

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF:



**Google** is the world's most widely used search engine. In addition to its web search function, Google also offers many specialized services such as Google Scholar, Book Search, Image Search, News Search, and Maps.

### Introduction

This guide explains how to effectively use the Google search engine (<https://www.google.ca/>) and some of its specialized search tools to find information online.

#### Points to remember:

1. No single search engine searches the entire Web. For the best results, try your search in more than one search engine.
2. Many scholarly journal articles cannot be found by search engines. *This includes Google Scholar.* To find and access scholarly journal articles reliably, use the library's [databases](#).
3. Websites often lack the quality controls that are used in publishing other types of resources (e.g., scholarly journals), so you should always **evaluate** internet resources for quality and appropriateness for your research. To learn more, refer to the Library's [guide](#) on evaluating internet resources.
4. Just because a result is the top hit on Google, this does not mean it is credible, reliable or accurate. Google's sorting is based on **relevancy** – to you, your search, your location, your past searches... – **not** quality.
5. Your search results are affected by personalized information such as your location and past search history. Google's algorithms guess what information you are looking for, which can result in a "filter bubble".

For example, you may not be shown results that disagree with what Google perceives as your viewpoints or ideologies. To see this personalization in action, try comparing your search results from your regular browser to that of a private or incognito window! You might also try searching with [duckduckgo.com](https://duckduckgo.com), a search engine that shows the same search results to every user.

6. Some of your search results may include advertisements (denoted by a small "Ad" to the left of the URL). These are from companies that pay Google to advertise their products or services and are not an indication that the site is a credible source.

# Basic Search

Google search has some customizable features and will perform differently depending upon which settings are selected.

Google has a built-in *Autocomplete* feature that is not possible to turn off. As you are typing your query, Google makes predictions about possible search terms for you. However, it is not necessary to choose any of the predictions.

Google has an option to include *Private results* that can look for tailored content for you from other Google products you use, like Gmail or Google Calendar. This only works if you are signed into your Google account while searching, and it can be turned off by going into **Settings** and selecting **Do not use private results**.

## Searching with Google:

To perform a search with Google, enter your keywords into the search box.

When you have entered your keywords, either click on one of the Autocomplete predictions, hit **Enter** on your keyboard, or click on the search button on the browser.



## Voice Search:

To use Voice Search, click on the microphone icon in the search bar and follow the instructions.



## When choosing search terms:

- **Be specific** and try to **include at least 2 keywords** that best describe what you are trying to find. For example, to find apartments for rent in Halifax, you could search:



- **Avoid common words** such as "how", "of", and "where" because these stop words will normally be excluded from a search. If stop words occur in a common phrase or title such as *Of Mice and Men*, use quotation marks to search for the exact set of words:



- **Select appropriate terminology** for your query and be aware that different terms may imply a certain bias:

e.g., searching “oil sands” will retrieve results from Alberta Energy and other members of the oil industry, whereas a search for “tar sands” will retrieve results from Greenpeace and other environmental advocacy organizations.

- **Word order** can affect your search results. Words should be ordered in the way you would expect them to appear in a search result or how they appear in natural phrases:

e.g., “world war” retrieves results about the First and Second World Wars, whereas “war world” retrieves results about a DC comic book series.

## Writing a Search Query

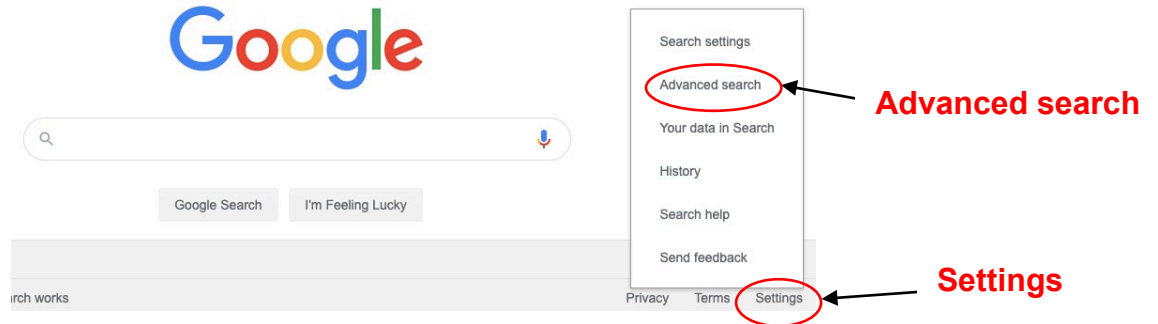
When searching, it helps to understand how Google interprets what you enter:

- Google searches for pages that contain as many of your terms as possible. However, it may return results without *some* of the terms you entered.
  - If a result is missing a search term, below its entry you will see: “Missing: ~~term~~”
- Google searches are not case sensitive.
- Google automatically searches for variations of some search terms, e.g., “knit”, “knits”, “knitting”, etc. To prevent searching for variations of a term, enclose it in quotation marks.
- You don’t need to type AND between your search terms.

Basic Search Operators	
<p><b>OR</b> e.g., canine OR dog OR puppy</p>	Finds pages that contain one or more of the search terms.
<p><b>-</b> e.g., titanic -movie e.g., biology -site:wikipedia.org</p>	Exclude particular words, phrases or sites from your results. Google’s version of the “NOT” operator. Can be combined with other special operators, such as site:
<p><b>“ ”</b> e.g., “life of pi”</p>	Finds pages that contain the phrase exactly as typed between the quotation marks.
<p><b>*</b> e.g., “* for an * makes the whole world blind”</p>	Use the asterisk as a wildcard for unknown terms. Phrase search with quotations for variations of an exact phrase.

# Advanced Search

To use advanced search, click on **Settings** in the bottom-right of the Google homepage and select **Advanced Search** from the pop-up menu.



If you are in a search already, **Settings** will appear below the search bar. Or, visit [https://www.google.ca/advanced\\_search](https://www.google.ca/advanced_search).

First, type your search terms into the relevant search boxes:

Find pages with...

all these words:

this exact word or phrase:

any of these words:

none of these words:

numbers ranging from:  to

Then, refine your search by selecting one or more limit options, which are listed next to the search boxes.

Then narrow your results by...

language:  Find pages in the language that you select.

region:  Find pages published in a particular region.

last update:  Find pages updated within the time that you specify.

site or domain:  Search one site (like wikipedia.org) or limit your results to a domain like .edu, .org or .gov

terms appearing:  Search for terms in the whole page, page title or web address, or links to the page you're looking for.

SafeSearch:  Tell SafeSearch whether to filter sexually explicit content.

file type:  Find pages in the format that you prefer.

usage rights:  Find pages that you are free to use yourself.

Advanced Search

## Refining Your Search

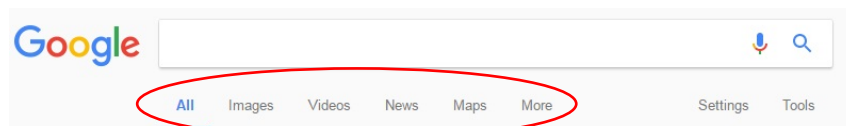
If your searches are retrieving too many irrelevant hits, use these special operators to increase the relevancy of your results:

Special Search Operators	
<b>intitle:</b>	Restrict your results to documents with a specified search term in the title e.g., forensics intitle:university
<b>allintitle:</b>	Restrict your results to documents with <u>all</u> of your search terms in the title e.g., allintitle:google tutorial
<b>site:</b>	Restrict your results to documents within a specified website or domain e.g., chemistry site:www.smu.ca
<b>inurl:</b>	Restrict your results to documents with a specified search term in the URL e.g., book review inurl:library
<b>define:</b>	Google tries to define the term first using dictionaries or encyclopaedias. e.g., define:deep web
<b>filetype:</b>	Restrict your results to specific file types using file extensions e.g., syllabus filetype:docx e.g., thesis filetype:pdf
<b>related:</b>	Restrict your results to find webpages with similar content to a specific URL e.g., related:http://www.smu.ca/

**Note:** do not place a space after the colon when using special operators.

## Google Search Results & Other Search Tools

Your searches could retrieve a variety of content, including links to books, news, images, etc. To limit your results to a particular format, e.g., images, simply select the **Images** tab located below the search bar on the results page. It is important to note that the placement of these links may change with every search. In the example below, *Google Books* results are hidden under the **More** tab, alongside *Shopping, Flights, Finance, and Personal*.



**Format options**

*Google Scholar* does not appear in the tab below the search bar or in the “More” tab. Instead, Google may suggest “Scholarly articles for **Your Search**”. This link will take you to *Google Scholar*.

*Google Books*, *Scholar*, *Images*, *News*, and *Maps* also have their own dedicated sites and search interfaces. You can use the square “apps” button to access these products. The “apps” button appears at the top right hand side of many Google products, and displays a selection of “popular” apps by default.



## [Image Search](#)

*Not to be confused with Google Photos, which is a tool for syncing, editing and sharing pictures.*

This feature allows you to search for images throughout the web. Enter keywords into the search box and if Google finds any matches to your query, it will display thumbnail pictures of the matches. Click on the thumbnails to view the full sized pictures.

You can also upload an image, or paste an image’s URL, to search the web for images that are visually similar to that image. This can be useful for identifying the provenance or original source of an image. To access this menu, click the “camera” icon in the Google Images search bar.



## [News](#)

On the *Google News* homepage, Google sorts its top news stories into various categories (e.g., Canada, Health, etc.). Thousands of news sources, including traditional news sites, blogs, satire, and press releases are indexed by *Google News*. While many articles are free to access, some sources have paywalls and will limit the number of articles you are able to view without a subscription.

*Google News* will also alter its contents based on your past searches and preferences. You may notice your favourite news websites appearing more frequently than ones you click on less often.

## [Book Search](#)

This feature allows you to search the full-text of many books. Google has amassed a collection of scanned books through its affiliations with some prominent libraries, as well as through a partner program with publishers and authors who wish to have their books searchable by the public.

Click on a book title and you will see basic bibliographic information about the book. If available, the full-text of the book will be viewable and available for download as a PDF. For some books you will only

be able to “preview” some full-pages of titles. Other titles only offer “snippet” views of a few lines of text, showing full-text search results in context.



If on campus, select the **Find in a library** (under **Get this book in print**) link and you will be directed to WorldCat Local for SMU. Here you will be able to see if the item is available at the Patrick Power Library or through another Novanet library.

Search within the full-text of the book for particular terms or phrases.

## Maps

With *Google Maps*, you can search for maps and directions to various locations (e.g., cities, streets, or restaurants). Browse streetscapes and explore landmarks as 360-degree images in **Street View** or try the **Satellite** view to see 3D imagery of the environment. Also try out Google’s related service, [Google Earth](#), which offers features including a Maps Gallery, along with Sky, Moon, Ocean, and Mars viewing modes.

## Google Scholar

Google Scholar is a specialized search engine developed for researchers and academics. Its index includes articles, books, patents, court opinions, scientific pre-prints, and government documents from many publishers and academic fields. With Google Scholar, you can search for scholarly literature on your topic – often in full-text – and then retrieve the items from the Patrick Power Library. See the Library’s [Google Scholar Guide](#) for more information.

### **For more help...**

Don’t forget to check out the complete lists of [online tutorials](#) and [library guides](#). You are always welcome to stop by the Research Help desk for further assistance with your assignments.

**Phone: (902) 420-5544**

**Email: [research@smu.ca](mailto:research@smu.ca)**