Searching the Internet

I.   Narrowing Your Results

When you do a search, your goal is not to get the largest number of results possible. Your goal is to get the best results possible in the shortest list possible. The following commands are recognized by virtually all search systems and will help you accomplish this goal:

Command   What does it do?
+   This tells the search engine that this term must be on the webpage.
_   This tells the search engine that this term must not appear on the webpage.
" "   Two or more words in quotations tell the search engine that these words must appear together and in this precise order.

Example: A search for the words – world wide web – will give you sites about the world, sites about wide rivers and roads and spiders (think "web"). I got 139 million results on Google. If you put it in quotes – "world wide web" - and search every website will contain all the words together and many non-related sites will be eliminated. By doing this, my results were reduced to about 18 million.

Example 2: A search for – Civil War – will give you information on civil engineering and every war in history. A search for "Civil War" will give you only sites with that precise phrase. You will, however, get sites regarding civil wars all over the world and throughout history. If you add +American or +"United States" it will eliminate all of these except those in which the United States is mentioned. If you consistently see something not useful, you may eliminate it by using the minus symbol. For example, you might want to remove sites that mention the Civil War but are really about genealogy or reenactments. Your search might look like:
+"Civil War +"United States" –genealogy –reenactment

Notice that there is a space between each term, but there is not a space between the words and the plus or minus symbols or the quotation marks.

II.   Evaluating Your Source

1. Determine its origin. Find the author AND the publisher
2. Determine the author's credentials. (What special training or education qualifies them to create this information?) Look under "About Us." Or "Who we Are"
3. Determine the age of the information.
4. Verify it. Find another reputable source that provides similar information.

Other tips that a source might not be a good one? Errors in spelling, content, sentence structure, etc. Is the page dominated by opinion? Are there broken links?

For Practice check out these sites:
http://descy.50megs.com/Emankato/mankato.html
http://home.inreach.com/kumbach/velcro.html
http://zapatopi.net/afdb/
http://www.buydehydratedwater.com/

http://www.dhmo.org/

http://www.internetfirstpage.com/

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