Basic Search Tools: Beyond Just Keywords

AND
OR
NOT
“—”
* -or- ?

Using these tools (called Boolean operators) can give you more control over your search results.

AND tells the computer you only want results that include both terms; in some databases (including) Google you can use a plus sign (+):

EX: climate change AND oceans [yes, capitalize it; this will give you more focused results]

OR tells the computer you want all the results with both terms:

EX: climate OR oceans [yes, capitalize it; this will give you more, but less

NOT tells the computer you want a term or set of terms, but not others that may be closely related:

EX: climate NOT oceans [yes, capitalize it; this will give you fewer, more focused results]

“—” tells the computer to search for the exact phrase you enter; some databases will allow you to put exact phrases in parentheses ( ) as well, but quotes are more common:

EX: “global climate change” [this will give you very narrow, focused results]

* -or- ? tells the computer to look for forms of a word that you enter; this can be helpful if are not sure exactly which form of a word will be most helpful to you:

EX: glob* will give you all of the following:

glob, globe, global, globally, globular, globalize, globularly, globalization

[this will give you very broad, but less focused results]

For more information see:

University of Nevada, Knowledge Center: http://knowledgecenter.unr.edu/help/using/booltips.aspx

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