTERNET SEARCH TIPS

<http://www.melissabarker.com/SearchTips.pdf>

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## Introduction

Over [60 million](#) American adults use search engines on a typical day. With over a [trillion Web pages](#) to search, just how effective are those millions of Internet users in finding information? According to IDC, a top provider of Internet research, [at least 50% of the time](#), searchers are unable to find what they seek. Fortunately, by using the following top 10 search tips, you can greatly increase your chances of quickly and easily locating what you want on the Internet.

## TIP 1: Choose the Right Search Tool or Technique

If you looking for Web pages containing specific words or phrases, search engines, such as [Google](#), provide a fast and efficient means of locating those pages. For a broader view of the information on the Internet, or when you are unfamiliar with a topic, you can use subject directories, such as the [World Wide Web Virtual Library](#), to acquaint yourself with the field and select the most appropriate information resources. Sometimes your best approach is to intuitively guess at the name of the site that might hold the information you seek.

Unfortunately, search engines, subject directories, and informed guesses cannot find the vast majority of Web pages on the Internet because they are stored in databases, inaccessible by conventional search tools and techniques. Instead, you must use specialty search resources to locate this hidden content.

For an informative overview of search engines, subject directories, intuitive search, and specialty search resources, take a moment to view the entertaining video [Searching the Internet – A Primer](#) by Internet pioneer Marcus Zillman or his more in depth whitepaper on the subject at <http://www.SearchingTheInternet.info/>.

## TIP 2: Use Boolean Operators

The biggest mistake a search engine user makes is to enter a single nondescript keyword. If you type “car” into Google and click the Google Search button, you will receive over 900 million search results! To narrow your search, start by adding more keywords. Adding the keywords *battery dead* after *car* will return less than a million search hits. To hone your search further, you will need to construct a complex query. A complex query uses Boolean operators to define the relationships among your keywords.

Common Boolean operators include AND, OR, and NOT. The AND operator restricts your search results by telling the search engine to return only Web pages that contain all the specified keywords (e.g., car AND battery AND dead). It is unnecessary to use this Boolean operator in Google because, by default, it assumes any keywords or phrases you enter are connected by the AND operator. The OR operator let’s you expand your search by locating all the pages that contain a least one of the specified keywords (e.g., car OR automobile OR vehicle). The NOT operator, symbolized by the (-) minus sign in Google, causes the search engine to

exclude pages that contain certain keywords (e.g., -buy). You can combine these operators to create a complex query that will locate the exact information you desire.

For example, if you are looking for details about a dead car battery and you don't want to be bothered with sales pitches, you could enter this complex query: *car battery dead (-buy OR -purchase OR -sale)*. Google will return pages about dead car batteries, but exclude those with the words "buy, purchase, or sale," thus, reducing the chances you will be pestered by sites attempting to sell you a new battery. To learn more about how to improve your searches with Boolean operators, check out [Boolean Searching on the Internet](#) and [Google search basics](#).

### **TIP 3: Use Advanced Search Operators**

The major search engines, such as Google, offer *advanced search operators* that let you really zero in what you are looking for on the Internet. For example, in Google you can use the *site:* operator to search a particular Web site for information. Type *health care crisis site:www.newsweek.com* into Google and it will return a list of articles in Newsweek.com that mention the health care crisis. Let's assume that you have found an expert on the health care crisis in one of the articles you read at Newsweek.com and now want to read more about subject by the same author. Simply type *health care crisis author:Dr. Marc Nuwer* into Google and you will receive more than 1,300 search results to choose from. Google offers many other powerful advanced search operators, such as *location:* to restrict a search to a particular country (e.g., health care crisis location:UK), *info:* to discover details about a site (e.g., info:www.newsweek.com), or *link:* to see who is linking to a site (e.g., link:www.newsweek.com). To learn more about these advanced search operators, visit

[Google Guide Quick Reference: Google Advanced Operators](#), [Yahoo! Meta Search Words](#), and [Bing: Advanced Search Keywords](#).

### **TIP 4: Google is Not the Only Game in Town**

Although Google is by far and away the [most popular search engine](#), no single search engine, not even Google, can cover even a fraction of the entire Internet. To perform a more comprehensive search of the Internet and, hence, increase your odds of finding additional useful information about a topic, be sure to use these other general purpose search engines: [AllTheWeb](#), [AltaVista](#), [AOL Search](#), [Ask](#), [Bing](#), [Hotbot](#), [SurfWax](#), and [Yahoo!](#)

### **TIP 5: Use Metasearch Engines**

Since each search engine covers different portions of the Internet at different times, to perform a thorough search of the Internet, you should query as many search engines as possible. However, going to each search engine and repeatedly entering the same search query is both time consuming and tedious. *Metasearch engines* let you enter your query just once and then query multiple search engines simultaneously, returning a compilation of search results from all the search engines queried.

The best metasearch engines eliminate duplicate results and even rank the results based on relevancy to your query. The potential time saved by using a metasearch engine is offset by the limitation that often the most popular search engines are not queried by a metasearch engine because of legal and fee issues. Thus, the most thorough search strategy is to employ metasearch engines in combination with the individual search engines (i.e., Google and Bing).

Some of the more powerful metasearch engines include: [dogpile](#), [Mamma](#), [ixquick](#), [metacrawler](#), [Search.com](#), and [Vivisimo](#).

## TIP 6: Use Specialty Search Engines

Although general purpose search engines like Google, Yahoo!, and Bing provide broad-coverage of the Web, you will likely achieve superior results using a *specialty search engine*, when you are looking for information about a specific topic or region. The following is a brief sample of powerful specialty search engines:

- [Academic and Scholar Search Engines and Resources](#)
- [eCouponBot](#) – Find Online coupons and Discount Codes
- [eFinancialBot](#) – Your Global Financial Search Engine
- [eGreenBot](#) - Green Resources and Search Engine
- [eHealthcareBot](#) - Search Engine for Healthcare Resources
- [eMarketingBot](#) - Search Engine for Health Care Resources
- [7in1 Web](#) – More specialty search engines

## TIP 7: Use Subject Directories

*Subject directories* provide the ability to quickly get a birds-eye-view of a topic, and then drill down to find detailed or “finer-grained” information about the topic. Unlike search engines, which index millions of Web pages and typically present you with an overwhelming number of search results, subject directories offer a limited and neatly categorized set of topics, typically sorted alphabetically for easy reference and browsing. A few of the most popular broad-coverage subject directories include:

- [BUBL LINK](#) - A catalogue of all academic subject areas
- [Digital Librarian](#) - A librarian's subject guide to the best of the Web

- [Directory Resources](#) - A directory of directories
- [Google Directory](#) - The Web organized by topics into categories
- [INFOMINE](#) - Scholarly Internet resource collections
- [ipl](#) - The Internet Public Library
- [Librarians' Internet Index](#) - Subject catalogue handcrafted by professional librarians
- [Open Directory Project](#) - The most comprehensive human edited directory of the Web
- [Scout Archives](#) - Search or browse subject-specific directory
- [WWW Virtual Library](#) - The original and oldest subject catalogue on the Web

In addition to these general purpose directories, *specialty subject directories* focus on particular topics and, hence, offer more in depth and meticulous coverage. The following is a small but highly useful selection of specialty subject directories:

- [Business Intelligence Online Resources](#) - Online business intelligence resources
- [eReference Library](#) - Guide to selected academic and government resources
- [Finding Experts By Using the Internet](#) - Directory of experts
- [Finding People Resources and Sites](#) - Guide to people location services
- [Healthcare Bots and Subject Directories](#) - Index of selected health care resources
- [Intute](#) - Directory of study and research resources
- [Online Research Tools](#) – Guide to online research tools
- [Web Based Resources](#) - Directory of electronic academic journals

## TIP 8: Search Intuitively

When you are searching for the Web site of a particular organization, person, place, or thing, often the quickest and most enjoyable way to locate the site is to make an educated or intuitive guess about its name. To conduct an *intuitive search*, begin by locating the narrow Address Bar across the top of your Web browser. It is the text box that contains the Web address or Universal Resource Locator (URL) of the Web site currently displayed in your browser.

Delete the current URL (Web address) in the Address Bar and type *www.* followed by your intuitive guess of the name of a Web site. You can use any combination of proper names, abbreviated names, or an acronym. Keep in mind that if you think the Web site name includes multiple words, then you must put them together. For example, if you were looking for auto prices, you might enter *www.AutoPrices* in the Address Bar. Next, add one of these top level domains or suffixes:

- .com for commercial
- .edu for educational
- .org for other organizations
- .gov for U.S. Federal Government
- .mil for U.S. military
- .net for Internet service providers
- .biz for business
- .info for information

Since the most common top level domain is .com (commercial), your intuitive guess might look something like this [www.AutoPrices.com](http://www.AutoPrices.com). Another approach would be to use the acronym *nada* (National Automobile Dealers Association), with *www.* in front and *.com* at the end, resulting in the intuitive guess of [www.nada.com](http://www.nada.com). It is worth noting that intuitive searches don't always work the way you expect, sometimes you will find a URL that no longer functions or one has taken not yet been registered.

## TIP 9: Deep Web

The *invisible* or *deep Web* is the vast reservoir of information stored in databases and sometimes dynamically generated only upon request, making it inaccessible to search engines, subject directories, and even intuitive searches. It is difficult to measure the precise size of the deep Web. However, BrightPlanet, a leader in the industry, estimates it is [approximately 500 times larger](#) than the *visible* or *surface Web* (the portion accessible to conventional search tools and techniques). Since the surface Web has more than a trillion pages--that means the deep Web likely contains more than 500 trillion pages! In other words, 99.8 percent of Web content is unavailable to traditional search engines and subject directories.

How can a person chart a course through the enormous and unknown expanse of the deep Web to discover the information they want? Marcus Zillman, a renowned international Internet expert, has created the [Virtual Private Library](#), a cutting-edge Web site that guides you through the uncharted territories of the deep Web.

The Virtual Private Library is an extensive subject catalogue of valuable information resources on the Internet. This groundbreaking site is made possible by the power of Subject Tracer Information Bots™. A Subject Tracer Information Bot is a highly sophisticated computer program, which uses artificial intelligence to track down and retrieve the most relevant information resources on various topics from the surface and deep Web.

Subject Tracer Information Bots draw on the resources in the [Deep Web Research](#) site, an information blog also developed by Marcus Zillman, which contains a wealth of the latest deep Web information, including sections on articles, papers, forums, audios, and videos. Subject Tracer Information Bots also scour the wilds of the immense deep

Web to bring back relevant links and raw data, then automatically identify, classify, and organize the information into easily read templates. When required, new discovery analysis is done by hand to ensure meticulous coverage of the information tucked away in Internet databases.

This exclusive and powerful combination of robotically and human generated deep and surface Web information results in the Virtual Private Library's impressive collection of Subject Tracer Information Blogs™. These subject libraries are arranged alphabetically and include resources on biotechnology, business intelligence, data mining, Internet demographics, Internet hoaxes, journalism, military, outsourcing, and privacy to name just a few.

To view one of these subject libraries, simply click on the link. For example, if you click [Business Intelligence Resources](#), a page appears with an extensive list of resources for gathering intelligence about your business competitors. You can quickly browse these resources and choose the most interesting to examine.

For instance, selecting the [50 Web Tools to Keep Tabs on Your Competitors](#) produces a page with a set of useful utilities for tracking your competitors' activities online. These include tools and services to identify your competition, their Web hosting services, company information, popularity of their Web sites, the keywords your competitors are using to attract customers through search engine traffic, and changes to their Web sites over time. (You can learn more about the Virtual Private Library by viewing: [The Virtual Private Library and Deep Web](#).)

## TIP 10: Use Social Search

*Social search* uses the power of the community participation and judgment to locate information of general interest and answer specific questions. Social search works well for finding subjective content through informed opinions. Common social search platforms include blogs ([Blogdigger](#), [BlogPulse](#), [Technorati](#)), microblogs ([Jaik](#), [Seismic](#), [Twitter](#)), social networks ([Facebook](#), [MySpace](#), [LinkedIn](#)), social bookmarking ([Del.icio.us](#), [Stumble Upon](#), [Furl](#)), collaborative harvesters ([Digg](#), [Popurls](#), [Reddit](#)), and question-and-answer (Q&A) sites ([Answerbag.com](#), [allexperts.com](#), [WikiAnswers](#)).

*Blogs* are places where people post commentaries and invite responses about almost any topic. *Microblogs* are typically used on mobile devices for the same albeit briefer exchanges. Blog and microblogs are great platforms for learning about current events and tapping into consensus opinions. *Social networks* allow people to connect with like and unlike minded people to create discussion forums and groups about a variety of topics. *Social bookmarking* allow people to store and vote on their favorite Web pages, thus, harnessing the power of the masses to identify the most useful sites on the Web. *Collaborative harvesters* aggregate and rank social media based on popularity as measured by user votes. Finally, *Q&A sites* let you pose questions and receive answers back from anyone, hopefully, knowledgeable enough to reply.

For a wide-ranging list of social search engines, be sure to check out the resources at <http://SocialInformatics.net/>.