

Boolean Searching

A Boolean search contains a series of words that relate to each other by search operators. Learning to use these operators gives you more control over your search. Boolean search operators are used in most databases and Internet search engines.

Boolean Operator	Description
AND	Searches for records containing both of the words it separates. Example: <i>cat AND dog</i> for both cat and dog.
OR	Searches for records containing either of the words it separates. Example: <i>cat OR dog</i> searches for either cat or dog.
NOT	Searches for records that contain the search word, but not the word you specify. Example: <i>cat NOT dog</i> searches for cat, but not dog, and returns results that contain cat, but do not contain dog.
ADJ	Searches for records in which the query word that follows it appears immediately after the word preceding it. Example: <i>rifle ADJ hunting</i> would find records that include the phrase "rifle hunting" as well as "hunting rifle."
W/n	Example: <i>amphibian W/5 frog</i> finds records in which frog appears within 5 words after amphibian.
?	Wildcard operator for a single character matches any one character. Example: <i>h?ld</i> matches <i>hold</i> and <i>held</i> .
*	Wildcard operator for strings matches any string. Examples: <i>micro*</i> matches <i>microscope</i> , <i>microcomputer</i> ; or <i>*late</i> matches <i>relate</i> , <i>translate</i> .