



Skill in the spotlight : Internet Research

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You often search the web for information, but do you always find what you are looking for? This document offers you tips and tricks that will help you to find relevant information when you're doing online research.

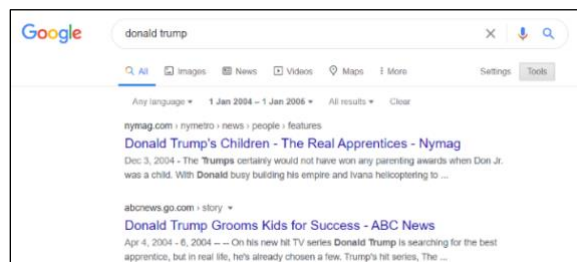
Internet search is about asking the right questions

Every search for online information starts by entering a query in a search engine that then provides you with links to relevant web pages. While today's search engines are quite smart and able to understand simple search phrases, being able to write a good search query remains key to finding relevant online information effectively and efficiently.

Using Google like a pro

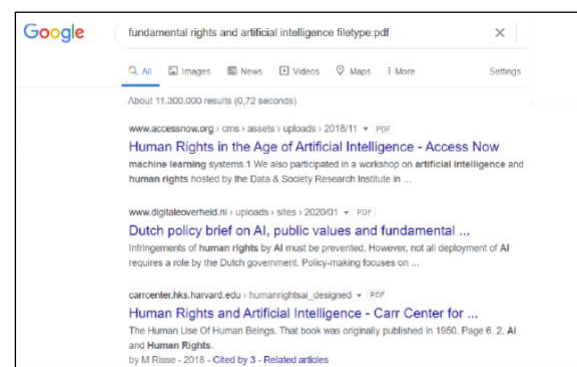
You probably know that you can do exact searches by putting your search terms between quotes ("like this"), but did you know that search engines offer much more advanced search functionalities?

Google provides several [filters](#) that enable you to refine your searches. For instance, you can limit search results to a certain period in time by clicking on the 'Tools' button (see image).



There are also commands, or '[operators](#)', that you can use to manipulate your search query (see [this page](#) for Microsoft Bing's list of operators). You type these operators in the search bar (see image). Here are some examples:

- Research, reports and official government documents are often stored as PDF's. You can limit your search to PDF files by using the [filetype-operator](#) (e.g. "fundamental rights and artificial intelligence filetype:pdf").
- Limit your search to specific websites by using the site-operator (e.g. "law and technology site:uu.nl").
- Search through webpage titles with the allintitle-operator if you are looking for a specific webpage (e.g. "allintitle:law and technology utrecht").



Follow Google's [free online 'Power Searching' course](#) if you're interested in learning more about using these operators and filters. Or read this [Scientific American article](#), in which Google researchers Russell and Callegaro share common search mistakes, misperceptions and advice.

Finding older copies of a website

Search engines generally only provide access to information that is still online. If you are looking for archival copies of online information, you can visit the [Internet Archive](https://archive.org/). For instance, their 'wayback machine' has almost 3000 copies of Utrecht University's websites dating back to 1998 (see image).



Google also makes copies of every website that it indexes. By putting the "cache"-operator in front of a site's address, you can see the snapshot that Google's made when it visited that particular website. This allows you go back in time a bit and see an earlier version of that particular website (e.g. "cache:uu.nl").

Saving information and preventing 'link rot'

Saving online information is critical to online research. You could use your browser's bookmark bar or sign up for an account with [Instapaper](https://www.instapaper.com/) or [Pocket](https://pocket.com/) if you are looking for a more advanced bookmarking tool. Note taking apps like [OneNote](https://onenote.officeapps.live.com/onenote/) (which is free to UU students), [Evernote](https://evernote.com/) or [Google Keep](https://keep.google.com/), can also be used to save the information you found.

If in your papers or thesis you refer to online sources, you run the risk that your links will break as websites change or go offline. You can prevent 'link rot' by using a service like [Perma.cc](https://perma.cc/) (ten free links per month) which creates publicly accessible archival copies of online information and provides permanent links that you can use as references in papers and other writings.

Keep up-to-date and organized

RSS (Real Simple Syndication) is an old, but very useful web technology. It essentially allows a website to send updates when new information is published in an organized manner. Blogs and other news websites generally offer an 'RSS feed' that you can add to your RSS reader. You can also use RSS to follow recent court cases (e.g. via [Rechtspraak.nl](https://rechtspraak.nl/) or the [CJEU's website](https://cjeu.europa.eu/)), or to read the latest journal articles (e.g. [Common Market Law Review](https://www.commonmarketlawreview.com/)).

To use RSS, you need an **RSS reader**. Feedly is a popular, free and user-friendly [RSS reader](https://feedly.com/) app that lets you categorize your feeds. More advanced users may like [Inoreader](https://inoreader.com/) (see image), which allows to set up complex filters for your RSS feeds.

