

Finding Materials on the Internet

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to effectively use the Internet as a resource for information.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Using the Internet as a Research Source
2. Why Use the Internet?
3. The Art of the Search Query

1. Using the Internet as a Research Source

As you gather research for your speech, you'll want to have a variety of sources from which to compile supporting evidence and facts.

With the advent of digital archiving, social media, and open-source education, it's easier than ever before to find information on the Internet.

2. Why Use the Internet?

The Internet is pervasive, easily accessible, and continually updated. It only makes sense to capitalize on this ever-evolving technology as a resource for your speech research.

In addition to convenience and accessibility, the Internet allows you to access resources to which you may not have the physical means to get previously.

➦ **EXAMPLE** You might not be able to just hop on a plane to Paris and see DaVinci's *La Joconde* (more commonly known as the *Mona Lisa*), but thanks to the Internet, you can now browse the hundreds of works at Le Louvre right from the convenience of your laptop.


The Internet is also an excellent way to familiarize or orient yourself with an unfamiliar speech topic. While you might not be able to cite every informational source you find, using the Internet in your research process is a fast way to get yourself familiar with the basics of your speech topic, thesis, or key supporting points and arguments.

3. The Art of the Search Query

When getting started with most Internet research, the first thing you'll do is open up your Internet browser and open to a **search engine**. While Google may dominate the search engine market, recognize that Bing, Yahoo!, Ask, and AOL Search round out the top five most popular search engines in the United States. Other popular search engines include Wolfram Alpha and Instagrok.com.

Using different search engines may yield different results, so don't limit yourself to just one search engine. Additionally, some search engines excel at certain types of information and searches more than others. Internet information, particularly of a certain quality or standard, can be organized in other ways besides word choice and prominence (as attended by global search engines).

Some information may also require further search skills to retrieve. A familiarity with midpoints like directories, "invisible" databases and an attentiveness to further types of organization may reveal the key to finding missing information.

 **EXAMPLE** A thesaurus may prove critical to connecting information organized under the business term "staff loyalty" to information addressing the preferred nursing term "personnel loyalty" (MeSH entry for Medline by the [US] National Library of Medicine).

While each search engine may have specific search query shorthand, almost all major search engines function by using Boolean logic and Boolean search operators. Boolean logic symbolically represents relationships between entities and uses three key search operators. These operators help you form your search query:

AND: The AND operator connects two or more terms to retrieve information that matches all of those terms. If, for example, you were searching for information about the freedom of speech in the United States, you might search for "freedom AND United States. "

OR: The OR operator searches for information that includes at least one of the **keywords** included in your query. If you were researching on court cases about freedom of speech, you might search for "freedom of speech OR amendment. "

NOT: The NOT operator excludes any keywords following the operator and retrieves the appropriate information excluding those terms. If you wanted to find out more about free speech in schools but not anything related to Supreme Court cases, you might search for "freedom of speech NOT Supreme Court."



TERMS TO KNOW

Search Engine

An application that searches for, and retrieves, data based on some criteria, especially one that searches the Internet for documents containing specified words.

Keyword

A specific term used to facilitate database searches about a topic.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned how to **use the Internet as a research source** to find materials for your

speech. If you find yourself with an unfamiliar topic, you can orient yourself by conducting a general, preliminary overview search **using Internet** search engines. Don't limit yourself to just one search engine; Google, Bing, Yahoo!, Ask, and AOL Search comprise the top five search engines in the U.S., and each do certain types of searches better than others. Use Boolean operators like AND, OR, and NOT to refine and specify your **search queries** for accurate research results.

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