Finding Information On The Internet

The following is intended as a BASIC guide to searching for information on the Internet. For any questions or more detailed information, please contact the Research Assistance Desk at Daytona State College Library at 386-506-3518 (Daytona) or 386-785-2017 (Deland) and speak with a Librarian or visit our webpage at http://library.daytonastate.edu.

**Search Engines** are programs that allow you to search for information on the Internet. There are dozens of search engines. All search engines provide on-line help and tutorials. Many also have advanced search features that allow you to search for maps, images, video clips, etc. Below is a list of some popular search engines. To access them, click on the link or type the URL address into your web browser.

**Popular Search Engines**

**Google** ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) Google is the most widely used search engine and considered by many to be the best. It uses a very sophisticated search formula to consistently return relevant results. Google has many specialized features such as a drag and drop image search and Google Scholar ([scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com)) which allows you to search for scholarly research articles and united states case law. You can also link Google Scholar to the Daytona State Library Collections. Call the Research Assistance Desk for details.

**Bing** ([www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)) Bing is the second most widely used search engine and also has many advanced features. There are sites which are indexed by Bing which are not indexed by Google and vice-versa, so it is always a good strategy to use both search engines for the most complete results.

**Duck Duck Go** ([duckduckgo.com](http://duckduckgo.com)) While not as well known, Duck Duck Go offers a very uncluttered search experience and as an added bonus does not track your searches automatically like Google and Bing.

**Ask** ([www.ask.com](http://www.ask.com)) Ask uses a question and answer format to help you organize your results, providing an initial result list and then additional sources organized under related questions.

**ChaCha** ([www.chacha.com](http://www.chacha.com)) ChaCha, like ask is a question and answer format site. Once you start typing a question, a list of possible questions will appear. You can pick one or finish typing your own. The results list is arranged by question. .

**Wolframalpha** ([www.wolframalpha.com](http://www.wolframalpha.com)) Wolframalpha makes itself as a “Computational Knowledge Engine” which can give you facts and data for a number of topics. And beyond just providing facts, it can perform complex calculations.

**WayBackMachine** ([archive.org](http://archive.org)) The WayBackMachine is an archive of websties. You can use it to find older versions of websites or websites that no longer exist.

While it is difficult to maintain a comprehensive list of search engines, this Wikipedia article does a pretty good job.


The infographic on this website provides an interesting visual history of search engines.


If you have questions about which search engine is best to use for your research or about search engines in general, a librarian will be happy to help you!
Evaluating Websites

Finding accurate, reliable sources of information on the Internet can be a challenge. As a rule of thumb, some of the best information on the web comes from government agencies, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations. However, all sources should be carefully evaluated before you use them. An easy way to remember how to evaluate information is to apply the C.R.A.A.P Test.

**Currency**

When was the information published or posted?
Has the information been revised or updated?
Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?
Are the links functional?

**Relevance**

Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
Who is the intended audience?
Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e., not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?

**Authority**

Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?
Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?
Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
   For example: .edu (educational) and .gov (government) sites usually have reliable information

**Accuracy**

Where does the information come from?
Is the information supported by evidence?
Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

**Purpose**

What is the purpose of the information? to inform? teach? sell? entertain? persuade?
Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?
Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?