

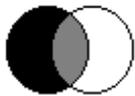
Advanced Keyword Searching

What is Keyword Searching?

Keyword searching is the most flexible type of search that can be done on an online catalog or index. Unlike a Subject Search, the term can appear anywhere the record, including the title, the author's name, subject heading or the name of the periodical or publisher. Keyword Searches can be as simple as a single word or very complex using Boolean operators, searchable fields and nested searches.

Boolean Operators

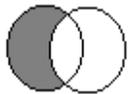
A method of combining concepts in a keyword search, which allows the searcher to make use of three logical commands (operators).



AND Used to narrow the search result. Each time another concept is added using "and" the search becomes more specific
Frankenstein and criticism



OR Used to expand or broaden the search results by including synonyms and related terms.
Criticism or Critical



NOT Used to exclude unwanted records for the search results.
Shelley not Frankenstein

Nested Search

When two different Boolean operators are used in the same search statement, parentheses must be included to indicate which command is to be performed first.

Frankenstein and (Criticism or Critical)

Truncation

In database searching, the addition of a symbol (usually ? or *) to a root word to retrieve variant endings. Truncation can be used to retrieve both the singular and the plural forms of a word at the same time.

Narrative*

Will locate narrative or narratives

Descriptors/Subject Headings

A word or phrase assigned to a work to indicate its subject, and to serve as an access point in an index catalog or database. Many databases such as ERIC have their own list of subject headings called descriptors. These descriptors appear in the DE field of the record and can be used to find additional search terms

Searchable Fields

Search Terms can be limited to a particular field of the record. Most databases will allow terms to limited to the Title, Author or Subject field. Other terms may also limit to Publication Year, Language or Publication Type field. For example in MLA

Frankenstein and la=English

Will limit citations to those written in English

Stopwords

Short words are terms that occur too frequently for the database to search them. Using one of these words usually results in no records being found. Each database uses its own stopword list.

Examples a, an on, of, with, because