Top Ten Tips for Successful Web Searching

#	Tip	Sub-point	Detail
10	Use the best Search Engine for the Job	Use more than one search engine	Every search engine is different, and will give you different results. If you can't find what you're looking for quickly with the first search engine that you try, there's plenty more out there including specialized searches. For a very wide assortment of different Search Engines visit www.searchfindknow.com/100-web-serachingsites.html
		Use Meta Searching	One search engine is great, but a dozen search engines - at one time - is even better.
		Don't even know where to start? Use Topic Indexes or Subject Directories to help you get started or with younger students	More like an Encyclopedia, Table of Contents or Book Index. Some peoples personal searching preferences better match method of starting with Indexes and then drilling down to more specific subjects.
9	Know how to use the Features of your chosen search site	Visit the Help Page of the search engine for tips and tricks	Know your favorite search engines inside and out. It's easy to skim the surface of your favorite search engines and only use the most prominent features; however, most search engines have a wide variety of advanced search options, tools, and services that are only available to those dedicated searchers that take the time to search them out. All of these options are for your benefit - and can help make your searches more productive.
		Learn how to set or change your preferences	Search preferences can be set globally on many search engines (safe search, limit number of results, chose default language, etc.)
		Auto Complete can speed things up.	There are multiple types of Auto Complete- some within search engines and some in your browser, history, recent searches, etc.
		Turn off personalized searching and/or use a search site such as DevilFinder which does not collect cookies.	For example- Google automatically pushes certain content at you that it assumes you will be interested in. This is based on: 1. Where you are (geographically) and 2. What you have searched for previously. For more information visit- http://support.google.com/websearch/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=35892
		Three tools that are intended for people maintaining websites can also be useful to searchers in identifying trends, alternative search terms, and research into key players and competitors in a sector.	Google Trends for Websites http://trends.google.com/websites - looks at search trends for individual websites or you can compare several websites. In addition it shows what people 'Also visited' and 'Also searched for'. Google Insights for Search http://www.google.com/insights/search/ - advanced options for identifying search trends including countries and categories.
		Use the country versions of Google for information that is country specific	This will ensure that the country's local content will be given priority, although it might be in the local language. Useful for companies and people who are based in or especially active in a particular country, or to research holiday destinations. Use Google followed by the standard ISO two letter country code, for example http://www.google.de/ for Google Germany or http://www.google.no/ for Google Norway.
		Keep up on changes in the Web & Search Engine World. Learn how search engines work & about the industry.	Just as the Web itself, Search Engines come and go and change features.
8	Use the Best Words in your search & know which words to avoid.	Use unique, specific terms. Use specific words rather than generic categories.	Whenever possible use "unique keys"/"golden words"
		Never search for single words!	You probably will not find what you want and will very often be shocked by what you find!
		Use scientific or trade names for items not common name or nicknames	Use your first couple of searches to find best words (Wikipedia is great place to find these).
		Carefully phrase your query	The more specific your query is, the more success you're likely to have. After all, "why is the sky blue" is easier to understand than "sky blue question". For more information on how to craft a more specific query, read article titled "Looking for a Specific Phrase" at http://websearch.about.com/od/internetresearch/a/phrasesearch.htm.
		Don't use common words and punctuation	Common terms like a and the are called stop words and are usually ignored. Punctuation is also typically ignored. But there are exceptions. Common words and punctuation marks should be used when searching for a specific phrase inside quotes. There are cases when common words like the are significant. For instance, Raven and The Raven return entirely different results.
		Realize that some words are not searched for	Know as "Stop Words" certain words are automatically excluded by search engines. Including words such as the, is, at, which and on. (This is similar to the rules you learned for sorting book titles). Use +, " " or operators Verbatim will force inclusion of these words.
		Drop the suffixes	It's usually best to enter the base word so that you don't exclude relevant pages. For example, bird and not birds, walk and not walked. One exception is if you are looking for sites that focus on the act of walking, enter the whole term walking.
		Use synonyms or alternative search terms.	Be creative or use a thesaurus for ideas. Type thesaurus in the search box to find an online thesaurus
7	Ctrl-F to find a word within the found page	Depending on the specific browser you use the Ctrl-F box will open in a different area of the page.	
6	Quickly & Effectively Review/Skim Pages Found.	Just because an item is listed first does not mean it is the best resource.	In fact, on many sites the first 5 to 10 entries are there because their owners paid the search engine company to put them there!
		Learn how to quickly skim a search engines description of a page, in the search results	Pay particular attention to the site address for clues. You can also install browser add-ons or extensions to get thumb nail views of the first page of each site found.
		Evaluate more promising result pages found	Use the Who, What, Why & When Criteria and Hierarchy of Source criteria. The "smell test" and other evaluation rubrics/schemes.
5	Learn & Use the Query Syntax of Search Engines	Although many search engines have added features to automatically help you get the right combination of words you may be searching for knowing and using Operators and other Syntax in your search give you the best results	The easiest way to use many special search features without know the proper syntax is to use a site's "Advanced Search Page"
		Operators: - will exclude words, " " will give exact phrases, + will force inclusion of "Stop Words" (see above) in your search and the ~ will include synonyms. AND will give you results that include both words but OR will give you results with either word. You can also use	in place of OR .	Most complex operators can really help you refine a search, but they may be harder to remember unless you use them often. A "cheat sheet" of operators is a quick way to start incorporating them into your searching
4	Learn How to Glean, Bookmark & Find Pages Again	Understand how to use Bookmarks or Favorites	Many "Social Bookmarking" online sites will allow you to have your bookmarks follow you to other computers or share bookmarks with friends or students.
		Learn how to copy specific items, save text or data, etc.	You may want to install Browser Add-ons/Extensions to allow right click sensitive copying menus.
		Understand how to paste the information you have copied into your own documents.	Copying and pasting tables into spreadsheets is a very good tool to understand, as it will allow you to analyze, sort, filter or do calculations on the information.
		Understand how to use browser history to find pages you have already visited.	
3	Use the Invisible Web	Understand that many resources are not found by traditional search engines	Invisible Web Directory: Many individuals and institutions have put together invisible Web directories, which you can use as a jumping off point to surf the Invisible Web. There are also specialized search tools for blogs, news, data, etc.
2	Learn about URLs & Directory Structure	Pay special attention to the addresses of sites- especially the part following the "dot" which gives some indication of the type of site (.com, .gov, .edu, .net, etc.)	
		Practice RWS (Recursive Web Searching™) Techniques to get more from sites (www.searchfindknow.com/rws.pdf)	
		Learn how to Climb Up & Down the Tree	
1	Just because you find it on the web does not mean it is true or accurate ! Always make sure you have found what you wanted and know what you have found !		