GETTING STARTED
Prerequisites
What You Will Learn

INTRODUCTION TO SEARCHING ONLINE
Fact and Fiction
Search Engines
Types of Websites
Organizing Your Search

GOOGLE
Introduction to Google
How to Search
Search Strategies
Understanding Your Results
Can't Find What You're Looking For?
Doing More with Google

MORE RESOURCES
Tutorials
Finding More Help
Closing the Program

To complete feedback forms, and to view our full schedule, handouts, and additional tutorials, visit our website:

cws.web.unc.edu

Created February 2017, Updated July 2018
Content based on GCF Learn Free Resources & The ABC’s of Determining Credible Sources
GETTING STARTED

Prerequisites:

To make today’s class more effective and useful, it will be important that you have these skills or feel comfortable using some of the technology we will cover. These skills include:

- Using the mouse and the left-click and right-click features
- Familiarity with using an Internet Browser
- Basic navigation between websites and tabs
- Basic typing and keyboard commands

Please let the instructor know if you do not meet these prerequisites.

What You Will Learn:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting and opening a browser</th>
<th>Facts and fiction about using search engines</th>
<th>Different Search Engines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of Websites</td>
<td>Organizing Your Search</td>
<td>An Overview of Google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Search Using Google</td>
<td>Search Strategies</td>
<td>Understanding Your Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Search Strategies</td>
<td>Tips on Doing More with Google</td>
<td>Additional Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION TO SEARCHING ONLINE

In today's world, more and more things are done online. Even if you don't consider yourself a computer person, you now need computer skills in order to conduct research, shop online, keep in touch with family, and more.

By improving your search skills, you can find what you're looking for more quickly without having to sift through tons of irrelevant results. Throughout this handout, there will be tips and strategies to help you improve your searches and evaluate your results to find the most reliable information.

Fact and Fiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FICTION: The web is magic. Search engines can’t understand complex sentences or questions.</th>
<th>FACT: The web is smarter than you think. Search engines use keywords to find results.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FICTION: You will always find reliable information. Just because you find it online does not mean it is true!</td>
<td>FACT: You can find a wide variety of content. From breaking news to personal opinions- it’s all there on the Internet!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FICTION: You can copy someone else’s work and call it your own. Content online still belongs to someone. You must give credit to those who posted the information.</td>
<td>FACT: You can create your own corner of the internet whether it is a blog, social media page, or website. Give credit where it is due- including to yourself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Search Engines

Search engines are specialized websites that can help you find what you're looking for. They work by using algorithms (complex math equations) to comb through the internet and offer results based on keywords you’ve entered. You’ve probably heard of some of the most popular ones—including Google, Yahoo!, and Bing—even if you've never used them.

With these three search engines in mind, you may be wondering, "What's the difference?" They all have access to the same information (i.e., the contents of the Internet), so they should return the same results, right? Not necessarily. Different search engines can yield different search results. Google is the most popular search engine because it's the most effective at finding what you're looking for.

Internet Browsers
Using a search engine requires accessing the internet. We can do this by opening a browser.

**Locate and Open a Web Browser**

A web browser is a program that lets you see information and images on web sites. A browser reads the information on a web page and displays it on your computer screen. The three most popular web browsers are called “Microsoft Internet Explorer”, “Mozilla Firefox”, and “Google Chrome”. You should be able to use at least one of these browsers at your local public library.

**To open one of these browsers**

Point to the browser’s icon on the desktop (see images below) with your mouse and double-click on it with the left mouse button (alternatively, left-click once, and then press the “Enter” key). A window like the one pictured below should come up on the screen.

**Types of Websites**

When you're looking for information online, it's a good idea to be aware of what types of websites are available and what kind of information they contain. Depending on what you're looking for, you may find that certain types are more relevant to your search than others. Let's take a look at some of the most common types of websites.

**Commercial site**

Most companies have websites to promote or give information about their products or services. Although these sites often have relevant information, they are sometimes biased. If the site makes claims that seem too good to be true, see whether other sites support or refute the claims.
Organization

Organizations, like other companies, usually have websites to **promote** themselves or **provide information**. Although they are not always "selling something," organizations **often have an agenda**, which may mean that the information on the site is biased.

See the next page for an example of an organization’s web page. This is the MacArthur Foundation which often provides funding for all sorts of projects and even public radio.

News site

More and more people get their **news** online instead of (or in addition to) newspapers and TV. News websites are usually updated frequently, and older articles may be kept on the site for years. If you find an article through a Google search, make sure you check the date.
Blog

Blog is short for web log. Blogs are usually updated frequently—sometimes several times a day. They are often a good place to find the latest information about a company, person, or topic (like technology). There are many different types of blogs, such as news, hobbies, humor, photography and more.
Wiki

A wiki is a site that lets users add or modify content. The most famous example is Wikipedia, which is an online encyclopedia. The quality of articles in a wiki can vary widely, but well-written ones always provide links to the original sources where you can verify the information.

School

Many schools have their own websites. In addition to having general information about the school, the website will usually have pages that are written by teachers to supplement their lesson plans. While these pages often contain useful information, you should be aware that the website may also contain pages created by students, which may be less reliable.
Scholarly site

For some subjects, you may want to search for scholarly works (such as dissertations or articles for academic journals). To find these types of works, you can do a search at Google Scholar.

Google Scholar

Databases

Databases are collections of information, often from different sources. One example is the Internet Movie Database, which is useful if you want to see all the movies a certain actor has appeared in.
**Organizing Your Search**

Being search savvy isn’t just about finding information online. It’s also about being able to save and organize the sites you’ve searched for so you can easily find them later. The simplest way to do this is to **bookmark** a site. Every web browser lets you create bookmarks (sometimes called **favorites**), and they also let you rename and organize your bookmarks. Even though it takes a second to create a bookmark, it can save you time because you won’t have to search the Web to find it again.

When it comes to using bookmarks, you may want to create folders for searches you often run in Google. For example, if you look for recipes online, you may want to have a bookmarks folder called “Recipes.” If you like to keep tabs on certain sports teams, you could have a folder dedicated to their websites, ESPN scores, etc.

**Creating Bookmarks- A Quick Guide**

If you find a website you want to view later, it can be hard to memorize the exact web address. **Bookmarks**, also known as **favorites**, are a great way to save and organize specific websites so you can revisit them again and again. Simply locate and select the **Star** icon to bookmark the current website.
Using bookmarks

Once you've bookmarked a website, there are a few ways to open the bookmark.

**The address bar:** As you begin typing in the address bar, any bookmarks matching the text will appear with a star icon next to them. Simply click a bookmark to open it.

![Address bar example](image)

**The Chrome menu:** Click the Chrome menu in the top-right corner, hover over Bookmarks, then click the bookmark you'd like to open.

![Chrome menu example](image)
**The Bookmarks bar:** The Bookmarks bar is located on the New Tab page just below the navigation bar. Click a bookmark to navigate to that page.

---

**Using Google**

*Introduction to Google*

When you have a question, when you need information, when you want to find something specific, you need the best tools in order to find what you're looking for. That's where Google comes in.

Google is the go-to search engine for most people on the Internet. It's so popular, in fact, that it's changed the way many of us talk about searching for information online. Have you ever heard someone use the word "google" as a verb, for example?

"I don't know the answer. Just google it!"

"Whoa! You won't believe what we found when we googled your name."

"Relax... I'm googling the address right now."
There are many reasons Google is so popular. For one, it's easy to use—even for beginners. It's also more effective than the average search engine, making it easier to find what you're looking for. In addition, Google is home to a variety of features that can improve your search experience in surprising ways.

**How to search**

There are several ways to conduct a Google search. If you're new to Google, take a look at the options below. You'll want to keep them in mind when we start exploring search strategies.

**Option 1: Google.com**

Go to Google's homepage at Google.com. From there, conducting a search is straightforward. Just type your search terms in the box, then click the Google Search button or press Enter on your keyboard.

If your search results start loading before you finish typing, don't panic. By default, you may have a feature called Google Instant enabled. If you don't like the way Google Instant works, you can disable it later by customizing your search settings.

**Option 2: Your browser's search bar**

Depending on your browser's default search engine, you may be able to conduct a Google search right from the browser's interface. For example, in Chrome you can use the address bar. In Firefox (pictured below), you can use the address bar or the built-in search bar. Both of these options can be convenient if you remember to use them.
Search Strategies

With a few basic search strategies, you can find almost anything online. It doesn't matter if you're using Google, Yahoo!, Bing, or some other type of search engine; most of the techniques in this video are universal. Take a look, and find out how you can improve your web search skills.

- Keep It Simple
  - Use keywords and phrases not full sentences or questions
  - Example: papillon dog
  - NOT: What does a papillon dog look like?
- Take Suggestions
  - Google has a predictive feature; it will try to guess what you are searching for. If it guesses correctly or uses words you are familiar with, try that search by clicking on it.

Search for an exact phrase by placing quotation marks around it.
  - Example: “apple pie recipe”

Understanding Your Results

Google can find more than websites! The search engine will also find images, news, videos, maps, shopping, books, and even flights. All of these results can be viewed on different pages. They are underneath the search bar at the top of the page.

Additionally, Google will place other types of results on the page. These can be:
- Ads (Look for the word AD!)
- Related searches (at the bottom of the page)
- A small preview of whatever you’re searching (it could be a blurb about a person, a map, or even the weather)
  - This usually appears on the top right side of the results page.
Can’t Find What You’re Looking For?

Sometimes it’s not enough to know all the basic and advanced search strategies. If you still can’t find what you’re looking for, you may need to try different search terms—and this time, really use your critical eye to look at your results and your keywords.

It can be helpful to know what is important to you in your search.

- Currency: do you want recent information?
- Authority: do you want your information to be from an expert? An amateur?
- Reliability: do you want your results to be from reputable sources? Blogs? Wikis?
- What else is important to you?
  - Location
  - Able to contact the company, person, or organization

How Do You Know if the Information You’ve Found is Reliable?

Once you find information, it is important to be able to discover if this information is reliable and accurate. One of the ways, to tell if the information is accurate is to think about what’s called the ABCs of research.

- Authority/Accuracy: Who wrote this information? Is an author listed on the website? Is the author part of an established education institution or other credible organization? Is the information free of spelling and grammatical errors?

- Bias/Benefit: What reasons would the author have to compose this material? Who does this information benefit? Is the writer giving the reader specific facts? Or is the writer offering only their personal opinion? Is the purpose of this information to sell a product?

- Currency: When was this information published on the web? Does the organization or author update the information? Is there potentially newer information on this subject matter that would offer more facts than presented on this source? Do all the links on the website work? Links that connect you to more information suggest that the website is regularly maintained.
Let's take a look at some examples.

**Example 1**

humane society

About 21,700,000 results (0.18 seconds)
Let's say you're looking for a place where you could adopt a dog. What words do you think OTHER people would use to describe that? Maybe shelter? Or rescue? You could even search for an adoption center by name (for example, humane society).

The truth is, shelter and rescue are pretty common terms—both in popular culture and among people in the pet adoption community. This means they're more likely to appear on a webpage than place to adopt a dog. Notice how that sounds slightly less "official"?

If you know the popular term for the information you're looking for, search for that instead. If you don't know the popular term, look closely at your original search results to see what you can find. If you notice any keywords that appear more frequently than others, it might be a clue.

Example 2

In certain parts of the country, fall is one of the most beautiful times of the year. If you're a "leaf peeper" (someone who's willing to travel in order to view or photograph fall foliage), you need to know when the leaves are going to be at their most colorful.

Of course, you could search for fall foliage forecast. But this may not produce the most comprehensive results. This is because there are so many other words you could use to describe what you're looking for. For example:

- Instead of fall, search for autumn.
- Instead of foliage, search for leaves or color.
- Instead of forecast, search for predictions, calendar, or peak (shorthand for when the colors are going to be at their most vibrant).

In short, try a few synonyms if your original search terms were unsuccessful. You may need to experiment with different combinations and then compare the results to figure out which keywords work best. You can also use advanced search strategies to search for multiple terms (for example, fall OR autumn).

Again, if you don't know any synonyms look at your original results. Review some of the language used there to see whether they give you any ideas.

Doing More with Google

Google fast facts are tricks you can use to get answers to common questions. They can also help you with everyday tasks like tracking packages or looking up sports scores. All you have to do is type your query in the search box using one of the techniques below, and the answer will appear instantly at the top of the results page.
Other Fast Facts

1. Convert measurements
   a. See above photo
2. Use a calculator
   a. 6*49
3. Convert currencies
   a. British pound to American Dollar
4. Get definitions
   a. define: loquacious
5. Get sports schedules and scores
   a. Team Name and schedule
6. Track Packages
   a. Enter tracking number
7. Know the time anywhere in the world
   a. Time and Location (Time London)
MORE RESOURCES

Free Tutorials

GCF Learn for Free

Free, easy to use, and has a tutorial on just about everything!

http://www.gcflearnfree.org/topics/

Recommendations: Internet Tips, Use the Internet to Get Stuff Done, and Internet Safety
Use the search feature at the top of the website to find these tutorials.

Google’s Blog

Google has a blog about the inner workings of the search engine and its other products. Read it to discover more about how it works and is so great at finding what you want.

www.blog.google.com

A Google a Day

Looking for a research challenge? Sharpen your search engine skills with the daily task on the website A Google a Day.

www.agoogleaday.com

FINALLY...

Remember, you are in charge of your search and what results you choose to look at and use. Google is only recommending things to you.

You hold the power!