Guide to Using
Search Engine Operators

Introduction

Searching our website can be a challenging task due to the large volume of information it contains. By default, the website searches for records which contain any of the words you type. This can yield a surprising number of results which only amplifies with the more words you type.

Implied Logic

A search for two words is interpreted by our search engine as a request for records which contain either the first word, the second word, or both words, but not necessarily all words. Simply think of the words you type which are separated by the space character to be using the "OR" operator.

*EXAMPLE: Searching for **Birth Certificate** will yield records containing the words **Birth** OR **Certificate** OR both words. Therefore the following results would all be considered matches to the query.*

- **Birth** Certificates
- **Birth** Defects
- College of American Pathologists **Certificate**
- Food and Drug Administration **Certificate**
- **Birth Certificate** Request Form
- Decline in Teen **Birth** Rates

Basic Operators

To offer control over the search engine, we have designed the system to accept a number of operators which help you narrow the results of your searches to specifically what you're looking for.

With operators, certain characters have special meeting at the beginning or end of words in the search string. For example, the plus (+) symbol and minus (-) symbol operators indicate that a word is required to be present or absent for a match to occur. Alternately you can think of the plus (+) symbol as AND while the minus (-) symbol can be thought of as NOT.

Operator	Description
	No operator means that the word is optional.
+	A leading plus symbol indicates the word must be present in each result.
-	A leading minus symbol indicates the word must not be present in any of the results.

Basic Examples

These sample search phrases illustrate the use of the basic operators defined above.

Phrase	Explanation
Measles Vaccination	Matches at least one of the two words.
+Birth +Certificate	Matches both words in any order.
+STD Prevention	Matches "STD" and ranks results higher if they also contain the word "Prevention".
+Treatment -Diabetes	Matches "Treatment" but not "Diabetes".

Advanced Operators

To offer even more control over the search engine logic, we have added the following advanced operators to help you narrow search results even further with more precision.

Operator	Description
~	A leading tilde acts as a negation operator, causing the word's contribution to the result's relevance value to be negative. This is useful for marking "noise" words. A result containing such a word is rated lower than others, but is not excluded altogether, as it would be with the minus symbol operator.
*	An asterisk character serves as the wildcard operator. Unlike the other operators, it should be appended to the word to be affected. Words match if they begin with the word preceding the asterisk symbol operator.
"	A phrase that is enclosed within double quotes indicates that the entire phrase must be present exactly as it was typed.

Advanced Examples

These sample search phrases illustrate the use of the advanced operators defined above.

Phrase	Explanation
+Treatment ~Diabetes	Matches the word "Treatment" but if the result also contains the word "Diabetes" then rate the relevance lower than if it did not contain it at all. This is "softer" than a search for "+Treatment –Diabetes" for which the presence of "Diabetes" causes the row not to be returned at all.
North*	Matches words that start with "North" such as "North", "Northeast", "Northwest", and "Northern".
"Immunization Schedule"	Matches the exact phrase "Immunization Schedule". For example, "Childhood Immunization Schedule" and "Immunization Schedule for Infants" but not "Immunization Poster for Vaccination Schedule"

Stop Words

The search also uses a list of stop words which are filtered out before processing your keyword search. As a result, searches for these words will yield zero results. A list of stop words appears below.

A	At	How	Of	This	Where
About	Be	I	On	To	Who
An	By	In	Or	Was	Will
Are	For	Is	That	What	With
As	From	It	The	When	