

# Using Web Search Tools

The World Wide Web is growing at an exponential rate. How can you find sites of interest? Fortunately, there are a number of tools that can be used to navigate the 'Net. This guide is an introduction to searching directories and search engines. This guide addresses only a couple of the many directories and search engines available on the Web.

## General Information

- Use the advanced search options to refine a search.
- Take advantage of the online documentation and help files that are available for each tool. Documentation provides information on how to enter a more refined search, how sites are searched, how results are displayed, and so on. Review the documentation regularly. As these tools are developed, search techniques may change.

## Web Directories

Web directories hierarchically list web sites by subject. Humans looked at the sites and decided into which category it should be placed. Directories can be browsed or searched. Note: Directories that offer a search option are not searching the Web as a whole; these types of search engines cover just those sites indexed in the directory.

### Yahoo! [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

Yahoo! searches for the keyword(s) in Yahoo categories, in Yahoo web sites, in Yahoo's Net Events and Chat, and in the most recent news articles.

<b>Required Terms</b>	Add a plus sign to the beginning of each word that must be found in each retrieved document. For example: <i>police +sting</i>
<b>Prohibited Terms</b>	Add a minus sign to the beginning of the word that must not be found the retrieved documents. For example: <i>python -monty</i>
<b>Phrase Matching</b>	Put quotes around a set of words with find the terms in the exact order. For example: <i>"great barrier reef"</i>
<b>Wildcard/ Truncation</b>	Add an asterisk to the end of a word or word root to truncate. This is typically used to expand a search. For example: <i>horse*</i> finds horse, horses, horsing, etc.
<b>Combining Syntax</b>	Multiple syntax may be used if they are in the order listed above. For example: <i>+t:football -American</i> (correct) vs. <i>t:+football -American</i> (incorrect)



Other Web directories to explore:

**About.com** [www.about.com](http://www.about.com)

**HealthWeb** specialized: health & medicine  
[healthweb.org](http://healthweb.org)

**LookSmart** [www.looksmart.com](http://www.looksmart.com)

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## Search Engines

Whereas directories organize sites into categories, search engines have a database of site information with no subject organization at all. There is no browsing without running a search first. Search engines use computer programs called spiders to search the Web for new sites to include in their databases. Because this, search engines, compared to directories, contain many more sites to search, but often have more “noise” (non-relevant retrieval results). [Note: Many search engines now offer directories as a value-added service; still, they are primarily search engines because of their reliance on software for identifying and gathering new sites.]

Search engines to try:

**Alta Vista** [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com)

**Google** [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

**Lycos** [www.lycos.com](http://www.lycos.com)

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## Metasearch Tools

Metasearch tools allow a single search to be run in many search tools automatically. A good metasearch tool will appropriately translate the entered search into appropriate search syntax for each search tool automatically.

**Dogpile** [www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)

**Metacrawler** [www.metacrawler.com](http://www.metacrawler.com)

**OneSeek** [www.oneseek.com](http://www.oneseek.com)

**Ixquick** [www.ixquick.com](http://www.ixquick.com)

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## Where to Learn More about Searching the Web

**Search Engine Show Down** [searchengineshowdown.com](http://searchengineshowdown.com)

**Search Engine Watch** [www.searchenginewatch.com](http://www.searchenginewatch.com)