Web Search Engines
SEARCHING TIPS

Phrase Searching
Use quotes around a phrase to ensure that the search engine searches the words together as a phrase.

Examples:
"information literacy"
"chocolate chip cookies"
"identity theft"

Boolean Searching
In most search engines, like Google, you don't need to type the word “and” in order to combine or cross-reference terms. However, you can add a plus sign (+), if the term or topic is absolutely essential to your search. Likewise, you can “not” a term to make sure it is not searched by using the minus sign (-).

Examples:
“chocolate chip cookies” +walnuts
“chocolate chip cookies” -nuts

Keyword Searching
That's all there is in Web search engines! There is no list of subject headings or “controlled vocabulary” that organizes or categorizes the items to be found. For some organization or categorization, try a subject directory, e.g. Yahoo's subject directory.

Here are some “Rules of Thumb” to help you with your keyword searches:

- Be as specific as possible with your choice of keywords. For example, if you want information on “flourless chocolate cake”, don't look up “chocolate desserts.”
- Try synonyms and related words if your keywords don't work out.
- Don’t include unnecessary words in your search or words that the search engine won’t even look for and might get “confused” by. Generally speaking, use nouns for your keywords, not adjectives and verbs.
  Bad Search: the best places to stay in Hawaii
  Good Search: hotels +Hawaii

Advanced Searching
Try Advanced Searching in Google, for example, where you can limit by date, language, and domain name.

Help!
Use the Help sections of the search engines for more searching tips.