

Search Tools



Search Engines: Search engines offer a keyword approach to searching. Search engines are large databases of web documents that rely on *robots*, *spiders*, or *crawlers*, which are automated programs that match words and phrases to web documents. Search engines depend on *you* to do the work through your choice of search terms (syntax). They match words or phrases you enter with words or phrases contained in web documents.

EXAMPLE: Google.com

Meta-Search Engines: Meta-search engines search across databases to take a broad look at available web documents. This kind of search engine will provide the top matches from a number of search engines. You are able to search with several search engines at once without having to go to each one individually. Meta-search engines perform a more comprehensive search and produce a greater number of matches.

EXAMPLE: Dogpile.com

Subject Directory: Subject directories are catalogs of websites that are collected, organized, and maintained by *humans*, not *robots*, *spiders*, or *crawlers*. Information is organized in “trees” from general to more specific categories. People review and select web documents to include based on certain criteria. Though subject directories offer fewer results, the results are usually of high quality and relevance (due to the human selection of documents to include).

EXAMPLE: Yahoo.com

Invisible or Deep Web: There are many web documents that are difficult or impossible to find using traditional search tools (such as those mentioned above). This includes databases, special file types (like some PDFs/ spreadsheets), and other sites that require password access or sites that block *robots* or *spiders*. You can access the invisible web when you use school databases like *e-Library*, *Culture Grams*, *ProQuest*, and *SIRS*.

There are also directories for the invisible web.

EXAMPLE: Geniusfind.com

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