Internet Searching Tips:
terms, tips, and practice

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Terminology

The browser is the program that gets you to the Internet. Think of it like a doorway or like a car. The browser is the way of getting there. The most common browsers are Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Safari.

A search engine is a website that helps you locate other websites. Think of it like a card catalog for websites, like the GPS in your car, or like a directory. The most popular search engines are Google, Bing, and Yahoo!

At the top left of the browser is the address bar. Typing a URL (or Web address) into the address bar and pressing Enter on the keyboard will take you to a website. Keep in mind there is a difference between the name of the site (ex: Bing) and the URL (ex: bing.com).

The home page is the website your browser opens first.

Tabs are located at the top of the browser and allow more than one website to be open simultaneously.

Favorites or bookmarks refers to a list of websites you select. Adding a website to the list allows you to quickly visit the site in the future. To add a website to the list of Favorites in Internet Explorer, navigate to the website, click on the star at the top right of the browser, then click on "Add to favorites." To visit a website on the list, open the list by clicking on the star at the top right of the browser and click on the website in the list.

Searching Tips

To search for a website, first open a browser such as Internet Explorer. Next, navigate to a search engine such as Google. Enter search terms in the box provided and press Enter on the keyboard.

Look at the results which are now displayed. Search engines often have ads at the top and right sides of the screen. Before clicking on a link, look at whether or not it is an ad, read the description, and look at the URL.

Consider the source when looking for important information. Look at the domain of the website when determining its credibility. Common domains include .com, .net, .edu, .gov, and .org. A site with a .edu domain is the website of an educational institution. A site with a .gov domain is an official government website. A site with a .org domain is the website of a non-profit organization. Sites with .edu, .gov., and .org domains tend to be more reliable than sites with .com or .net domains. If the accuracy of the information you find is important to you, consider cross-referencing the same information on multiple websites.

Use an appropriate search type when searching the Internet. The most common search types are website and image searches. If you are using Google as your search engine, you can toggle between these two search types by clicking on Web or Images at the top of any results page.

Think about how you will use the information before determining whether or not Wikipedia (an online encyclopedia that anyone can modify) is an appropriate source. Consider using Wikipedia to find general information or use the list of references at the bottom of an article to view the sources of the information.

Remember that the search terms you select have no context. For example, "windows" can refer to glass panels in your home or a computer's operating system.

Refine a search by adding additional terms, eliminating terms, and using synonyms. You can also consider limiting your search to a specific website created by an authority on the topic.

Practice Searching

When searching start with a broad search term or terms. Add search terms to narrow the search. Consider using a synonym or eliminating a term to further refine the results. Look carefully at the selected website before using the information found.

Tips

- Look at the search results screen before clicking on a link.
- Refine search results by adding search terms or using synonyms.
- Carefully consider the source of the information.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.

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