

TIPS FOR CREATING BETTER SEARCH QUERIES

1. Use search “groups” or verticals to narrow the scope of your search

On a search results page, use the pre-configured search “verticals” to narrow the scope of your search to just specific types of content as shown below.



2. Click query suggestions that appear as you type search queries

As you type a search in the search box, the search provides suggestions. These suggestions are based on past queries and include the items that you have searched for and clicked before.

3. Review the “did you mean” suggestions after you submit a search query

Search provides suggestions if the terms in your search query are similar to other queries that have been submitted frequently. This will help if you make a mistake as you type in the query box.

4. Use OR to expand your search to include more terms

Use the operators AND, OR, and NOT to expand or narrow your search query. One of the reasons that you may not get the results you are looking for in search is that you are not giving the search engine enough of a clue to find what you want. It’s a good idea to use more than one word to search. If you don’t get the results you want, try adding more terms to your search. To be certain that the search engine knows how you want to connect the terms, you must separate the words with an operator. For more results, the operator is probably “OR” – **and you need to make sure that you capitalize OR.** (By the way, this is true for Google as well, though Google will attempt to interpret whether you mean AND or OR, it doesn’t always get it right.) It is always safest to capitalize your search operators. Let’s say you are looking for your organization’s social media policy but you don’t know if it is called a policy or manual or handbook. You could write your query as: “social media” AND (handbook OR policy OR guide). Notice the use of parentheses, which are used just like in algebra.

5. Use AND to narrow your search results

Most search engines, assume that two words together with no operator separating them implies AND as the operator. In other words, a search for apples pears is the same as apples AND pears. Get in the habit of including the operator – in capital letters or it will be ignored.

6. Capitalize operators in search

Normally, search does not care about capitalization. However, you **MUST** capitalize the words AND, OR, and NOT if you want search to recognize the words as operators. (This goes for Google too.)

7. To make sure you find words with any term listed, be sure to separate terms with the OR operator

If you just string words together, search assumes you are using the AND function. To make sure you find any term, separate terms with OR. For example, to find cats or dogs, type cats OR dogs as your query.

8. Use double quotes to ensure that words must be found together, as in “social media”

If you were to type the two words without the quotes, search will interpret the query as (social AND media), which means that both words have to appear in results but not necessarily together as a single phrase. When you use quotes, be sure you know that the exact phrase in quotes is in the content you are looking for because search assumes that all of the words in quotes must appear in the content in order for it to be returned by search.

9. Use a wildcard (*) to find words that begin with a character string

For example, you can search for “Micro*” to find all documents that contain Microsoft or microchip or microscope.

10. Use [Property Name]:[value] to find content in managed properties

For example, to find all the documents written by Maureen Smith, you could use the query Author:Maur* or Author: “Maureen Smith.” Note that the results would be slightly different in the first query because that query (with the wildcard) would find documents written by anyone named Maureen or anyone name Mauro (or any name beginning with Maur). Note that this syntax only works for managed properties. Some of the default managed properties that you may find particularly helpful for searching are Author, Description, and Title.