

Find Good Websites Fast

There are two main resources on the Internet to help you find websites: subject directories and search engines. There are also some tricks you can learn to search more quickly and accurately.

SUBJECT DIRECTORIES: Like the yellow pages of a phone book, subject directories list broad categories and provide links to websites about these subjects. They are good for general searches like basketball, World War II, the solar system, etc. Subject directories point you to websites that have been previewed and contain useful information on your topic. Some recommended directories include:

- Infomine: <http://infomine.ucr.edu/>
- Internet Public Library: www.ipl.org
- KidsClick: <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick/>
- Librarians' Index to the Internet: www.lii.org

SEARCH ENGINES: Another way of finding information on the Internet is to use a search engine. These websites use special software to scan millions of web pages for the words you type in as your search terms and then they give you a list of results for what is found. Search engines are good for specific topics like the Grand Canyon, Eiffel Tower, or Venus Williams. While there many search engines on the Internet, the following are especially good for research and school projects:

- Google Scholar: <http://scholar.google.com/>
- Ithaki for Kids: www.ithaki.net/kids/
- Scirus: www.scirus.com (just for science-related information)
- Ask: www.ask.com/
- Vivisimo: <http://vivisimo.com/>

Check out www.searchenginewatch.com to learn more about the different types of search engines.

SEARCH TRICKS

Keep the following rules in mind when searching the web:

1. Always search more than one search engine
2. Refine your search (change and/or modify the words you search with—try synonyms)
3. Consult reliable web domains including .gov, .mil and .edu
4. Follow the 30 minute rule – if you can't find what you want in 30 minutes, ask a librarian for help

Boolean Operators: You can use “boolean operators” (AND, OR, and NOT) to help you search. For example, if you want information about high school or college football, type “football NOT NFL” to avoid professional football sites.

Helpful Symbols: If you type a phrase, put it in quotations (“”) so the search engine knows exactly what to find. For example, type “crime prevention” in quotes, or the search engine will find all the sites with the word crime in them and all the sites with the word prevention in them, but not necessarily sites about stopping crime. Another important symbol is the asterisk. If you put one after the root of a word, it will search for all forms of the word. For example, if you type “music*” you will get information about music, musicians, musicals, etc.

Remember: Only about 15% of the world's knowledge is available on the Internet. Ask a librarian to recommend other resources that may have good information about your topic.

