

Using Google and Wikipedia more effectively and appropriately



Google is great for some things, but not so much for others.

Consider these tips for using Google the right way. **Google is great at..**

- ✓ Getting info on new or cutting-edge topics.
- ✓ Obtaining documents & reports from government agencies, companies, & educational institutions.
- ✓ Accessing open access online journals.

Google is *not* so great at...

- Finding peer reviewed sources
- Finding sources that use quality evidence

Understand Rankings. Google rankings are determined by:

Number of links to site.

User time spent on site.

Social media prominence.

Therefore, Google values reputation over truth

Try Advanced Google/ Google Scholar

Google Scholar is great at..

- ✓ Identifying top publications in your field.
- ✓ Expanding your search outside of subject specific databases.
- ✓ Accessing scholarly information if you are not affiliated with an academic institution.

Google Scholar is not so great at... Finding specialized sources particular to a certain field.



DO

Find background information

Entries embedded links can be used to generate ideas and learn the terminology associated with your topic

Generate Search Terms

Take a look at the embedded links, bolded words or table of contents. They can help generate search terms to use for searching in library databases.

Look at the Bibliography

The bottom of the page should list the sources used to compile the entry. They can point you to other resources (sometimes scholarly) on the topic

Do Not

Cite to Wikipedia

In academic research, you usually never cite to an encyclopedia or other sources of background information.

Believe Everything

Because the content is user-created, anonymous, and does not have a mandatory review process, there is no guarantee that the information is accurate and credible.

Better Ways to Search

“ ”

Exact phrase

What it does: Searches for an exact phrase

What to type: “one small step for man”

What you’ll get: webpages that include the exact phrase “one small step for man”

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Excluded words

What it does: Excludes webpages with a particular word or phrase

What to type: bass -fishing

What you’ll get: Results about bass that are not related to fishing

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Similar words

What it does: Searches for a word and all of its synonyms

What to type: ~mobile phone

What you’ll get: results with the word “phone” as well as “cell,” “cellular,” “wireless,” etc.

OR

Multiple words

What it does: Searches for webpages that include either word

What to type: books urban fiction OR street fiction

What you’ll get: Webpages that contain the word “books” and either “urban fiction” or “street fiction”

...

Numerical ranges

What it does: Searches for a range of numbers, such as years or prices

What to type: Barack Obama 2000...2006

What you’ll get: Webpages that discuss Barack Obama during this time period.

define:

Find meanings

What it does: Defines a word or phrase

What to type: define:bankruptcy

What you’ll get: links to definitions of the word “bankruptcy”

site:

Site specific

What it does: Searches only particular websites

What to type: financial literacy site:.edu

What you’ll get: References to financial literacy on .edu (college maintained) websites.

2 more shortcuts*

Once your search has produced a website to review, here are two useful commands to make it easier to find what you want on the site. *These are not Google commands, but keyboard shortcuts.

CTRL+F

Find

What it does: Finds your exact search term within the text of a webpage.

What to type: Hold down the CTRL key and the letter F (CTRL+F). This will bring up a search box, in which you type what you need to find “money”.

What you’ll get: Every instance of the word “money” on that particular site.

CTRL+

CTRL-

Zoom page

What it does: Changes the size that the webpage displays on your screen.

What to type: CTRL+ makes the webpage bigger. CTRL- makes webpage smaller.

What you’ll get: Bigger or smaller webpages to make them easier to view.