

Boolean Searches

What is a Boolean search?

When researching information on computers -databases and websites- use Boolean logic to make you searches more efficient and effective.

How to conduct a Boolean search

Use the following Boolean operators: AND, OR, NOT. These have to be in capitals.

AND

The words 'pink' and 'dolphin' will return results that contain the words 'pink' and/or 'dolphin'. You may get results that contain only one of the two words, eg 'grey dolphins spotted' or 'pink flamingoes spotted'. To get results about 'pink dolphins' (i.e. to get results containing both words) you have to add AND between the words. However, this doesn't ensure that the words will be next to each other, it just means that both words will be contained in the search.

OR

Use OR to request an alternative, for example 'pink OR grey dolphins'. This will give results with either pink or grey in the result and dolphin.

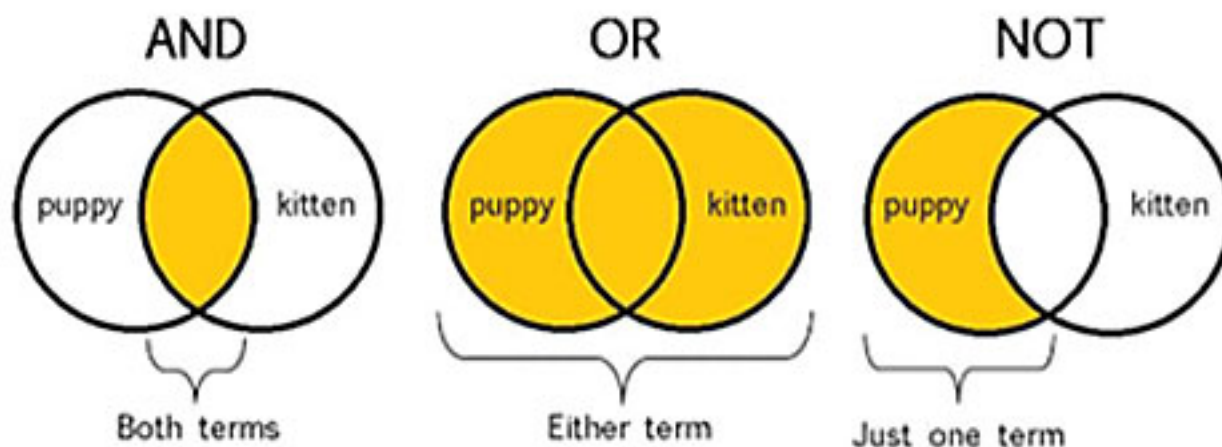
NOT

Using NOT enables the search engine to ignore some results. For example, 'pink NOT grey dolphins' this will results for pink dolphins only. Another option is to use a minus sign in front of the word you want the search engine to ignore, rather than NOT.

Quotation marks

These can be used to get more accurate results; however, they are not originally a Boolean operator. For example, "pink dolphins" will return results with 'pink' and 'dolphins' are next to each other in the results.

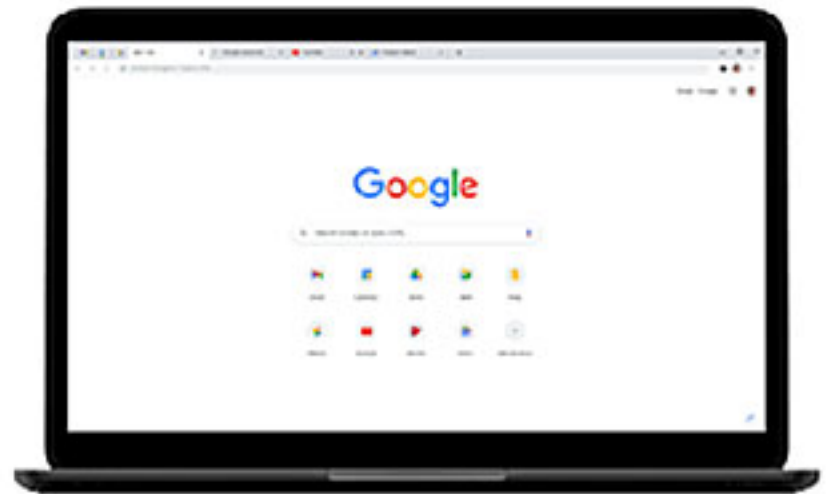
Boolean searches are named after George Boole.



How to check that the source you're using is reliable.

The internet is full of information that can be incredibly useful, but, as with everything, there can be some faults in it. Dodgy websites that mislead information can be found almost at every turn you go through on the internet. But, there are some key details that can help you uncover which websites to trust and which websites to not trust.

A key detail to look out for is the name of the website, and if it has a track record of offering unbiased clear information, like the BBC or Ted Ed. These websites have a history you can look into if needed. You should also look at how the website is set up. Check for who wrote the article and when it was posted, and see if the person seems realistic with their title they may use on the article. For example saying Professor of engineering at Oxford University, you could probably trust what they are saying.



Something else to beware of are 'bog' websites. Blog websites are usually run by members of the public who lack the experience and credentials to properly discuss a heated matter or give a valuable piece of information that can be trusted. These websites are usually just up there for those people to express their opinions on the matter and don't really have a lot of information backing them up.

