

## **English 101 - Library Skills Instruction Session #2**

### **Searching in Electronic Resources**

#### **Review of Session #1**

#### **Searching Concepts**

- Types of searches
- Choosing and narrowing a topic
- Search Strategy
- Boolean Operators
- Truncation (wild cards)

#### **Sample Searches**

- LIBROS
- Academic Search Premier
- Expanded Academic ASAP

#### **Follow-up Assignment**

See handout from English 101 instructor

## Common Types of Searches

The following information is true in most cases in most databases you will encounter. Some databases offer other types of searches as well.

### Keyword

- An uncontrolled vocabulary search
- most dynamic type of search, because it searches in most of the fields in a book or periodical article catalog record
- allows use of any word or words (except common stop words), phrases, names, places, etc.
- will produce list of records related to the terms entered in the search -- usually **about** something or someone.
- best search to perform when you need information **about** something

### Author

- requires that you know what author you are looking for
- must enter at least the last name of an author
  - if it is a common name like "Smith" you will also need to provide a first name and possibly even a middle initial/name if first name is also common, such as "John Smith."
- searches the author fields in catalog records
- produces list of books, articles, etc. **by** the author you searched
- best search to perform when you know who the author is and need to see what is available by that author

### Title

- requires that you know the title or at least part of the title you are looking for
- may enter entire or partial title
- searches the title fields in catalog records
- produces list of books with titles exactly or at least similar to the terms you searched
- best search to perform when you know the title of the item and need to see if it is available or what editions or formats are available for that title.

### Subject

- a controlled vocabulary search
- requires use of words, names, places that match subject terms established by the Library of Congress, also known as "subject headings."
- may enter all or part of a known subject heading
- produces list of items **about** the subject you searched
- if search is on an author, list of items is produced both **about** them and **by** them
- like the keyword search, is a search you can do when you need information **about** something or someone.

# Search Strategy Worksheet

1. Briefly summarize your search topic:

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2. Divide your topic into major concepts. Write them on the bolded lines below, in order of their importance.

3. Under each major concept list synonymous or related terms/concepts.

| <b>First<br/>Major Concept</b> | <b>Second<br/>Major Concept</b> | <b>Third<br/>Major Concept</b> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| _____                          | _____                           | _____                          |
| or _____                       | or _____                        | or _____                       |
| or _____                       | or _____                        | or _____                       |
| or _____                       | or _____                        | or _____                       |
| or _____                       | or _____                        | or _____                       |

# Boolean Operators

Library

UNM-Los Alamos

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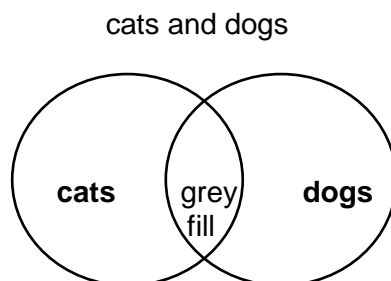
The **Boolean operators** “and”, “or”, and “not” are used to combine words and phrases when performing online searches to place specific conditions on a set of documents to be retrieved. The process is named after George Boole (1815-64), who was an English mathematician and logician. Many online databases and World Wide Web search engines accommodate the use of Boolean operators in information search queries; however, there may be slight differences from resource to resource in how they are used. Follow the instructions in the searching tips and help sections for each separate resource.

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## “And”

- Retrieves documents containing all terms specified in the search query
- Eliminates documents that have only one among any of the terms specified in the search query
- Narrows your search, and documents retrieved tend to be more relevant

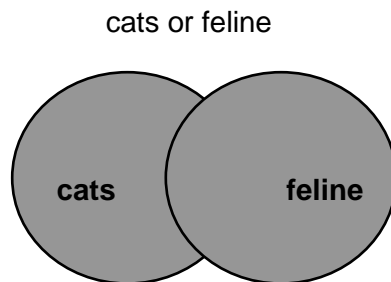
The shaded area in the diagram below illustrates that the documents retrieved contain both cats and dogs



## “Or”

- Retrieves documents containing all terms specified in the search query together or separately.
- The rule of thumb in using “or” is to remember that **“or is more.”**
- Broadens your search, and documents retrieved tend to be less relevant.
- Is usually used for synonyms

The shaded area in the diagram below illustrates that the documents retrieved contain the terms individually as well as together.



## “And Not” or “Not”

- Eliminates specific aspects of a broader term or concept in a search query.

The shaded area in the diagram below illustrates that the documents retrieved contain information about any sonnet other than those written by Shakespeare.

