Table 11.1

How AOL Search Stacks Up Against the Leading Search Engines

Search Engine	Number of Web Pages Indexed
Google	1.2 billion
Netscape Search (powered by Google)	1.2 billion
Yahoo (powered by Google)	1.2 billion
Lycos (powered by FAST)	575 million
HotBot (powered by Inktomi GEN3)	500 million
AltaVista	350 million
Northern Light	330 million
Excite	250 million
AOL Search (powered by Inktomi)	110 million
MSN Search (powered by Inktomi)	110 million

Note: Search engine sizes are based on figures reported as of January 2001 by Search Engine Watch (www.searchenginewatch.com).



Figure 11.1 You'll find press releases and other information about AOL Time Warner at the company's Web site.

✔ Tips

- To see how AOL Search measures up against the leading search engines when it comes to database size, see **Table 11.1**.
- In late 1998, AOL bought Netscape Communications, so AOL Search and Netscape Search are now owned by the same company.
- For news and information about AOL and its parent company, AOL Time Warner, visit `www.aoltimewarner.com/press` (**Figure 11.1**).

The AOL Search Home Page

Nicely designed and refreshingly clutter-free, the AOL Search home page (**Figure 11.2**) provides you with three different ways of finding information. You can search the Web by entering a query in a very basic search form, browse the Web by topic, or use a set of specialized tools for some of the most common day-to-day search tasks.

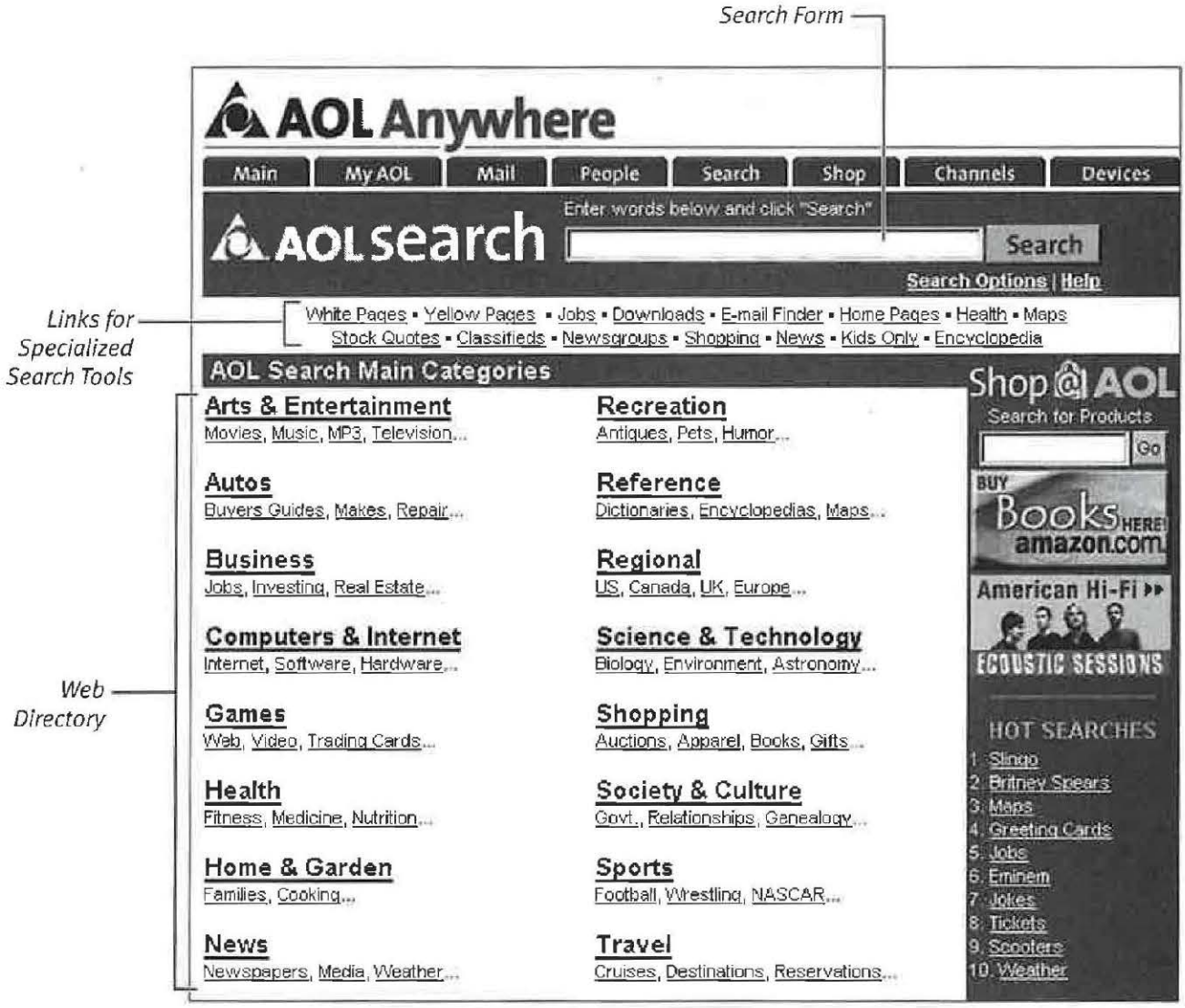


Figure 11.2 The AOL Search home page looks like this, whether you access it via AOL or the Web.



Figure 11.3 AOL subscribers can use the AOL toolbar's Internet/Search the Web option to get to the AOL Search home page.



Figure 11.4 There's nothing complicated about the AOL Search form—just type your query in the text box and click the Search button.

As mentioned previously, anyone with Internet access can use AOL Search, which is located on the Web at `search.aol.com`. Subscribers to AOL's online service can also get to the AOL Search home page by signing on to AOL and then clicking the toolbar's Internet/Search the Web option (**Figure 11.3**).

Search form

The search form for AOL Search (**Figure 11.4**) includes a box for entering your query and a Search button to submit it. AOL Search defaults to doing an AND search, looking for *all* the words and phrases you type, so it's not necessary to use plus signs (+) or the Boolean operator AND, but you can if you wish. (AOL Search supports a full range of Boolean operators, including proximity operators and parentheses for nested searches.)

✔ Tip

- AOL Search automatically looks for your search words in both AOL content and the Web. But what if you want to limit your search to one or the other?

  You might try the Search Options link, right below the Search button. It takes you to a page offering "Where should we look?" radio buttons for AOL Only or On the Web Only. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to work. We did more than a dozen "AOL Only" searches for features that we know AOL offers (games, horoscopes, and photography, among others), and got "no results found" messages every time.

Web directory

AOL Search's Web directory (**Figure 11.5**) comes from the Open Directory Project (dmoz.org), a human-compiled guide to the best Web sites, organized in outline fashion, with 16 main topics and hundreds of subtopics and sub-subtopics. You can click on any topic (or subtopic) that appears on the AOL Search home page and then "drill down" through the various levels of the directory (**Figure 11.6**) to locate Web sites that might be of interest.

✔ Tips

- Unlike Yahoo (www.yahoo.com), AOL Search doesn't give you the option of limiting your search to topic categories in the Web directory. But it *does* include matching Web-directory topic categories in your search results.
- The Open Directory Project is owned by AOL, which acquired it along with Netscape Communications in 1998. Despite the change in ownership, the process for building the directory remains the same—volunteer editors from around the world who are knowledgeable on a particular topic take responsibility for reviewing Web sites and selecting the best ones for inclusion in the directory.



Figure 11.5 The Web directory is organized into 16 main categories, shown here in bold.

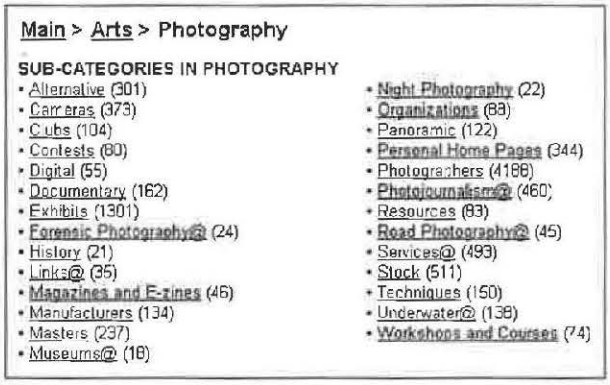


Figure 11.6 The Arts & Entertainment category includes Photography, which is further broken down into more than two dozen sub-categories. The numbers tell you how many Web sites you'll find by clicking on each link.

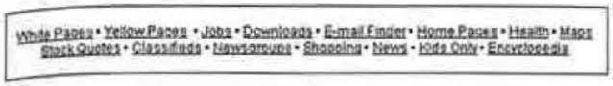


Figure 11.7 Often one of these specialized tools can get you the answer you need faster than a regular Web search.



Figure 11.8 Clicking this logo takes you back to the AOL Search home page.

Specialized search tools

The AOL Search home page includes links for a set of specialized tools that come in handy for everyday search tasks—looking up e-mail addresses and phone numbers in yellow pages and white pages directories, checking stock prices, getting maps and driving directions, locating product information, and so forth (**Figure 11.7**).

✔ Tips

- To make AOL Search your Web browser's default home page, see "Customizing Your Web Browser" in Chapter 4.
- You can return to the AOL Search home page at any time by clicking the AOL Search logo (**Figure 11.8**) that appears on every page.

Searching with AOL Search

There are two important points to keep in mind when searching with AOL Search:

- AOL's overall goal is to help you find what it considers to be the *best* information related to your search. Consequently, it favors its own proprietary content and Web sites that have been selected by AOL editors (and the Open Directory Project's volunteer subject experts) over Web sites from the spider-created Inktomi database. You won't even be shown Web pages from Inktomi if matches are found in these other sources.
- Anyone with Internet access can use AOL Search, but unless you're an AOL subscriber and you have signed in with your screen name and password, you won't be shown AOL content.

To enter a query:

1. If you're an AOL subscriber, sign on to AOL and use the toolbar's `Internet/Search the Web` option to go to the AOL Search home page. Subscribers and non-subscribers alike can access the home page by going directly to `search.aol.com`.
2. Type your query—expressed as a plain-English question or one or more unique keywords—in the search form (**Figure 11.9**). If you type a question, leave off the question mark at the end because that's one of the symbols AOL Search uses for a wildcard character.
3. To look for an exact phrase, enclose the words in double quotes: `"digital photography"`.

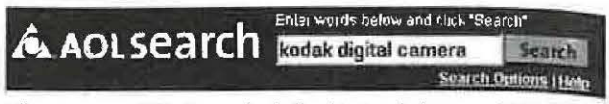


Figure 11.9 AOL Search defaults to doing an AND search, so it would interpret a query like this to mean you want to find items with all three words.

4. You can use the Boolean operators AND and OR (uppercase *not* required) to combine words and phrases. AND isn't really necessary, however, because AOL Search defaults to doing an AND search.

   You can also use plus signs (+) in front of required words and phrases.

5. If you want to *exclude* a word or phrase from your results, use the Boolean operator NOT: `photography NOT fashion`.

✔ Tips

- Instead of going to the AOL Search home page, AOL subscribers can simply enter a query in the AOL navigation bar's text box and click Search to submit it (**Figure 11.10**).
- AOL Search is *not* case sensitive, so you'll get the same results whether you type your queries in uppercase, lowercase, or a mix of the two.
- Two types of wildcard characters can be used in AOL Search queries.

  To match *multiple* characters anywhere in a word (beginning, middle, or end), use an asterisk: `photog*` would find references to *photograph*, *photographer*, and *photographic*.

  To match a *single* character, use a question mark (?): `adapt?r` would find references to both *adapter* and *adaptor*. `Fran?` would find both *Frans* and *Franz*.



Figure 11.10 AOL subscribers don't have to go to the AOL Search page. They can type a query in the AOL navigation bar's text box and click Search to submit it.

To view your search results:

1. Click the Search button (or hit Enter) to submit your query.
2. Your search results (**Figure 11.11**) will be organized into as many as four sections:
   - **Recommended Sites.** The items here include AOL's proprietary content, "official" Web sites for companies and celebrities, and other Web sites selected by AOL's editorial staff.
   - **Sponsored Links.** These are paid listings for sites offering products and services related in some way (often quite loosely) to your search words.
   - **Matching Sites.** Typically the largest section, this includes AOL content and Web sites from the Open Directory Project. You can scroll through the entire list or click the Show Me link for AOL Only or Most Popular Sites (**Figure 11.12**).
   - **Matching Categories.** These are topic categories from the Open Directory Project that may be relevant to your search (**Figure 11.13**).

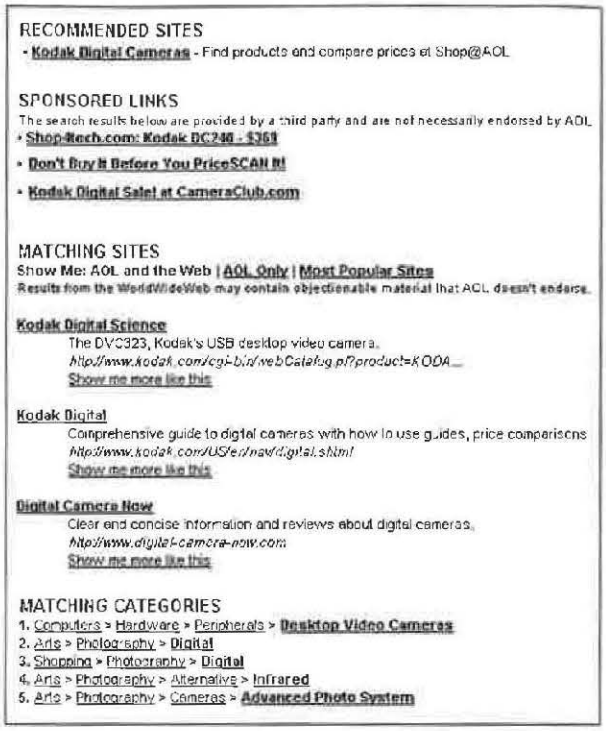


Figure 11.11 Here's an example of how AOL Search presents results. You may not be able to read the individual items here, but you'll get a sense of how a typical results page is organized.

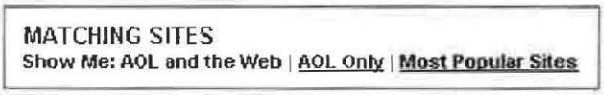


Figure 11.12 You can view a subset of your Matching Sites results by clicking the link for AOL Only or Most Popular Sites.

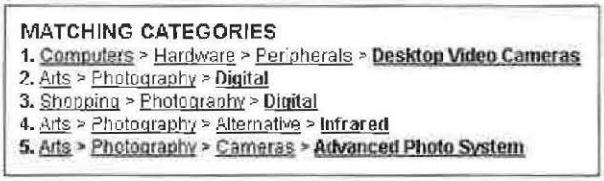


Figure 11.13 Matching Categories come from the Open Directory Project. For recommendations on the best Web sites on a particular topic, just click its link.

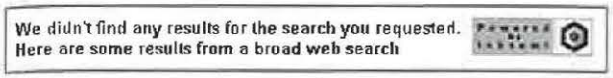


Figure 11.14 AOL Search displays this message to alert you that the results that follow are from the Inktomi database.



Figure 11.15 Click the Web Pages tab to display results from the Inktomi database. (AOL Search uses *Web Sites* to refer to its original set of results and *Web Pages* for results that come from Inktomi.)



Figure 11.16 Until the technology is perfected, the Show me more like this option is likely to be a waste of time.

In addition to these four sections, your results may include two additional sets of results:

- **Matching Web Pages.** These results come from the Inktomi database. They are displayed automatically (**Figure 11.14**) if no results are found for any of the other four sections. Otherwise, you have to click the Web Pages tab (**Figure 11.15**).
- **Matching News Articles**. Displayed only if you click the Related News tab that may appear at the top of your search results page, these items come from *The New York Times*, major news wires (Associated Press, Reuters, and Bloomberg), and other news sources.

3. You can visit any item on the search results page by clicking its link.

✔ Tips

- You can increase the likelihood of being presented with all six categories of AOL Search results by limiting the number of words you type in the search box.
- The Show me more like this link (**Figure 11.16**) for Web sites on the search results page is a neat idea, but the technology isn't quite there yet. Ask for more sites like the one for *Popular Photography* magazine, for example, and you'll be presented with a list of other magazines starting with the letter *P*.

  In most cases, you'll probably have better luck using the Matching Categories section to find similar sites.
- AOL Search doesn't give you any control over how your results are displayed.

To refine an AOL Search query:

1. One way to refine a query is to simply add another unique keyword or phrase and run the search again. AOL Search looks for *all* the words that you type in the search box, so this has the effect of searching *within* your original results (also referred to as *set searching*).
2. Use the Matching Categories section to get ideas for additional keywords. And remember that you can use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT, etc.) to combine words and phrases.
3. Another technique you might try is to look for words in close proximity to one another, which can often cut down considerably on the number of irrelevant hits (**Figure 11.17**). AOL Search supports three different proximity operators: ADJ, NEAR, and W/*n*. See the AOL Search Quick Reference (**Table 11.2**) for examples of each.



Figure 11.17 A proximity search using the Boolean operator NEAR may produce better results than simply typing `kodak digital camera` in the search box.



Figure 11.18 To learn more about AOL Search, including new features that may have been added, click the `Help` link.

✔ Tips

- Don't struggle too much with refining your search. Instead, try another search engine that offers a larger database of Web pages and better tools for refining a query (field searching, case sensitivity, limiting a search to a specific language, etc.). AltaVista, Google, or one of the other "Big Six" engines covered in Part 2 of this book would be a good place to go for a "second opinion."
- For a summary of search rules and examples for AOL Search, see the AOL Search Quick Reference (**Table 11.2**).
- For AOL Search's own help information, click the `Help` link that appears below the Search button (**Figure 11.18**).

Table 11.2

AOL Search Quick Reference

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Plain-English Question	Type a question that expresses the idea or concept, using as many words as necessary. Don't include a question mark, because it may be interpreted as a wildcard character.	Does Norm Abram have a Web site
Phrase Search	Type the phrase enclosed in **double quotes**.	"New Yankee Workshop"
AND Search (multiple words and phrases, each of which *must* be present)	Type words or phrases separated by a space.	"paint shaver" clapboard
	You can also use the Boolean operator AND (uppercase or lowercase) to connect two or more search terms, or put plus signs (+) directly in front of required search terms. All three examples will produce the same results.	"paint shaver" AND clapboard +"paint shaver" +clapboard
OR Search (multiple words and phrases, any one of which may be present)	Use the Boolean operator **OR** (uppercase or lowercase) to combine words and phrases.	woodworking OR cabinetry
NOT Search (to exclude a word or phrase)	Use the Boolean operator **NOT** (uppercase or lowercase) to exclude a word or phrase.	"custom windows" NOT software
Case-Sensitive Search	Not available.	
Date Search	Not available.	
Field Search	Not available.	
Nested Search	Use **parentheses** to group search expressions into more complex queries.	hardware AND (antique OR reproduction)
Proximity Search	AOL Search offers three different proximity operators, which you can type in uppercase or lowercase:	
	ADJ to find words next to each other. The example would find *paint stripping* and *stripping paint*.	paint ADJ stripping
	NEAR or **NEAR/n** to find one search term within a specified distance (*n* is number of words) from another. The example would find *moss* within five words of *roof*.	moss NEAR/5 roof
	W/n to find one search term within a specified distance (*n* is number of words) *after* another. The example would find *roof* within three words after *moss*.	moss W/3 roof
Wildcard Search	Use an **asterisk (*)** to match *multiple* characters anywhere in a word (beginning, middle, or end). The example would find *cabinetmaker*, *cabinetry*, and *cabinets*.	cabinet*
	Use a **question mark (?)** to match a *single* character.	"anders?n windows"

12

EXCITE



Good to Know

- One of the original Web search engines, Excite is now part of Excite@Home, a company that provides Internet portal features and high-speed cable service.
- Excite supports the use of Boolean operators and makes it easy to search for news and multimedia files.
- But its database is relatively small (250 million pages) and it lacks "power search" options like field searching, case sensitivity, and wildcards.
- If you don't like Excite's cluttered home page, you can "personalize" it, or enter your queries on a page devoted to searching.

Like many successful high-tech ventures, Excite was conceived in the garage of a suburban California home. It was the brainchild of six young software developers, fueled by burritos and a strong desire to "work together and do something entrepreneurial." They launched their service in 1995, went public a year later, and in 1999 merged with @Home, a leader in broadband "always-on" cable Internet services.

Now one of the most popular Internet portals, Excite supports the use of Boolean operators and nested searches for creating complex queries. It also offers some nice features for locating multimedia files and for searching and tracking news stories.

On the downside, Excite lacks many of the "power search" features that Internet users have come to expect, like searching Web page titles and other fields, doing case-sensitive searches, and incorporating wildcards in their queries.

Another drawback to Excite is the relatively small size of its database. Currently 250 million pages, Excite's database is more than twice the size of the one used by AOL Search and MSN Search. (Both are powered by Inktomi's 110-million-page database.) But it's substantially smaller than the 1.2-billion-page Google database—which is also used by Netscape Search and Yahoo—and the databases of the other Big Six engines.

Consequently, if your Excite search is unsuccessful—or whenever thoroughness counts—be sure to try Google (www.google.com) or one of the other Big Six engines.

✔ Tips

- To see how Excite's database stacks up against all the leading search engines covered in this book, see **Table 12.1**.
- For more information about Excite and its parent company, Excite@Home, scroll down to the bottom of the Excite home page (www.excite.com) and click Press Releases. In addition to news stories, you'll find a brief company history, Q&A, and a short broadband tutorial (**Figure 12.1**).

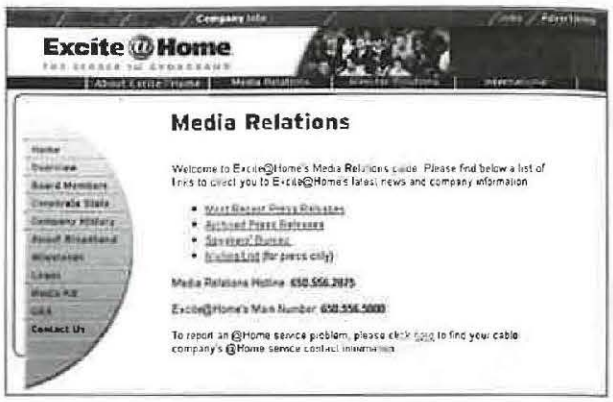


Figure 12.1 You can learn more about the Excite search engine and its parent company by clicking Press Releases on the home page.

Table 12.1

How Excite Stacks Up Against the Leading Search Engines

Search Engine	Number of Web Pages Indexed
Google	1.2 billion
Netscape Search (powered by Google)	1.2 billion
Yahoo (powered by Google)	1.2 billion
Lycos (powered by FAST)	575 million
HotBot (powered by Inktomi GEN3)	500 million
AltaVista	350 million
Northern Light	330 million
Excite	250 million
AOL Search (powered by Inktomi)	110 million
MSN Search (powered by Inktomi)	110 million

Note: Search engine sizes are based on figures reported as of January 2001 by Search Engine Watch (www.searchenginewatch.com).

Contact Information

Excite@Home
Redwood City, California
650-556-5000 (voice)
650-556-5100 (fax)
www.excite.com

The Excite Home Page

The first thing you'll notice when you visit the Excite home page (`www.excite.com`) is that it's without a doubt the most cluttered and disorganized Web page imaginable. Like a teenager's room, there's stuff strewn everywhere. And depending on the season, you may even find that the site has been "decorated" for Halloween, or that snowflakes are drifting across the screen.

The good news is that, with Excite's Personalize feature, you can get rid of the clutter and create your own version of the Excite home page that's more conducive to searching (**Figure 12.2**). Once you've done that (we'll tell you how later in this section), you'll find it much easier to focus on the most important search-related features—the Excite search form and Quick Tools.

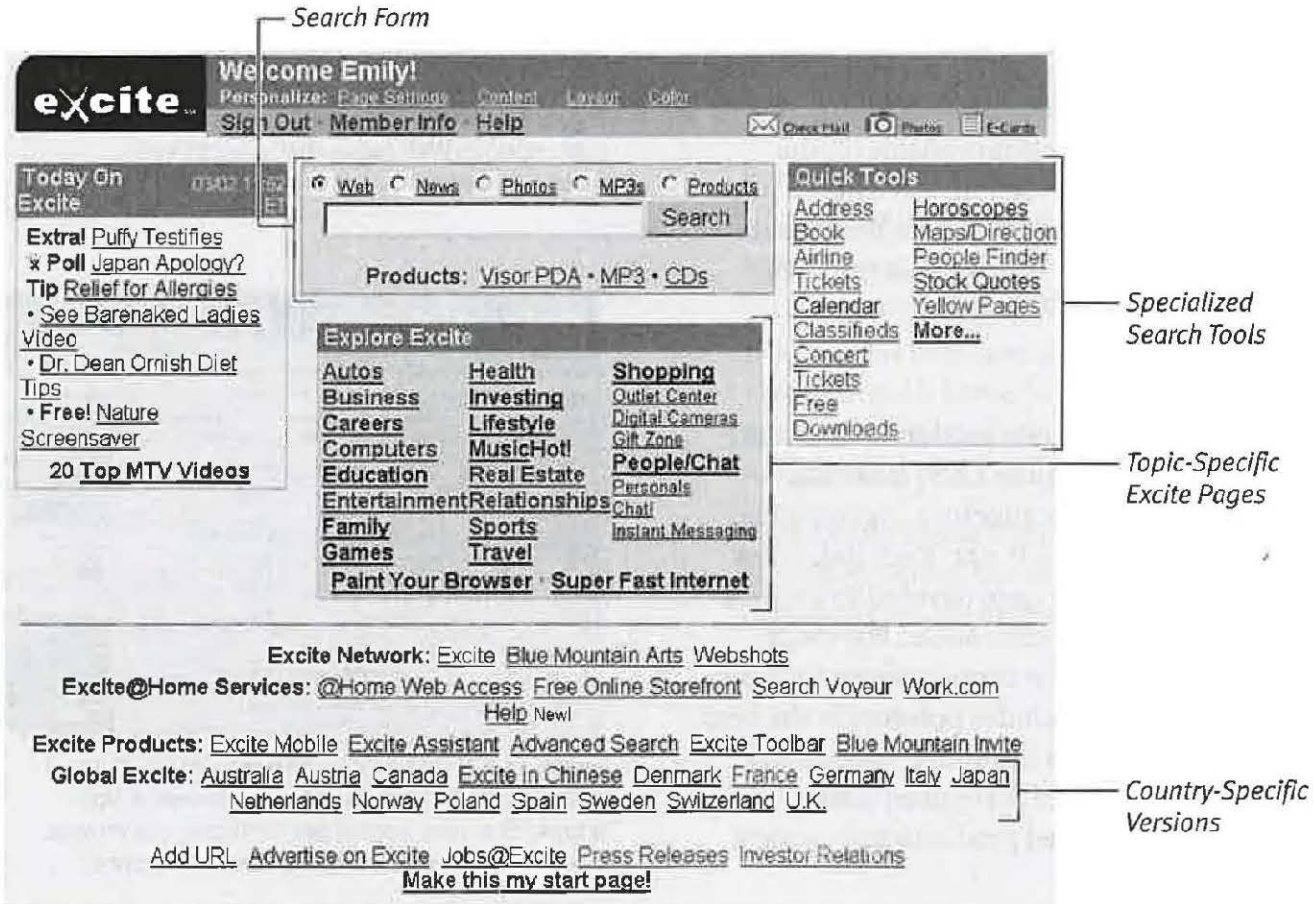


Figure 12.2 The Excite home page, optimized for searching using the Personalize feature.

Search form

Excite's search form (**Figure 12.3**) makes it easy to focus your search on a specific type of information. Just type your query in the search box and click the appropriate radio button to indicate whether you want to search the Web, news articles, photo archives, MP3 files, or product information.

You can search for phrases in quotes, or use the Boolean operators AND, OR, AND NOT, and parentheses to combine words and phrases.

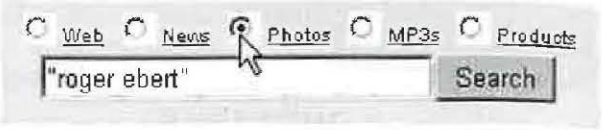


Figure 12.3 Excite's search form lets you specify whether you want to search the Web or another database, such as a photo archive.

Quick Tools

A section called Quick Tools (**Figure 12.4**), conveniently located to the right of the search form on our personalized Excite home page, provides links to a number of *specialized* reference tools—airline farefinder, searchable classifieds, concert and sporting events locator, maps and driving directions, yellow pages, people-finding tools, and so forth.

The Quick Tools section is a standard feature of every personalized Excite home page. The same set of tools is available on the regular (cluttered) version of the home page, but you might very well miss it because it's buried in a section called Explore Excite under the heading "Tools."

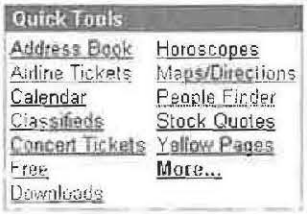


Figure 12.4 You can use this collection of reference tools for many common day-to-day searches, like getting stock quotes or looking up phone numbers and e-mail addresses.



Figure 12.5 Excite has created a set of topic-specific Web pages that you can get to with these links.

✔ Tips

- The Explore Excite section of the Excite home page (**Figure 12.5**) looks like a traditional Web directory, organized by topic, but it's really not. Each link takes you to a special page devoted to a single broad subject area—`Autos`, `Business`, `Careers`, etc. The content varies by topic, but typically includes pointers to the best Web sites, news headlines, specialized search tools, and (of course) advertisements for related products and services (**Figure 12.6**).

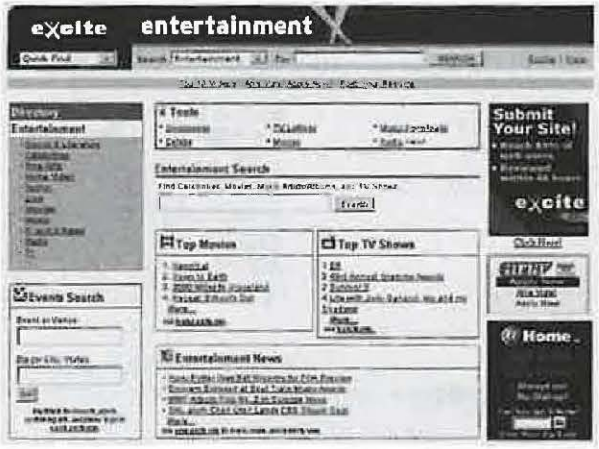


Figure 12.6 Here's an example of what you'll find if you click the Explore Excite `Entertainment` link: a topic directory, special search forms, top movies and TV shows, entertainment news, and more.

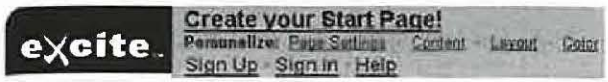


Figure 12.7 The links for Excite's Personalize feature are next to the logo on the home page. Until you go through the sign-up process, Page Settings, Content, Layout, and Color are inactive.



Figure 12.8 For Excite searches without the portal interface, use this search-only page at www.excite.com/search.

- Excite is offered in several country-specific versions that you can access from a set of links on the home page labeled "Global Excite."
- To use Excite's Personalize feature for creating your own customized home page, click Sign Up or Create your Start Page! (**Figure 12.7**) and complete the form. Once you've done that, you can pick and choose the content for your page, move features around on the screen, and even change the color scheme if you're so inclined.
- If you'd rather not bother with the Personalize feature, here's another solution to the home-page clutter problem: Go to www.excite.com/search and do your Excite queries from that page (**Figure 12.8**). It's devoted exclusively to searching.
- To make Excite your Web browser's default home page, use these URLs in your browser's home-page setup Address or Location box:

  http://www.excite.com
  (for the Excite home page)

  http://www.excite.com/search
  (for the special Excite search page)

  If you're not sure how to access your Web browser's home-page setup feature, see "Customizing Your Web Browser" in Chapter 4.
- To get back to the Excite home page from anywhere within the site, click the Excite logo that appears at the top of every page.

Searching with Excite



Figure 12.9 It's a good idea to use plus signs (or the Boolean operator AND) in your searches, because Excite defaults to looking for *any* of the words (OR search).

Whether you use the search form on the Excite home page (`www.excite.com`), or the one on the page devoted exclusively to searching (`www.excite.com/search`), the process for entering a query is the same. Here are the key points to keep in mind:

- You can express your query as a plain-English question, one or more unique keywords, or a phrase in quotes.
- By default, Excite performs an OR search, looking for *any* of the words in your query.
- For more precise searches, you can use plus and minus signs to require (+) or exclude (-) words and phrases, or use the Boolean operators AND, OR, AND NOT, and parentheses. Full caps are *required* for Boolean operators.
- Except for Boolean operators, Excite searches are *not* case sensitive. You'll get the same results whether you use upper-case, lowercase, or a mix of the two.

To enter a query:

1. Type a question, several unique keywords, a phrase in quotes, or a Boolean expression in the search form text box (**Figure 12.9**).
2. If you want to tell Excite to search a database other than the Web, click the appropriate ratio button above the search form text box. Options include `News`, `Photos`, `MP3s`, and `Products`.

✔ Tip

- For a description of the non-Web databases that Excite searches, click `Help` on the Excite home page and then select `Search Help` from the Directory/Info menu.



Figure 12.10 Here's an example of how Excite presents search results. The total number of matches appears in the upper left.



Figure 12.11 The Show `Titles Only` display option lets you quickly scan page titles for information that might be of interest.

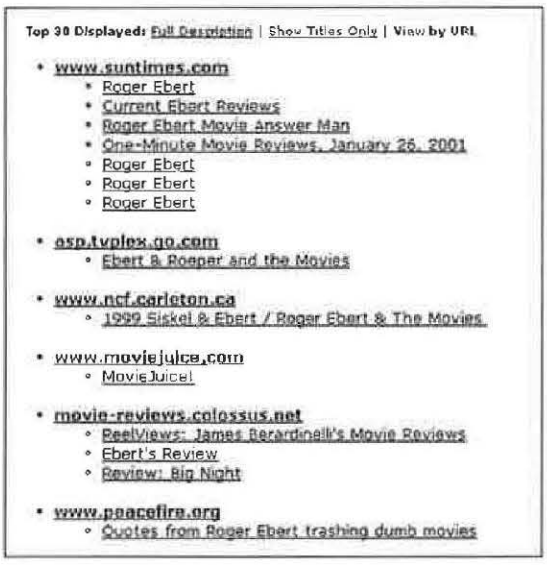


Figure 12.12 Using the `View by URL` display option, it's easy to see that the *Chicago Sun-Times* Web site is the place to go for Roger Ebert movie reviews.

To view your search results:

1. Click the Search button (or hit Enter) to submit your query.
2. Your results will be presented 10 to a page, with the best matches listed first, along with a count of the total number of matches found (**Figure 12.10**).
3. To get a quick handle on your search results, try one of Excite's alternate display options:

   `Show Titles Only` presents your results *without* the descriptions (**Figure 12.11**).

   `View by URL` organizes the titles by Web address (**Figure 12.12**)—a neat way to find out if there's a particular site that has lots of pages devoted to the information you're looking for.
4. You can view any item listed on your results page by clicking its title link.

continues on next page

5. To find related items, click the Web Directory link (**Figure 12.13**) at the top of your search results list. Web Directory matches (**Figure 12.14**) come from LookSmart (www.looksmart.com), a human-compiled guide to the best sites on the Web.

   LookSmart is organized in hierarchical fashion, with major topics, subtopics, and sub-subtopics. To help you understand where a particular item in your search results fits in the LookSmart Directory, Excite includes the main topic category, and each level of subtopics, separated by a greater-than symbol (>).

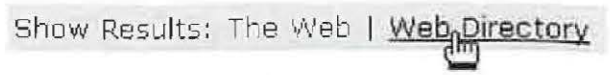


Figure 12.13 To find Web pages in the LookSmart Directory with content related to your query, click this link, located at the top of your search results list.

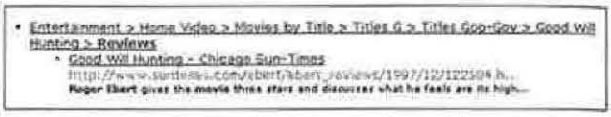


Figure 12.14 The first two lines in this Web Directory listing tell you where the item is categorized by LookSmart. A greater-than symbol (>) separates each topic from the next level down.

✔ Tips

- Many of the leading search engines "cluster" search results and show only one or two pages from any given Web site. The idea is to present you with as much variety as possible, especially in the first couple of pages of your search results.
- Excite takes a different approach. They give you *all* the matching pages. But they also provide you with the View by URL display option, which you can use to get a bird's-eye view of where your results are coming from.

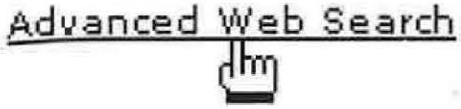


Figure 12.15 This link gives you access to Excite's Advanced Web Search page.

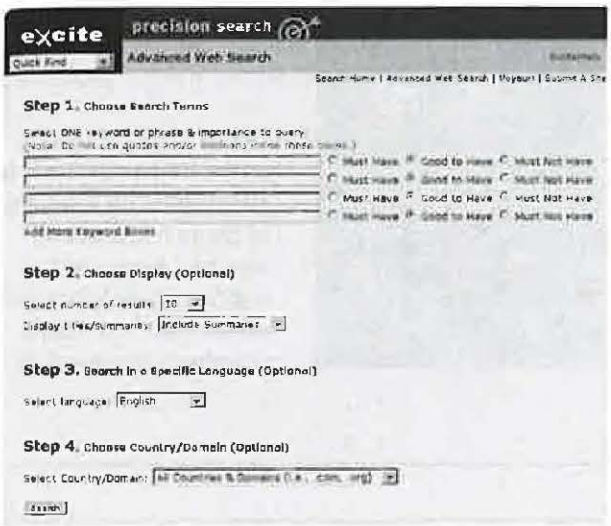


Figure 12.16 If you want to limit your search to a specific language, domain type, or country, use this search form. You can also boost the number of search results per page from 10 to 50.

To refine an Excite query:

1. Try adding another search term, and be sure to use the Boolean operator AND or plus signs (+) to tell Excite that each word or phrase in your query *must* appear in the results.

   Remember that by default, Excite searches for *any* of the words. So if you type multiple words in the search box without using AND or plus signs, you're sure to get a huge number of irrelevant results.

2. You might also try clicking Advanced Web Search (**Figure 12.15**) on the search results page and re-entering your query in the form presented there (**Figure 12.16**).

   With the Advanced Web Search form, you can limit your search to Web pages written in a specific language, and focus on a particular domain type (com, edu, gov, etc.) or country.

   You can also boost the number of search results that are presented on each page from 10 to 50.

3. If you're not successful finding what you're looking for after a couple of attempts with Excite's search forms, try another search engine that has a larger database and more sophisticated search tools.

continues on next page

✔ Tips

- For a summary of Excite search terms and how to use them, see the Excite Quick Reference (**Table 12.2**).
- You can learn more about Excite features, including new ones that may have been added, by clicking Help on the Excite home page. Then pick a topic from the Directory/Info menu (**Figure 12.17**).

  The two menu options that you're likely to find most useful are Search Help (for descriptions of Excite databases and general and advanced search tips) and NewsTracker (to learn how to set up a your own personal "news clipping service").

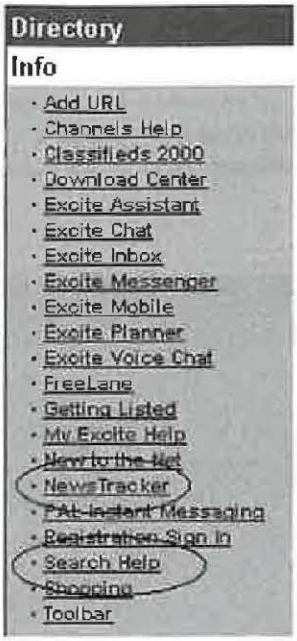


Figure 12.17 This menu on the Help page leads to information on a variety of Excite features and services. NewsTracker and Search Help are the most important from a searcher's perspective.

Table 12.2

Excite Quick Reference

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Plain-English Question	Simply type a phrase or question that expresses the idea or concept. Use as many words as necessary.	thoroughbred racing in Kentucky Where can I find information about thoroughbred racing in Kentucky?
Phrase Search	Type the phrase enclosed in **double quotes**.	"Kentucky Derby"
AND Search (multiple words and phrases, each of which *must* be present)	Use a **plus sign (+)** in front of each word or phrase that *must* appear in the results.	+racing +"Churchill Downs"
	Alternatively, you can use **AND** (full caps required) between the words or phrases.	racing AND "Churchill Downs"
OR Search (multiple words and phrases, any one of which may be present)	Type words or phrases separated by a space.	Derby Preakness
	Alternatively, you can use **OR** (full caps required) between each word or phrase.	Derby OR Preakness
NOT Search (to exclude a word or phrase)	Use a **minus sign (-)** directly in front of the word or phrase you want to exclude from your results. (Note that there's no space between the minus sign and the search word.)	"horse race" -Derby
	Or use NOT or AND NOT (all caps) in front of the word or phrase you want to exclude.	"horse race" NOT Derby "horse race" AND NOT Derby
Case-Sensitive Search	Not available.	
Date Search	Not available.	
Field Search	Not available.	
Nested Search	Use **parentheses** to group Boolean expressions into more complex queries.	racing AND (horse OR thoroughbred)
Proximity Search	Not available.	
Wildcard Search	Not available.	

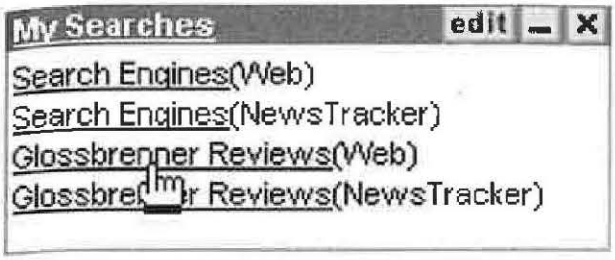


Figure 12.18 We can periodically check for reviews of our books—on the Web and in various news sources—by clicking a link in the My Searches box.

- Excite's NewsTracker feature isn't as easy to set up and use as Northern Light's Search Alert Service (covered in Chapter 9). But it's worth considering if you plan to make Excite your primary search engine and you'd like to be able to monitor news stories.

- You can do the same thing for both Web and news searches—enter a search once and save it so that you can run it again from time to time—with an Excite feature called Saved Searches.

  You'll first have to use the Personalize feature to create a customized version of the Excite home page, as described earlier in this chapter. Then click Content on the Excite home page and select Saved Searches from the Content menu. Click Done and a My Searches box will appear on your personalized Excite page.

  Once you've added your searches using the edit button in the My Searches box, you can run them any time you wish by simply clicking the appropriate link (**Figure 12.18**).

13

MSN SEARCH



Good to Know

- MSN Search is the default search engine for Internet Explorer (IE) and Microsoft Network (MSN).
- It's powered by Inktomi's 110-million-page database (the smallest of the top search engines covered in this book) and uses LookSmart for its Web directory.
- MSN Search encourages you to keep your queries simple. Boolean operators and most other "power search" features are available only with Advanced Search.
- Despite its relatively small database and limited search options, MSN Search does a surprisingly good job of returning high-quality results.
- For more precise searching of a larger database, use Google or one of the other "Big Six."

MSN Search is among the most heavily used search sites on the Internet. But its popularity is due in large measure to the fact that it has a built-in audience—the four million subscribers to the Microsoft Network (MSN) Internet service, plus the tens of millions of brand-new computer users each year whose systems come equipped with the Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE) Web browser.

The vast majority of these MSN subscribers and new computer users have no idea that they can change IE's default home page from MSN (`www.msn.com`) to some other Web site of their choosing. Consequently, they leave it set the way it is, and whenever they click the MSN or IE Search button, they're presented with an MSN Search form.

Fortunately, it's possible to get fairly good results with MSN Search, using the simplest of queries. The creators of the site have chosen to emphasize quality *vs.* quantity of search results. (Their objective is to present a small number of highly relevant Web pages on the very first results page.) And they discourage the use of "power search" capabilities—Boolean expressions, field searching, limiting a query by date and language—by relegating these features to the Advanced Search form.

MSN Search even tries to accommodate poor spellers and those prone to typing errors with what it calls a "what you mean is what you get" approach to searching. They've designed their software to recognize common misspellings, so that a search for, say, `Brittany Spears` or `Britney Speers` will nevertheless return Web pages featuring teen singing idol Britney Spears (**Figure 13.1**).

Like its rival America Online (AOL), MSN uses Inktomi's 110-million-page database for its Web-page results. That makes them tied for last place among the major search engines covered in this book when it comes to database size. (See **Table 13.1** for specifics.)

But the relatively small size of the MSN Search database isn't necessarily a problem. Unless you're looking for some very obscure piece of information, or when thoroughness is absolutely essential, it probably doesn't really matter whether you search 110 million Web pages, or 1.2 billion.

The biggest drawback to MSN Search, in our opinion, is that it doesn't allow you to search with much precision. And features like the "what you mean is what you get" approach to common misspellings may work most of the time. But what if you're looking for information on a business associate named *Britt Speers*? Try as you might, MSN Search will insist that "what you mean" is *Britney Spears*!

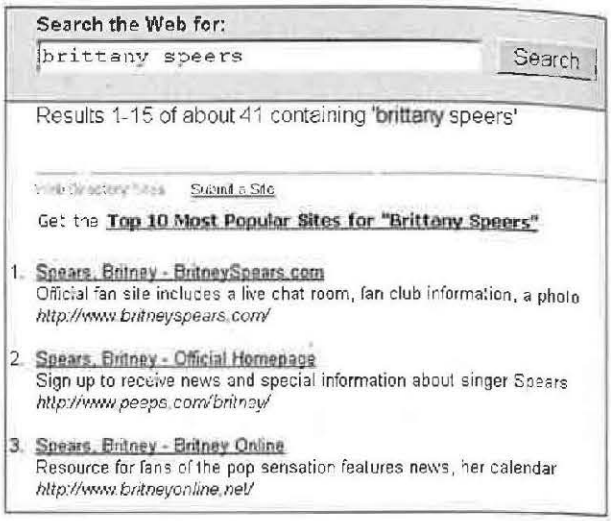


Figure 13.1 Spelling and typing errors are often not a problem for MSN Search. Even though we spelled the name incorrectly, the search engine located several "official" Britney Spears fan pages.

Table 13.1

How MSN Search Stacks Up Against the Leading Search Engines

Search Engine	Number of Web Pages Indexed
Google	1.2 billion
Netscape Search (powered by Google)	1.2 billion
Yahoo (powered by Google)	1.2 billion
Lycos (powered by FAST)	575 million
HotBot (powered by Inktomi GEN3)	500 million
AltaVista	350 million
Northern Light	330 million
Excite	250 million
AOL Search (powered by Inktomi)	110 million
MSN Search (powered by Inktomi)	110 million

Note: Search engine sizes are based on figures reported as of January 2001 by Search Engine Watch (www.searchenginewatch.com).

Contact Information

Microsoft Network
Redmond, Washington
800-386-5550 (customer service)
877-635-7019 (technical support)
www.msn.com (MSN home page)
search.msn.com (MSN Search)

✔ Tips

- Out of curiosity, we did an MSN Search for the "what you mean is what you get" acronym WYMIWYG (which could be pronounced "why-me-wig," but we're just guessing!). Turns out the acronym has been used since the mid-1990s in educational measurement circles to refer to "What You Measure Is What You Get."

  An obscure fact and a relatively small database, but we found it quickly and easily by simply typing `wymiwyg` in the MSN Search form.

- You won't find an `About` link on the MSN Search page, but if you're interested in reading up on the latest Microsoft and MSN corporate news and information, visit `www.microsoft.com/mscorp`.

The MSN Search Home Page

If you're an MSN or IE user, you've probably already figured out that clicking any button labeled "Search"—on the MSN home page (`www.msn.com`) or on the IE toolbar—takes you to the MSN Search home page (**Figure 13.2**) or some version of the MSN Search form.

You can also go to MSN Search directly, of course, by typing the Web address `search.msn.com` in your browser's Address or Location box.

The MSN Search home page is devoted exclusively to searching. The key features to zero in on are the search form, Web directory, and Advanced Search option.

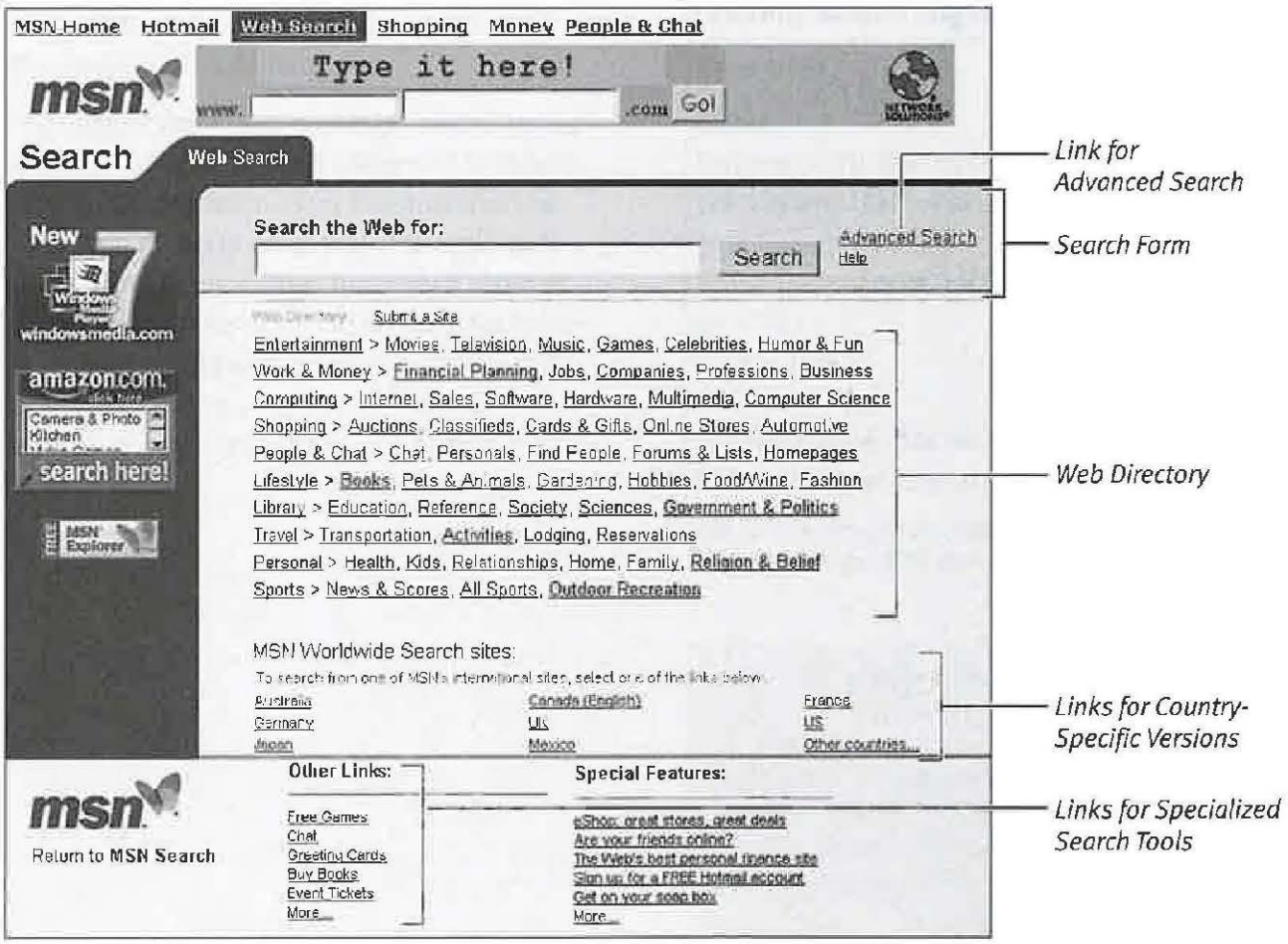


Figure 13.2 The MSN Search home page is devoted exclusively to searching.

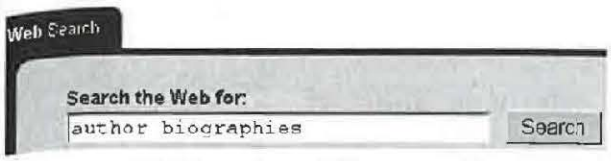


Figure 13.3 MSN Search would interpret this query to mean that you want to find Web pages with *both* words, even though you haven't used plus signs.

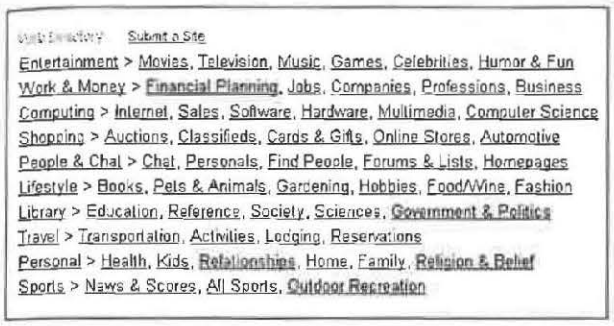


Figure 13.4 The Web directory on the MSN Search home page comes from LookSmart, a human-compiled guide to the best Web sites, organized by topic.

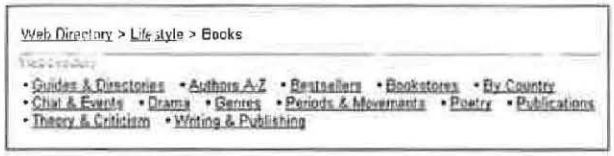


Figure 13.5 We clicked on the Web directory's `Lifestyle` category and found a subcategory called Books, which is further broken down into the subcategories shown here.

Search form

The MSN Search form (**Figure 13.3**) is about as simple as they get—a box for entering your query and a Search button to submit it. MSN Search automatically looks for *all* the words in your query, so it's not necessary to put plus signs (+) in front of required terms.

✔ Tip

- Boolean operators aren't allowed on this search form. In fact, if you combine search terms with `AND` or `OR` (in full caps) on the MSN Search home page, you'll get a "no results found" message. Use lowercase and the Boolean operators will simply be ignored.

Web directory

The Web directory (**Figure 13.4**) on the MSN Search home page is created and maintained by LookSmart (`www.looksmart.com`), a company that employs a staff of editors to identify the best Web sites and organize them into meaningful categories.

When you do an MSN Search, your results include matches from the LookSmart Web directory as well as the Inktomi database of Web pages. But you can also *browse* the directory by clicking the link for one of the 10 major categories (`Entertainment`, `Work and Money`, `Computing`, etc.) or the dozens of subcategories, and then "drill down" through topics of greater specificity (**Figure 13.5**).

✔ Tip

- Unlike Yahoo (`www.yahoo.com`), MSN Search doesn't give you the option of limiting your search to the Web directory. But you can increase the likelihood of finding Web directory matches by using a fairly general word or phrase as your search term.

Advanced Search option

When you want to search with more precision, or exercise some control over how your results are presented, click Advanced Search (**Figure 13.6**) and use the form presented there.

With Advanced Search, you can enter Boolean expressions, boost the number of results per page from 15 to 50, change the sort order, do field searches (titles, links, and domains), and limit your queries in a variety of ways—by language, date modified, and multimedia file type, among others.

✔ Tips

- For a set of specialized tools called Quick Links (**Figure 13.7**) that will help you with common day-to-day search tasks (looking up e-mail addresses and phone numbers, getting maps and driving directions, checking stock market performance, etc.), click More in the Other Links section of the MSN Search home page.
- MSN Search is offered in several country-specific versions that you can access from the home page (**Figure 13.8**). In addition to being presented in the country's native language, the content is also tailored to the country.
- To make MSN Search your Web browser's default home page, see "Customizing Your Web Browser" in Chapter 4.
- You can get back to the MSN Search home page by clicking the Web Search link (**Figure 13.9**) that appears at the top of most pages within the site.



Figure 13.6 The Advanced Search link takes you to a page that gives you access to "power search" features not available on the MSN Search home page.



Figure 13.7 These are just a few of the many specialized search tools you'll find on the Quick Links page.



Figure 13.8 If you live outside the United States—or you simply want to explore the Web from the perspective of another country—try one of MSN Search's country-specific versions.



Figure 13.9 Use this link, which you'll find at the top of most pages within the site, to get back to the MSN Search home page.



Figure 13.10 With MSN Search, it's often best to start with a simple query like this.

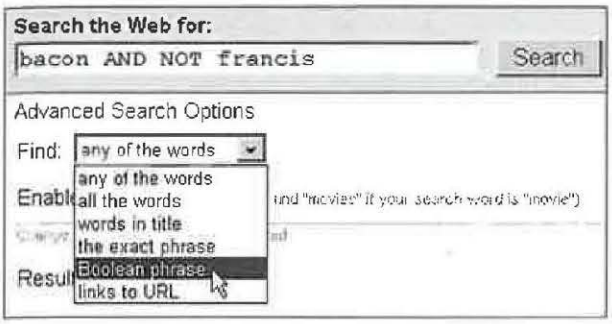


Figure 13.11 For searches that involve *excluding* a word, we've found that using AND NOT on the Advanced Search form works better than using a minus sign (-) on the regular search form.

✔ Tip

- A more effective way to exclude a word or phrase from your search results is to go to the Advanced Search page, type your query in the search box using the Boolean operator AND NOT (in full caps), and choose Boolean phrase from the Find menu (**Figure 13.11**).

Searching with MSN Search

As we've said, the search form on the MSN Search home page is quite simple to use and offers very few options. There are just a few basic rules to keep in mind:

- You can type up to 150 characters in the search form's text box.
- There's no need to use plus signs (+) to combine words and phrases, because MSN Search automatically looks for *all* the words in your query.
- Boolean operators aren't allowed, and including them is likely to result in a "no results found" message.
- Searches are *not* case sensitive, so you'll get the same results whether you type your search terms in uppercase, lowercase, or a combination of the two.

To enter a query:

1. Go to MSN Search (`search.msn.com`) and type a plain-English question or several unique keywords in the search form (**Figure 13.10**).
2. To look for an exact phrase, enclose the words in double quotes: `"reading maketh a full man"`.
3. If you want to *exclude* a word or phrase from your search results, try putting a minus sign (-) in front of it: `bacon -francis` (no space between the minus sign and the search word).

   This may or may not actually eliminate the word from your search results, but it's likely to push pages containing the excluded word farther down in the list.

To view your search results:

1. Click the Search button (or hit Enter) to submit your query.
2. Your results will be presented 15 to a page, along with a count of the total number of matches found (**Figure 13.12**). They'll be organized into as many as five categories:
   - **Popular Search Topics** are designed to help you refine your query by suggesting search words or phrases that might be related (**Figure 13.13**).
   - **Featured Sites** are Web sites from MSN.com and MSN sponsors, some of whom pay for appearing in this section. A special icon is used to identify the official Web site of a company, brand, or product (**Figure 13.14**).
   - **Web Directory Sites** come from the human-compiled LookSmart Directory (the Web directory that's featured on the MSN Search home page).
   - **Top 10 Most Popular Sites** are generated by Direct Hit (**Figure 13.15**), a "popularity engine" that ranks Web sites based on how often users click on them at the Direct Hit Web site (`www.directhit.com`).
   - **Web Pages** come from the 110-million-page Inktomi database. MSN Search does *not* "cluster" search results, so if multiple pages within a Web site match your query, they will all be included in your results.
3. You can visit any Web site on the search results page by clicking its title link.

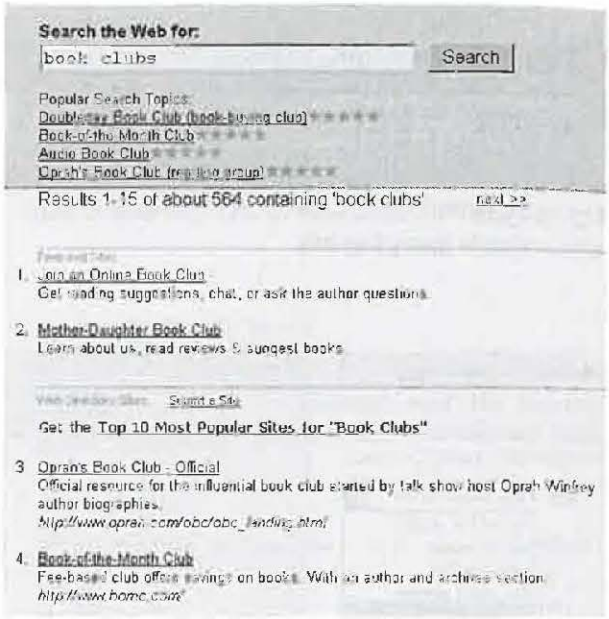


Figure 13.12 Here's an example of how MSN Search presents results. The total number of matches appears in the line right below the shaded box.

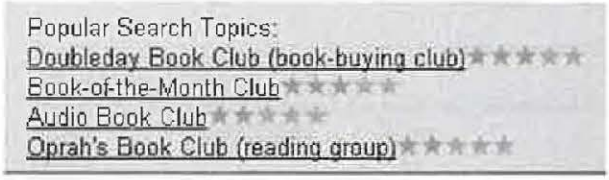


Figure 13.13 The Popular Search Topics section for our book clubs search suggests four topics we might want to explore.

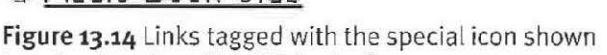


Figure 13.14 Links tagged with the special icon shown here lead to the *official* Web site for a company, brand, or product. Microsoft is part owner of RealNames, the company that registers names and authorizes use of the icon.

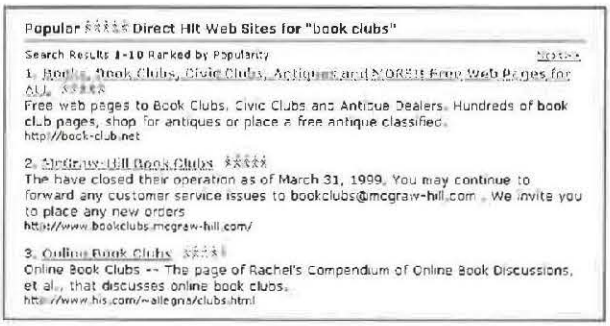


Figure 13.15 MSN Search gets its "Top 10 Most Popular Sites" from a company called Direct Hit.

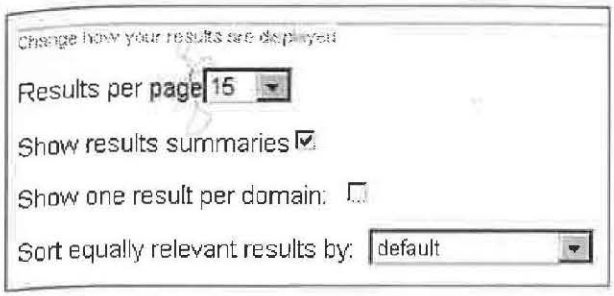


Figure 13.16 To make changes in the way your results are displayed, use these options on the Advanced Search form. Unfortunately, you have to make the changes each time you search.

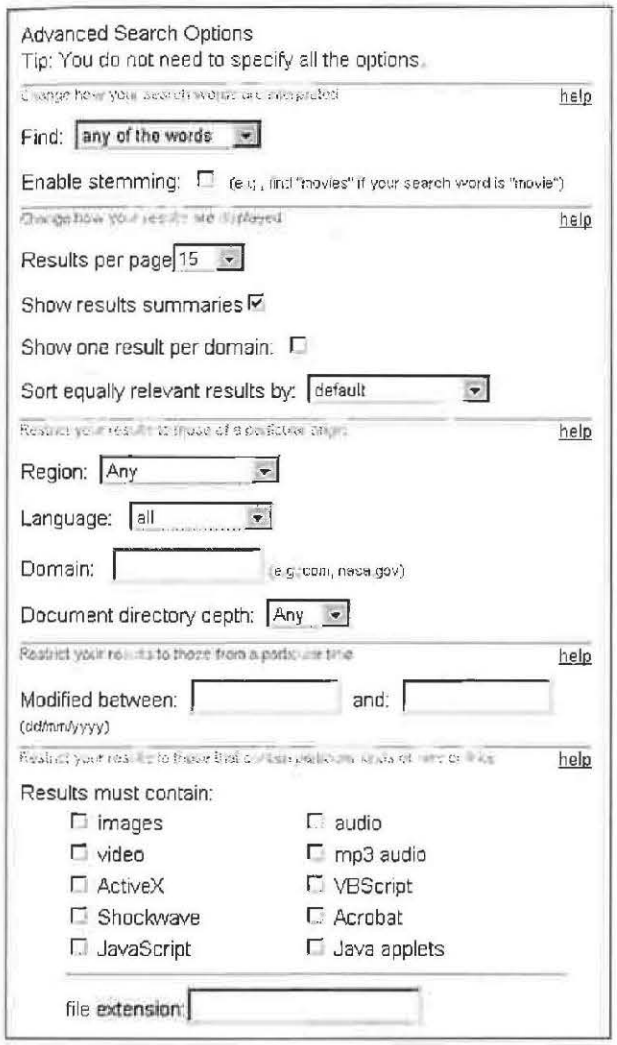


Figure 13.17 The Advanced Search form offers a number of "power search" capabilities that can help you refine a query.

✔ Tips

- If you want to increase the likelihood of being presented with all five categories of MSN Search results, don't enter a long phrase or a plain-English question in the search box. MSN Search's objective is to direct you to the "most popular" or "best" Web sites on a given topic, and the search engine has been designed to do that most effectively when you enter just a couple of search words.
- If you want to be able to control how your results are presented, click Advanced Search and use the form presented there. The Advanced Search display options (**Figure 13.16**) let you boost the number of results per page from 15 to 50, suppress Web-page descriptions, "cluster" results so that you'll only be shown one page per Web site, and sort equally relevant results by date, title, or page depth (how far "down" in the Web site the page is located).

To refine an MSN Search query:

1. Start by reviewing the list of Popular Search Topics (if any) to see if there's one that seems appropriate. If so, click on it to generate a new search.
2. You can also refine an MSN Search by simply adding another unique keyword or phrase to your original query. Since MSN Search looks for *all* the words, this has the effect of searching *within* your original results (also referred to as *set searching*).
3. You might also try clicking Advanced Search on the results page and using the fill-in-the-blanks form (**Figure 13.17**) to refine your query. Advanced Search offers a number of "power search" features not available on the MSN Search home page:

continues on next page

- **Boolean Operators**. You can use AND, OR, AND NOT, and parentheses in your queries to create Boolean expressions and nested searches. Just be sure to type the Boolean operators in *uppercase* and select Boolean phrase in the Find menu (**Figure 13.18**).
- **Field Search**. You can look for words in Web page titles and links using the Find menu's words in title and links to URL options. For links, be sure to type the *complete* URL (including http://) in the Advanced Search form's search box: http://www.bartleby.com.

  To limit a search to a specific domain or domain type (com for commercial, edu for education, org for non-profit organization, etc.), enter that information in the Domain section (**Figure 13.19**)
- **Language Option**. You can limit your search to Web pages written in a specific language.
- **Date Search**. You can focus on Web pages modified within a range of dates.
- **Multimedia/File Search**. You can search for Web pages that include specific types of files (images, audio, video, VBScript, etc.).
- **Stemming**. You can turn on *stemming* (a type of wildcard searching), so that MSN Search will automatically look for both *root* words and *variations*.

If you haven't found what you're looking for after a couple of attempts with MSN Search's regular and Advanced Search forms, try another search engine that has a larger database and more sophisticated search tools.

✔ Tips

- A set of tabs (**Figure 13.20**) at the top of the search results page lets you do a follow-on search for news articles, shopping sites, and yellow-pages listings related to your query.

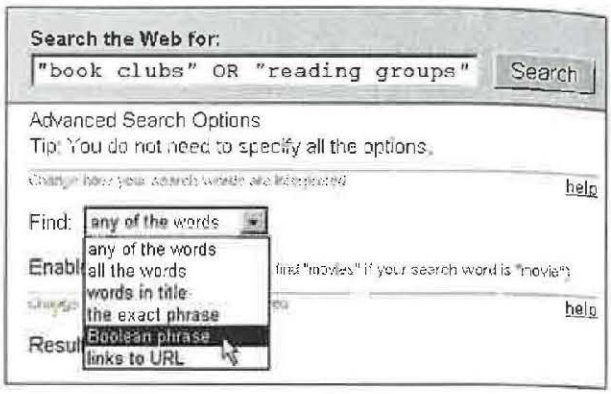


Figure 13.18 You can use Boolean operators on the Advanced Search form. Just remember to type them in *uppercase* and set the Find menu to Boolean phrase.

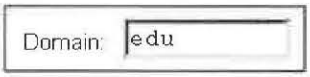


Figure 13.19 Typing edu in the Domain search box tells MSN Search to limit the query to education Web sites (sites whose domain names end in .edu).



Figure 13.20 You can use these tabs to do a quick search of news, shopping, and yellow-pages information, without having to retype your query.



Figure 13.21 The MSN Search help information is accurate and searchable, but we're not crazy about the way it's presented, in a skinny frame like this.

- For a summary of search rules and examples, see the MSN Search Quick Reference for the regular (**Table 13.2**) and Advanced Search (**Table 13.3**) forms.
- MSN Search's own help information, which you can access by clicking Help on the home page and the Advanced Search form, is rather skimpy and difficult to use. It appears in a frame on the right side of your screen (**Figure 13.21**), and you have to *right-click* in the frame order to print a topic ([Control]-click on the Macintosh).
- On the plus side, the help information is searchable and, for the most part, accurately describes MSN Search features. The only topic we encountered that didn't work as advertised was wildcard searching using an asterisk (*) on the Advanced Search page. (Every wildcard search we tried resulted in a "no results found" message.)

Table 13.2

MSN Search Basic Search Quick Reference*

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Plain-English Question	Simply type a question that expresses the idea or concept, using as many words as necessary.	`What's the best place for cross-country skiing in Minnesota?`
Phrase Search	Type the phrase enclosed in **double quotes**.	`"Gunflint Lodge"`
AND Search (multiple words and phrases, each of which *must* be present)	Type words or phrases separated by a space. MSN Search automatically searches for *all* the words, so **plus signs** (+) aren't necessary.	`skiing snowboarding`
OR Search (multiple words and phrases, any one of which may be present)	Not available. Use Advanced Search.	
NOT Search (to exclude a word or phrase)	Use a **minus sign** (-) directly in front of the word or phrase you want to exclude from your results. (Note that there's no space between the minus sign and the search word.)	`skiing -downhill`
Case-Sensitive Search	Not available.	
Date Search	Not available. Use Advanced Search.	
Field Search	Not available. Use Advanced Search.	
Nested Search	Not available. Use Advanced Search.	
Proximity Search	Not available.	
Wildcard Search	Not available. Use Advanced Search.	

Note: This table applies to searches using the form on the MSN Search home page. For Advanced Search, see* ***Table 13.3**.*

Table 13.3

MSN Search Advanced Search Quick Reference*

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Plain-English Question	Type a question that expresses the idea or concept and choose `all the words` on the Find menu.	`When was the Mir space station launched"?`
Phrase Search	Type the phrase without any special punctuation and choose the `exact phrase` on the Find menu.	`Hubble space telescope`
AND Search (multiple words and phrases, each of which *must* be present)	Type words or phrases separated by a space and choose `all the words` on the Find menu.	`"space camp" scholarships`
	Alternatively, you can combine words and phrases with the Boolean operator **AND** (full caps required) and choose `Boolean phrase` on the Find menu.	`"space camp" AND scholarships`
OR Search (multiple words and phrases, any one of which may be present)	Type words or phrases separated by a space and choose `any of the words` on Find menu.	`NASA "space program"`
	Alternatively, you can combine words and phrases with the Boolean operator **OR** (full caps required) and choose `Boolean phrase` on the Find menu.	`NASA OR "space program"`
NOT Search (to exclude a word or phrase)	Use the Boolean operator **AND NOT** (full caps required) with the word or phrase you want to exclude and choose `Boolean phrase` on Find menu.	`shuttle AND NOT challenger`
Case-Sensitive Search	Not available.	
Date Search	Specify range of dates in the **Modified between** section of the search form, using the format dd/mm/yyyy.	`Modified between: 01/01/2001 and: 30/06/2001`
Field Search	Three types of field searches are possible:	
	Titles. Type search words or phrases in the search box and choose `words in title` on Find menu.	`astronaut hall of fame`
	Links. Type complete URL (including `http://`) in search box and choose `links to URL` on Find menu.	`http://www.astronaut.org`
	Domain. Use Domain section of form to limit your search by domain type (`com`, `edu`, `gov`, `org`, etc.) or to a specific domain.	`Domain: com` `Domain: nasa.gov`
Nested Search	Combine search terms with **Boolean operators** and **parentheses,** and choose `Boolean phrase` from the Find menu.	`(NASA OR "space program") AND budget AND 2001`
Proximity Search	Not available.	
Wildcard Search	Use **Enable stemming** option to automatically search for both *root* words and *variations*. With stemming enabled, a search for `budget` would also find references to *budgets*, *budgetary*, and *budgeting*.	`budget`

Note: This table applies to searches using MSN Search's Advanced Search form. For searches using the form on the MSN Search home page, see* ***Table 13.2**.*

14

NETSCAPE SEARCH

Netscape Search

If you use Netscape Navigator as your Web browser, you're probably at least somewhat familiar with the Netscape home page and its various "portal features," chief among them Netscape Search, for finding information on the Web. When you install Netscape for the first time, or upgrade to a new version, the Netscape home page loads automatically. The hope is that you'll leave it that way and begin all your online sessions—and do all your Web searches—from `home.netscape.com`.

As you may recall from the section in Chapter 4 on "Customizing Your Web Browser," you can make *any* Web site your default "home page" location. But if you're currently using the Netscape home page and you're happy with the features it offers, by all means stick with it. This chapter will help you understand what Netscape's search function is all about and how to use it to best advantage.

Good to Know

- Netscape Search is the default search engine for the Netscape portal site, and it's one of several search options for Netscape Navigator.
- Search results come from three main sources: Netscape's Smart Browsing database of "official" Web sites, the Open Directory Project, and the gigantic Google database.
- You can use Boolean operators, plus and minus signs, and wildcards with Netscape Search, but the site offers little else in the way of "power search" features.
- Where it really shines is in locating Web sites for companies, brand-name or trademarked products, and sites that have been identified as the best on a particular topic.

Toward that end, there are two things you need to know up front:

- **What are you searching?** The creators of Netscape Search have decided to emphasize *quality* over *quantity*. When you do a search, your results come from several different sources, including the 1.2 billion-page Google database (`www.google.com`). But whenever possible, Netscape Search *first* presents you with Web sites from its Smart Browsing database, and a manageable number of related topic categories and Web sites from the Open Directory Project (`dmoz.org`).
- **What search tools are available?** The search tools that are offered with Netscape Search are quite limited. You can use Boolean operators (AND, OR, and ANDNOT), plus and minus signs, and wildcards, but that's about it. You can't search by date or language, focus on specific fields, do case-sensitive searches, or control the way your results are displayed.

Despite the lack of "power search" tools, Netscape Search is a good choice when your objective is to find some of the *best* Web sites on a particular topic, or when you're looking for brand-name products and therefore want to be able to zero in on the official company site.

Contact Information

Netscape Communications
Mountain View, California
650-254-1900 (voice)
650-528-4124 (fax)
home.netscape.com (Netscape portal)
search.netscape.com (Netscape Search)

Table 14.1

How Netscape Search Stacks Up Against the Leading Search Engines

Search Engine	Number of Web Pages Indexed
Google	1.2 billion
Netscape Search (powered by Google)	1.2 billion
Yahoo (powered by Google)	1.2 billion
Lycos (powered by FAST)	575 million
HotBot (powered by Inktomi GEN3)	500 million
AltaVista	350 million
Northern Light	330 million
Excite	250 million
AOL Search (powered by Inktomi)	110 million
MSN Search (powered by Inktomi)	110 million

Note: Search engine sizes are based on figures reported as of January 2001 by Search Engine Watch (www.searchenginewatch.com).



Figure 14.1 *Estée Lauder* is an Internet keyword, so with Netscape 6 and IE 5, you can use that instead of www.elcompanies.com to get to the company's Web site.

✔ Tips

- The Google database of Web pages used by Netscape Search is the largest of the leading search engines. (See **Table 14.1** for a comparison.)
- Netscape's Smart Browsing database of company and product Web pages is similar to the RealNames database used by Google, MSN Search, and others. Both are designed to enable you to access a Web site by typing an *Internet keyword* (instead of a complicated URL) in your browser's Address or Location box (**Figure 14.1**).

  RealNames (www.realnames.com) charges companies for the privilege of "owning" an Internet keyword, while inclusion in Netscape's Smart Browsing database is free.
- The Open Directory Project, a volunteer effort to identify the best Web sites and organize them into meaningful topic categories, was acquired by Netscape in 1998. Some 20,000 volunteer editors from around the world—people who are passionate about a particular subject—contribute to the directory.
- Close on the heels of Netscape's acquisition of the Open Directory Project, America Online (AOL) bought Netscape. To read about this and other Netscape developments dating back to 1994, go to home.netscape.com/company.

The Netscape Search Home Page

Located at `search.netscape.com`, the Netscape Search home page (**Figure 14.2**) is nicely organized and designed exclusively for searching and browsing the Web. It includes a search form, Web directory, and links for a set of specialized tools for handling common search tasks.



Figure 14.2 The Netscape Search home page gives you two ways to look for information on the Web: using a search form or browsing by topic.

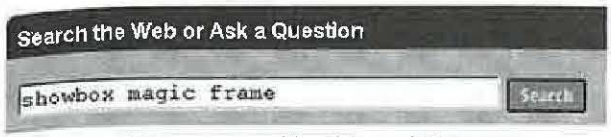


Figure 14.3 Type a query like this and Netscape Search will look for all three words, even though we haven't used AND or plus signs.



Figure 14.4 Netscape owns the Open Directory Project, so that's the Web directory that appears on the Netscape Search home page.



Figure 14.5 We clicked on Society & Lifestyles and then Genealogy to reach this set of sub-subtopics. The numbers in parentheses tell you how many reviewed Web sites you'll find for each one.



Figure 14.6 Often one of these specialized tools can get you the answer you need faster than a regular Web search.

Search form

The search form for Netscape Search is very straightforward—a box for entering your query and a Search button to submit it (**Figure 14.3**). Netscape Search defaults to doing an AND search, looking for *all* the words that you type in the search box, so it's not necessary to use the Boolean operator AND or to put plus signs (+) in front of required terms, although you can if you wish.

Web directory

The Web directory (**Figure 14.4**) on the Netscape Search home page comes from the Open Directory Project (`dmoz.org`) and is similar in concept to Yahoo (`www.yahoo.com`). You can click on any one of the 16 major topic categories and then "drill down" through the various subtopics and sub-subtopics (**Figure 14.5**).

The Web sites you'll encounter in the directory are generally among the best available on a given topic, because they've been hand-selected by knowledgeable editors—not rounded up by an automated spider program.

✔ Tip

- Unlike Yahoo, Netscape Search doesn't give you the option of limiting your search to the Web directory. But you can increase the likelihood of finding Web directory matches (rather than Web pages from the Google database) by using a fairly general word or phrase as your search term.

Specialized search tools

The Netscape Search home page includes links for a set of specialized tools for common day-to-day search tasks—looking up e-mail addresses and phone numbers in yellow pages and white pages directories, getting maps and driving directions, locating product information, and so forth (**Figure 14.6**).

continues on next page

You'll also find a link for International Search, which gives you access to versions of Netscape Search designed for specific countries and for languages other than English.

✔ Tips

- The links in the Learn More and Get Involved sections of the home page provide details on Netscape's Internet keywords, the Smart Browsing feature, and the Open Directory Project (including how to become an editor yourself).
- To make Netscape Search your Web browser's default home page, see "Customizing Your Web Browser" in Chapter 4.
- If you use Netscape Navigator as your browser, its Search button (shown in **Figure 14.7** for Netscape 6 and **Figure 14.8** for earlier versions) takes you to a multi-option search page called Net Search (**Figure 14.9**).

  Each time you visit Net Search, one of nine search engines will be chosen for you at random—not a good idea in our opinion, because they all work a bit differently, and who wants to master all nine?

  Fortunately, you're given the option of setting a default search engine. Just click its name and then click the "Keep" checkbox.
- Whatever browser you use, you can return to the Netscape Search home page at any time by clicking the Search button with the magnifying-glass icon (**Figure 14.10**) that appears at the top of most pages within the site. (Note that this is different from the Search buttons shown in Figures 14.7 and 14.8.)



Figure 14.7 With Netscape 6, the Search button's Search the Web option takes you to the Net Search page shown in **Figure 14.9**.



Figure 14.8 With older versions of Netscape, use the Search button shown here to get to the Net Search page.

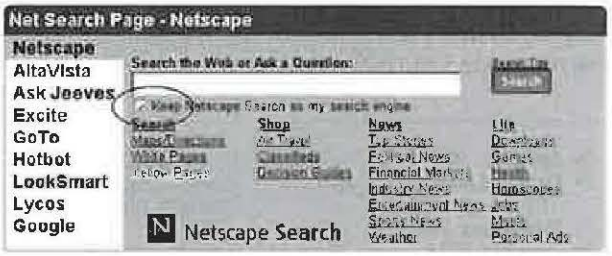


Figure 14.9 The Net Search page features a different search engine each time you visit unless you designate a favorite by clicking its name and then the Keep checkbox.



Figure 14.10 Click this button, which you'll find at the top of most pages within the Netscape Search site, to get back to the home page.



Figure 14.11 With Netscape Search, it's often best to start with a simple query like this one, especially if you're looking for product information or a company-sponsored Web site.



Figure 14.12 You can also enter a Netscape Search query using this form on the Netscape home page (`home.netscape.com`).

Searching with Netscape Search

Even though the search tools available to you with Netscape Search are quite limited, you can get very good results as long as you keep a few general concepts in mind:

- Netscape Search is designed to help you find what it considers to be the *best* information related to your search, so it favors Web sites from its Smart Browsing database and the Open Directory Project over those from the spider-created Google database.
- You won't even be shown Web pages from Google if matches are found in these other sources.
- You can increase the likelihood of finding Web sites in Netscape Search's non-Google sources by limiting the number of words in your query and avoiding the use of plus signs (+).
- Conversely, you can virtually assure that your results will come from Google by using three or more unique keywords and putting plus signs in front of each of them.

To enter a query:

1. Go to the Netscape Search home page at `search.netscape.com` (or the Netscape home page at `home.netscape.com`) and type your query—expressed as a plain-English question or one or more unique keywords—in the search form (**Figures 14.11** and **14.12**). If you're looking for a company or a brand-name or trademarked product, use that as your search term.
2. To look for an exact phrase, enclose the words in double quotes: `"pentium processor upgrade"`.

continues on next page

3. You can use the Boolean operators AND and OR (uppercase *not* required) to combine words and phrases. AND isn't really necessary, however, because Netscape Search defaults to doing an AND search.

   You can also use plus signs (+) in front of required words and phrases, but if you do, you're not likely to find Smart Browsing and Open Directory Project Web sites in your search results.

4. If you want to *exclude* a word or phrase from your results, put a minus sign (-) in front of it: `sherlock -holmes` (no space between the minus sign and the search word) to find information on the Macintosh Sherlock application rather than the fictional detective (**Figure 14.13**).

   Or use the Boolean operator ANDNOT (one word, uppercase *not* required): `sherlock ANDNOT holmes`.

✔ Tips

- Netscape Search is *not* case sensitive, so you'll get the same results whether you type your queries in uppercase, lowercase, or a mix of the two.
- You can use an asterisk (*) as a wildcard character to look for multiple characters at the end of a word: `spam*` to find references to *spam*, *spamkiller*, *spammer*, and *spamming*.

To view your search results:

1. Click the Search button (or hit Enter) to submit your query.
2. Your results (**Figure 14.14**) will be organized into as many as five sections:
   - **Partner Search Results**. Similar to what other search engines refer to as "sponsored links," these are paid listings from GoTo (`www.goto.com`), a pay-for-placement search site.

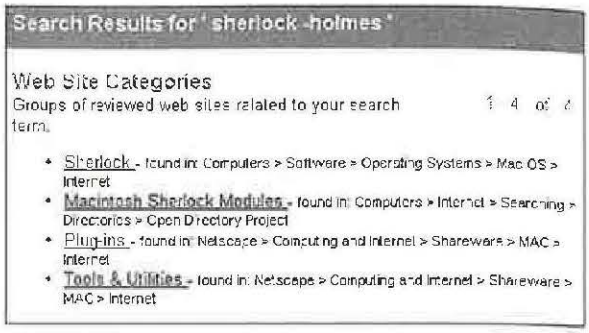


Figure 14.13 A search for `sherlock -holmes` proved to be just the ticket for finding Web-site topic categories dealing with Macintosh software.



Figure 14.14 Here's an example of how Netscape Search presents results. Don't worry about trying to read the individual items. Our point is simply to show you how the results page is organized.

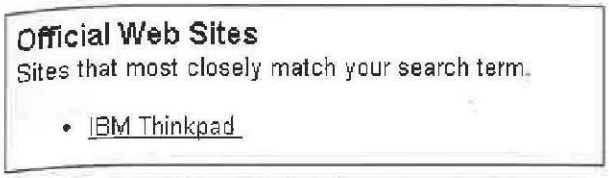


Figure 14.15 Clicking this link (or typing the *Internet keyword* `ibm thinkpad` in your browser's Address or Location box) will take you to the official company Web site for IBM's Thinkpad computer.

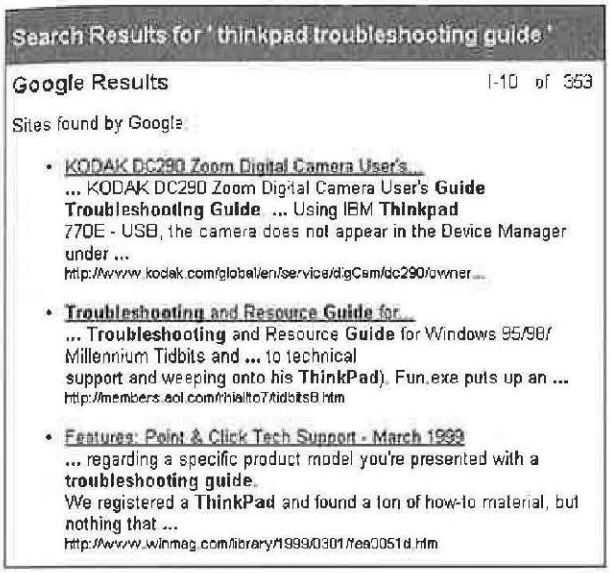


Figure 14.16 A search for `thinkpad troubleshooting guide` was automatically forwarded to Google because no matches were found in Netscape Search's other databases.

- ▲ **Official Web Sites.** The sites listed here come from Netscape's Smart Browsing database, described earlier in this chapter (**Figure 14.15**).
- ▲ **Netscape Pages.** Created by Netscape, each page presented here offers a collection of tools, services, and content related (sometimes rather loosely) to your search words.
- ▲ **Web Site Categories.** These are topic categories from the Open Directory Project that may be relevant to your search.
- ▲ **Reviewed Web Sites.** Also from the Open Directory Project, these are specific Web sites that have been reviewed and categorized by volunteer editors.

If no results are found for any of these sections, Netscape Search will check the Google database and report what it finds there (**Figure 14.16**).

3. You can visit any Web site on the search results page by clicking its title link.

✔ Tips

- Don't forget that you can increase the likelihood of being presented with all five categories of Netscape Search results by limiting the number of words you type in the search box.
- Netscape Search doesn't give you any control over how your results are displayed.

To refine a Netscape Search query:

1. Scroll down to the bottom of the search results page, where you'll find the Search Again form (**Figure 14.17**) with your original query.
2. One way to refine a query is to simply add another unique keyword or phrase and run the search again. Netscape Search looks for *all* the words that you type in the search box, so this has the effect of searching *within* your original results (also referred to as *set searching*).
3. You might also try adding a word or phrase that you want Netscape Search to *exclude* from your results, using a minus sign (-) or the Boolean operator ANDNOT.



Figure 14.17 You'll find this form, with your original query entered for you, at the bottom of your search results page.

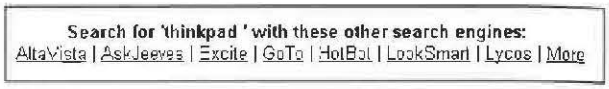


Figure 14.18 You can use these links to send your query to another search engine for a "second opinion."



Figure 14.19 To forward your search to Google, use this link, which you'll find in the left column of your search results whenever Google wasn't included the first time around.



Figure 14.20 In addition to search tips, this set of links will provide you with more details on Internet keywords, the Open Directory Project, and other "behind-the-scenes" aspects of Netscape Search.

✔ Tips

- Netscape Search makes it easy to get a "second opinion" from another search engine. Using the links that appear right above the Search Again form (**Figure 14.18**), you can do the same search with a variety of leading engines.
- If your original set of results came from sources other than Google, you'll find a `Search again` link (**Figure 14.19**) that you can click on to send your query to the Google database.
- For more precise Google searching, go to `www.google.com` and perform your search there. At the Google site, you can use field-search terms to limit your query to Web page titles, domains, links, and URLs. (See Chapter 6 for more on searching with Google.)
- For a summary of search rules and examples, see the Netscape Search Quick Reference (**Table 14.2**).
- For Netscape Search's own help information, use the Learn More links on the home page (**Figure 14.20**), and the `Help` link that appears at the bottom every page within the site.

Table 14.2

Netscape Search Quick Reference

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Plain-English Question	Simply type a question that expresses the idea or concept, using as many words as necessary.	Where can I buy accessories for my IBM Thinkpad?
Phrase Search	Type the phrase enclosed in **double quotes.**	"thinkpad accessories"
AND Search (multiple words and phrases, each of which *must* be present)	Type words or phrases separated by a space, or use the Boolean operator AND (uppercase or lowercase) to connect two or more search terms. Both examples would produce the same results.	IBM thinkpad IBM AND thinkpad
	You can also put **plus signs (+)** directly in front of required search terms, in which case your results will be limited to Partner Search Results (paid listings from GoTo) and Web pages from Google.	+IBM +thinkpad
OR Search (multiple words and phrases, any one of which may be present)	Use the Boolean operator **OR** (uppercase or lowercase) to combine words and phrases.	notebook OR laptop
NOT Search (to exclude a word or phrase)	Use a **minus sign (-)** directly in front of the word or phrase you want to exclude from your results. (Note that there's no space between the minus sign and the search word.)	notebook -thinkpad
	Alternatively, you can use the Boolean operator **ANDNOT** (one word, uppercase or lowercase) followed by the word you want to exclude.	notebook ANDNOT thinkpad
Case-Sensitive Search	Not available.	
Date Search	Not available.	
Field Search	Not available.	
Nested Search	Not available.	
Proximity Search	Not available.	
Wildcard Search	Use an **asterisk (*)** to search for multiple characters at the end of a word only. The example would find references to *technological*, *technologies*, and *technology*.	technolog*

PART 4

SPECIALIZED SEARCH ENGINES

Chapter 15:	Deja for Newsgroup Searches	231
Chapter 16:	Topica for Mailing List Searches	241
Chapter 17:	Argus Clearinghouse Subject Guides	247
Chapter 18:	InfoSpace People-Finding Tools	253
Chapter 19:	Zip2 for Business Searches	261
Chapter 20:	Other Search Tools from A to Z	269

Specialized Search Engines

Good as they are, the all-purpose search engines presented in Parts 2 and 3 of this book aren't the best tools for every job. Sometimes the fastest, easiest way to find a particular type of information is with a special-purpose search engine. For example:

- **Deja** for searching Usenet newsgroups.
- **Topica** for searching Internet mailing lists.
- **Argus Clearinghouse** for finding topical guides to Internet resources, written by experts in a particular field.
- **InfoSpace** for tracking down e-mail addresses, home addresses, and phone numbers.
- **Zip2** for finding businesses, whether they're on the Internet or not.

Chapters 15 through 19 focus on these five search engines. You'll find step-by-step examples and Quick Reference guides, similar to the ones for the all-purpose search engines in Parts 2 and 3.

Chapter 20 takes a slightly different approach. Here you'll find brief descriptions of 29 of the best *single-subject* search tools. In most cases, they are so specialized that using them is as easy as filling in the blanks. The most difficult thing about these search tools is remembering to use them.

✔ Tip

- Sooner or later, you're bound to need a specialized search engine for a subject that we haven't covered in this part of the book. When that happens, try one of these sites, which offer searchable directories of specialized search tools:

  Invisible Web
  `invisibleweb.com`

  Search Engine Guide
  `searchengineguide.com`

  Search Engine Watch
  `www.searchenginewatch.com/links`

DEJA FOR NEWSGROUP SEARCHES 15



The World Wide Web gets most of the press coverage, but for many people, Usenet newsgroups are the best thing about the Internet. Think of them as "electronic-word-of mouth"—millions of people from all over the world sharing information, ideas, and personal experiences. Some 35,000 newsgroups are out there, each devoted to a specific topic. And unlike Web sites, nobody owns or controls newsgroups, so people are free to say anything they wish—rants, raves, and tirades included.

You have to take a lot of it with a grain of salt, of course. But the fact is, newsgroups can be an excellent source of information—especially if you use a search engine like Deja to find the really good stuff. Deja also makes it relatively easy to avoid the "Get Rich Quick," "Free Horoscope Reading," and other widely distributed junk-mail postings—generally known as *spam*—that have made browsing and subscribing to newsgroups (as opposed to targeted searching) practically intolerable. Some general-purpose search engines (AOL Search, HotBot, and Yahoo, among others) give you the option of searching newsgroups as well as the World Wide Web. In fact, most of them actually use Deja to handle newsgroup queries made from their search forms. So why bother learning more about Deja? Why not simply master a couple of general-purpose

What You Can Search

- Recent Usenet newsgroup postings (one month's worth)
- Usenet newsgroup archives (older postings dating back to May 1999)

Contact Information

Deja, Inc.
Austin, Texas
512-343-6397 (voice)
512-502-8889 (fax)
www.deja.com

search engines and rely on them whenever you want to explore newsgroups?

The main reason is that the Deja search capabilities offered by HotBot and other general-purpose search engines are but a *subset* of what's available at the Deja Web site (**Figure 15.1**). To take full advantage of this incredible resource—especially if you're an active participant in newsgroups—you'll want complete access to the full range of Deja databases and search capabilities, including the following:



Figure 15.1 The Deja home page includes a basic search form and newsgroup directory.

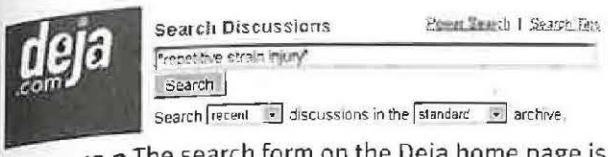


Figure 15.2 The search form on the Deja home page is fine for quick newsgroup queries.

- **Newsgroup Archives**. Deja has the largest collection of indexed, archived Usenet newsgroup postings available anywhere. The search form on the Deja home page (**Figure 15.2**) allows you to search the current database for recent postings (one month's worth). Or you can search for older material dating back as far as May 1999. (Eventually, the service hopes to archive postings all the way back to March 1995.)
- **Power Search**. Deja is *optimized* for searching newsgroups. You can do a quick search on a couple of keywords. But for even better results, and to avoid being swamped with irrelevant hits, use the Power Search page.
- **Query Language**. The Deja query language is quite sophisticated and well documented, with all the standard types of searches (AND, OR, NOT, and phrase searching), as well as more advanced features like proximity and field searching.

In short, the Deja Web site is superb, and for serious newsgroup searching, it just can't be beat.

✔ Tips

- If you'd like to know more about Internet history, terminology, and slang, look for *The Internet Glossary and Quick Reference Guide*, published by AMACOM. We wrote the *Internet Glossary* in collaboration with Alan Freedman, author of *The Computer Desktop Encyclopedia* and *The Computer Glossary* (also from AMACOM).
- For more information about the company behind Deja, click on `About Deja.com` at the bottom of the Deja home page.
- *Usenet* (short for *Usenet Network*), is a program that was created in 1979 to help foster communication and the exchange of ideas among people interested in the UNIX operating system. The program was designed to use the Internet to automatically transmit news about UNIX. That's why, to this day, the features Usenet offers are called *newsgroups*. But these days, of course, news about the UNIX operating system can be found in only a tiny fraction of the 35,000 or so newsgroups in existence.
- Deja was founded in 1995 as a service called *Deja News*, a pun on the phrase *déjà vu*—that odd sensation we all get from time to time of having heard or seen something before.

Understanding Newsgroup Names

The Deja site (www.deja.com) is so well designed and well documented that you'll have newsgroup searching mastered in no time. But before you plunge in, you need to know a couple of things about the terminology associated with Usenet newsgroups.

First, in recognition of the possible confusion over the term *Usenet newsgroups*, Deja often refers to them instead as *discussions* or *discussion forums*.

Second, the names of specific newsgroups (or discussions) don't make much sense until you understand the concept of *newsgroup hierarchies*—the system used on the Internet to organize the groups into general areas, topics, and subtopics. The most popular top-level newsgroup hierarchies are `alt`, `biz`, `comp`, `misc`, `news`, `rec`, `sci`, and `soc` (**Table 15.1**).

Specific topics and subtopics under these main areas are designated by the addition of a *period* (or *dot*) and an identifying word: for example, `misc.health` (pronounced "miss-dot-health"), `misc.health.arthritis`, and so forth.

One of the best ways to get a handle on Usenet newsgroup names and hierarchies is to spend a few minutes browsing newsgroups with Deja's Browse Discussions feature.

To browse newsgroups:

1. Click on one of the top-level newsgroup hierarchies in the Browse Discussions area (**Figure 15.3**) of the Deja home page.

Table 15.1

Popular Newsgroup Hierarchies	
alt	Alternative newsgroups—everything from sexy stuff to the truly offbeat.
biz	Business-related newsgroups that welcome advertising and marketing messages.
comp	Computer-related newsgroups.
misc	Grab-bag category, including the popular misc.jobs and misc.forsale.
news	Groups concerned with the Usenet network (not current affairs, as you might think).
rec	Recreation and hobbies.
sci	Science-related newsgroups.
soc	Groups devoted to social issues, often related to a particular culture.



Figure 15.3 Deja's Browse Discussions feature lets you explore newsgroups by *hierarchy*, the system used on the Net to name and organize discussion groups.

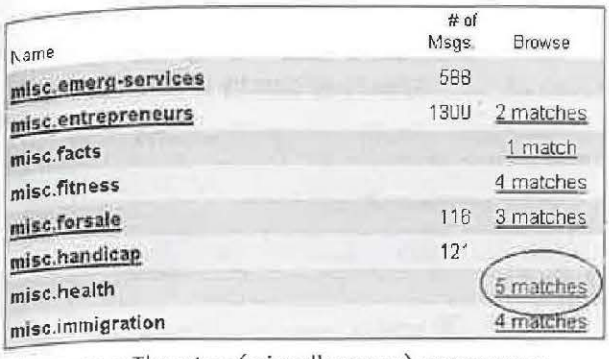


Figure 15.4 The `misc` (miscellaneous) newsgroup hierarchy includes `misc.health`, which, according to information in the Browse column, is further broken down into five additional newsgroups.

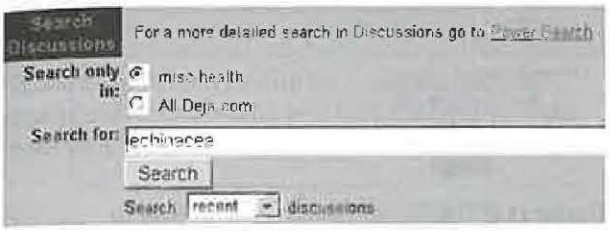


Figure 15.5 As you're browsing newsgroups with Deja, you can always stop and do a search of the category you're exploring.

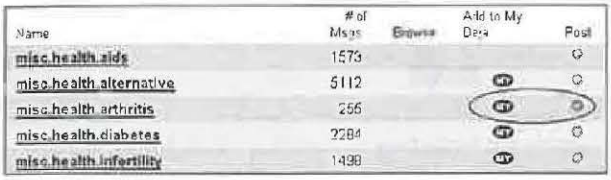


Figure 15.6 To subscribe or post a message to a specific newsgroup, click on the My button (to subscribe) or the P button (to post). The first time around, you'll also have to register with Deja.

2. Continue working your way down through the resulting pages until you find the specific newsgroup that you're looking for. At each point along the way, the Browse column (**Figure 15.4**) alerts you to the existence of additional subtopics.
3. You can stop at any point and do a keyword search of a specific topic or the entire Deja database (**Figure 15.5**).

✔ Tips

- In addition to browsing newsgroups, you can also use Deja to post messages and subscribe to newsgroups (**Figure 15.6**).
- For more on Usenet newsgroup hierarchies, see Appendix C.

Searching Newsgroups

Browsing newsgroups is okay for starters, but Deja's real power lies in its newsgroup search capabilities. Your best bet is to skip the form on the Deja home page, which is likely to produce too much information to be very useful. Instead, use the Power Search form for your Deja newsgroup searches.

To search with Power Search:

1. Click on Power Search (**Figure 15.7**) on the Deja home page to access the Power Search form (**Figure 15.8**).

2. Type your search terms in the text box and use the drop-down menu to specify whether you want to search for `all` or `any` of the keywords (**Figure 15.9**).

   Because the Deja archives are so vast (more than 1.5 terabytes of data), you may sometimes want to limit your search to a specific database using the Archive drop-down menu (**Figure 15.10**). Choices include:

   `Complete`. The entire archive.

   `Standard`. Everything *except* `Adult`, `Jobs`, and `For Sale`.

   `Adult`. Messages suitable only for adult readers because of explicit sexual content.

   `Jobs`. Job openings and resume postings.

   `For Sale`. Classified ads and advertising messages.

3. The Results Type menu (**Figure 15.11**) allows you to specify whether your search results page displays `discussions` (a list of newsgroup *messages*), `forums` (a list of newsgroup *names*), or `Deja Classic` (an older display format that dates back to when the service was called Deja News).

   Many longtime newsgroup searchers prefer the Deja Classic format and have prevailed upon Deja to continue to offer it. If you're using the service for the first time, you'll probably find that the `discussions` and `forums` options are perfectly acceptable.



Figure 15.7 Most of the time, you'll want to use this link on the Deja home page to go directly to Power Search.

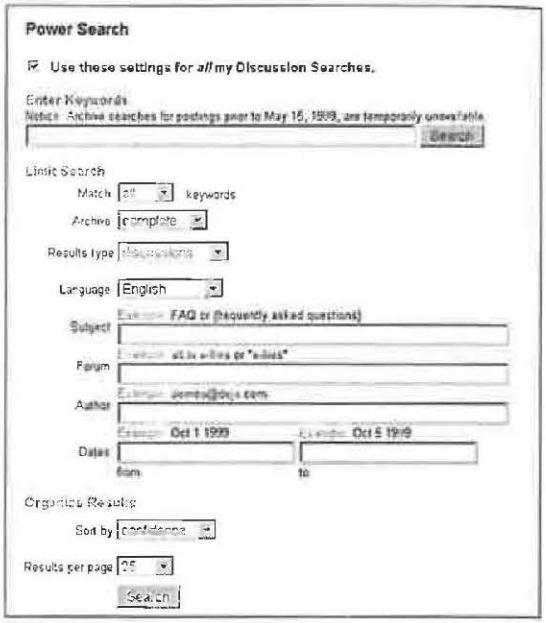


Figure 15.8 The Power Search form is easy to use and gives you a great deal of control over your newsgroup searches.

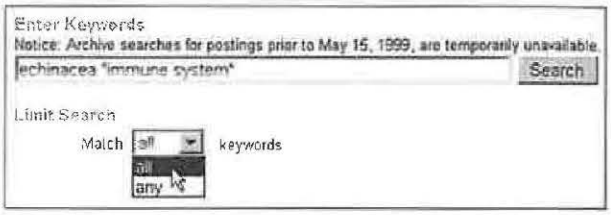


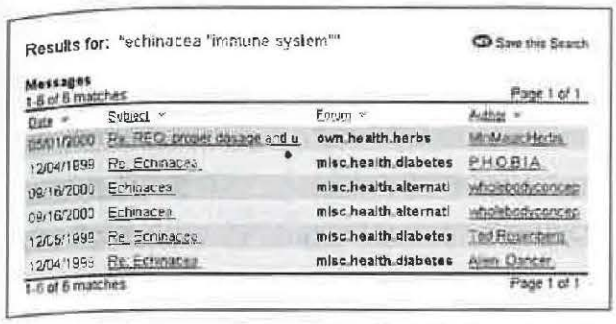
Figure 15.9 Selecting `all` on this menu tells Deja to do an AND search for the keywords typed in the text box. For an OR search, click on *any*.



Figure 15.10 Use the Archive menu to limit your search a specific Deja database.



Figure 15.11 This menu tells Deja whether you want to locate newsgroup *messages* (`discussions`) or *names* (`forums`). It also includes the `Deja Classic` option.


Results for: "echinacea "immune system""

Save this Search

Messages
1-6 of 6 matches

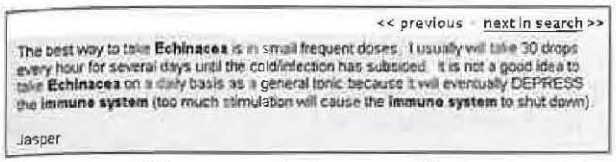
Page 1 of 1

Date	Subject	Forum	Author
05/01/2000	Re: REQ: proper dosage and u	own.health.herbs	MtnMagicHerbs
12/04/1999	Re: Echinacea	misc.health.diabetes	PHOBIA
09/16/2000	Echinacea	misc.health.alternati	whoisbodyconcep
09/16/2000	Echinacea	misc.health.alternati	whoisbodyconcep
12/05/1999	Re: Echinacea	misc.health.diabetes	Ted Rosenberg
12/04/1999	Re: Echinacea	misc.health.diabetes	Alwin Dancer

1-6 of 6 matches

Page 1 of 1

Figure 15.12 Here's an example of how Deja presents newsgroup search results.


<< previous | next in search >>

The best way to take **Echinacea** is in small frequent doses. I usually will take 30 drops every hour for several days until the cold/infection has subsided. It is not a good idea to take **Echinacea** on a daily basis as a general tonic because it will eventually DEPRESS the **immune system** (too much stimulation will cause the **immune system** to shut down).

Jasper

Figure 15.13 When you display a specific message, your search terms will be presented in bold to make them easy to spot.


Posting History: "MtnMagicHerbs" <Mtnmagicherbs@uswest.net>

There are 188 unique messages by
"MtnMagicHerbs" <Mtnmagicherbs@uswest.net>
(numbers may be slightly skewed by cross-postings)

Number of Messages	Forum
78	alt.folklore.herbs
27	alt.healing.flower-essence
19	alt.religion.goddess
14	alt.magick.tantra
12	misc.kids.pregnancy
11	own.health.herbs
9	soc.couples.wedding

Figure 15.14 Clicking on an Author link shows you the person's *posting history*—the specific newsgroups in which the person participates and the number of messages posted.

4. Next you'll be given the option to specify these search options:

   Language. You can limit your results to a specific language, or set the Language option to ANY for the widest possible search.

   Field Search. You can search the Subject, Forum (i.e., newsgroup name), and Author fields of newsgroup messages by simply typing search terms in the spaces provided on the Power Search form.

   Date Search. You can search for messages posted within a certain range of dates going back to May 1999. Be sure to specify dates in the format MMM D YYYY or MMM DD YYYY (for example, Jan 1 2000 or Mar 24 2001).

5. Power Search also lets you choose to have your results sorted by confidence (how well it matches your search terms), subject, forum, author, or date. And you can specify how many search results will be displayed per page (25, 50, or 100).

6. Once you've made all your search selections, click the Search button to submit your query and view your results (**Figure 15.12**).

7. To view the complete text of any message (**Figure 15.13**), click on its Subject link. Once you're on a message page, you can scroll back and forth through other messages, use the Thread link to view the complete *message thread* (original message and all subsequent replies), and post messages of your own.

8. You can also click on the Author link to learn about the person's other newsgroup interests and activities. Though by no means foolproof, checking a person's posting history (**Figure 15.14**) can help you assess the reliability of a source.

continues on next page

✔ Tips

- Deja supports phrase searching; the Boolean operators AND, OR, AND NOT, and NEAR; nested searches; field searches; and wildcards. For details, see the Deja Quick Reference (**Table 15.2**).
- Searches are *not* case-sensitive, so you can type search terms in uppercase or lowercase, or a combination, and you'll get the same results.
- Don't expect to find images, program listings, and other encoded binary files among Deja postings. They're simply too large and can't be easily indexed.
- The Deja help information is very thorough and well written. It even includes the service's list of *stopwords*—common words that the Deja search engine ignores (**Figure 15.15**).
- To access Deja's help information, click on `Search Tips` on the Deja home page. Then click on `Boolean connectors` for more details.

1995	do	may	s
1996	for	message-id	sender
a	from	newsgroups	subject
an	gmt	nntp-posting-host	t
and	have	of	that
any	i	on	the
are	if	or	there
as	in	organization	this
be	is	path	to
but	it	re	with
can	lines	references	you
date			

Figure 15.15 Unlike most search engines, Deja includes its list of stopwords along with the help information for the site.

Table 15.2

Deja Quick Reference

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Plain-English Question	Not recommended. Use a phrase or AND search instead.	
Phrase Search	Type the phrase as a sequence of words surrounded by **double quotes.** **Restrictions:** Phrases must contain at least two words that are not Deja stopwords. For a list of *stopwords*, see **Figure 15.15**.	`"forensic medicine"`
AND Search (multiple words and phrases, each of which must be present)	Use AND or & to connect two or more words or phrases. Or simply type the words or phrases separated by a space. All three of the examples would produce the same results.	`cholesterol AND exercise` `cholesterol & exercise` `cholesterol exercise`
OR Search (multiple words and phrases, any one of which may be present)	Use OR or | (**pipe symbol**) to connect two or more words or phrases. Both examples would find newsgroup postings that mention either *fitness* or *nutrition*.	`fitness OR nutrition` `fitness | nutrition`
NOT Search (to exclude a word or phrase)	Use AND NOT or &! in front of a word or phrase you want to exclude from your results. To look for postings about vitamins but not multi-level marketing deals, for example, you might want to exclude *mlm*.	`vitamins AND NOT mlm` `vitamins &! mlm`

Table 15.2

Deja Quick Reference *continued*

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Case-Sensitive Search	Not available.	
Date Search	Use the Power Search form and specify a range of dates in the fill-in-the-blanks form. Use the format MMM D YYYY (for single-digit days of the week) or MMM DD YYYY (for double-digit days).	Oct 1 2000 Apr 15 2001
	Alternatively, you can use the date-search operator ~dc (for *date created*) right on the search form, in which case the date format must be YYYY/MM/DD.	~dc 2001/03/24
Field Search	Use the Power Search form for fill-in-the blank searching of newsgroup Author, Subject, and Forum (i.e., newsgroup name) fields.	
	Alternatively, you can use the following field-search operators on the search form itself:	
	Author: ~a Subject: ~s Group name: ~g	~a bjones@nih.edu ~s "lyme disease" ~g sci.med.diseases.*
Nested Search	Use **parentheses** to group search expressions into more complex queries. The example would find postings that mention *clinical study* or *clinical trial*.	clinical AND (study OR trial)
Proximity Search	Use NEAR or ^ (**carat symbol**) to find words that appear in close proximity to each other. The default distance is 5 characters, but you can change that by including a number along with the carat symbol.	infertility NEAR treatment
	The second example would look for the two words within 30 characters of each other.	infertility ^ treatment
	Restrictions: Phrases aren't allowed with Deja proximity searches. Also, neither search term can be on the Deja stopwords list. (See **Figure 15.15** for stopwords.)	infertility ^30 treatment
Wildcard Search	Use an **asterisk (*)** to search for wildcard characters. The example would find *therapeutic*, *therapist*, and *therapy*.	therap*
	You can also use **braces** ({ }) to search for a range of words. The example would find all words that fall alphabetically between *therapeutic* and *therapy*.	{therapeutic therapy}
	Restrictions: Wildcards cannot be used in phrases.	

TOPICA FOR MAILING LIST SEARCHES 16



Internet mailing lists are groups of people who regularly exchange e-mail on a subject that interests them. As with newsgroups, there are tens of thousands of mailing lists covering every conceivable topic. The vast majority of them are private—university professors discussing scholarly subjects, clubs and associations communicating with their members, families doing genealogical research or planning reunions. But there are plenty of general-interest mailing lists that welcome subscribers. The trick is to find them.

Topica (pronounced "TOP-i-kuh") is designed to help you do just that. Having acquired Scotty Southwick's highly regarded Liszt database of over 90,000 public and private mailing lists, Topica is now the premier site on the Net for doing mailing-list searches.

Once you find a list that sounds interesting, you can click on a link to subscribe (or to request more information if it's a members-only group for which you might qualify). From that point on, you'll receive all the group's postings automatically by e-mail.

Mailing lists aren't as freewheeling and interactive as newsgroups, and it takes some effort to locate and subscribe to the right ones. Furthermore, once you subscribe to a mailing list, you have to deal with the postings as they come into your mailbox.

What You Can Search

- Directory of over 90,000 mailing lists
- Message archives for public lists and lists to which you subscribe

Contact Information

Topica
San Francisco, California
415-344-0800 (voice)
415-344-0900 (fax)
info@get.topica.com (general info)
support@get.topica.com (tech support)
www.topica.com

But on the plus side, they aren't nearly as likely as newsgroups to be polluted with advertisements and get-rich-quick solicitations, because many list owners go to the trouble of making sure that such junk never reaches your mailbox. There's also the fact that people who have taken the time to seek out and subscribe to a particular mailing list are likely to be genuinely (perhaps passionately) interested in the subject, so they can be an incredible information resource.

✔ Tips

- Mailing lists vary widely in what they offer and how they operate. Some maintain searchable archives. Some give you the option of reading "digests" instead of complete messages. Some lists are quite interactive, while others are designed primarily to distribute a newsletter or magazine and do little to encourage interaction with or among members.
- One of the neat things about Topica is that, before subscribing to a mailing list, you often have the option of reading not only a *description* of the list but also the *archive* of messages that have been posted to it. Reading some actual messages is the best way of determining whether a mailing list will be interesting and worthwhile for you.
- Scotty Southwick's Liszt directory is still available at `www.liszt.com`. But in a letter posted at the site, Southwick advises his fans that "Basically [Topica] will do everything I did for Liszt (except with a great big support and technical staff)."
- There are three other widely used and respected mailing-list directories available on the Web. Though not as comprehensive and easy to use as Topica and Liszt, they're worth knowing about, if only to get a different perspective on the mailing-list phenomenon:

  CataList
  `www.lsoft.com/lists/listref.html`

  Publicly Accessible Mailing Lists (PAML)
  `paml.net`

  Tile.Net
  `tile.net/lists`

Searching for Mailing Lists

The Topica home page (**Figure 16.1**) gives you two ways of locating Internet mailing lists (or "Newsletters and Discussions" as they are called at the Topica site):

- You can click on one of several broad categories—like `Art & Design` or `Sports & Recreation`—to display a special page devoted to mailing lists on that topic.
- You can use the search form to do a keyword search of all the mailing lists in the Topica database.

continues on next page



Mailing List Topic Categories

Search Form

Figure 16.1 The Topica home page includes a search form and a directory of mailing lists organized into several broad topics.

In our opinion, however, the best way to search for mailing lists at Topica is to forget the home page completely. There's another location within the site that offers a more detailed subject directory and better search features. That's what we'll focus on here. But first you'll have to become a registered user of the site.

To register with Topica:

1. Go to the Topica home page at `www.topica.com` and click on `sign up now` (**Figure 16.2**) in the navigation bar.
2. Complete the short registration form and follow the prompts for confirming your registration via e-mail. It only takes a couple of minutes.
3. Once you've logged in as a registered Topica user, the navigation bar will include several new options, including one that will provide you with more and better search capabilities (**Figure 16.3**).

To search for mailing lists:

1. Go to the Topica home page at `www.topica.com` and click on `search` in the navigation bar. (If you don't see the `search` link, click on `login` and enter your e-mail address and password.)
2. To browse for mailing lists by subject, click on one of the topics or subtopics in the List Directory (**Figure 16.4**).
3. To do a search, type one or more keywords (or a phrase in quotes) in the space provided on the Topica search form.

   Topica supports the Boolean operators AND, OR, and NOT, as well as parentheses for more complex queries. Searches are *not* case-sensitive, so you can use uppercase or lowercase and you'll get the same results.
4. Use the search form's drop-down menu (**Figure 16.5**) to tell Topica whether you want to search `Lists` or `Messages`. In most



Figure 16.2 To take full advantage of all that Topica offers, you'll need to become a registered user. It's free and only takes a couple of minutes.



Figure 16.3 Once you're logged in, use this link to access Topica's expanded search capabilities.



Figure 16.4 The mailing-list directory for registered users is much more detailed than the one offered on the Topica home page.



Figure 16.5 The search form for registered users lets you specify whether you want to search `Lists` or `Messages`.

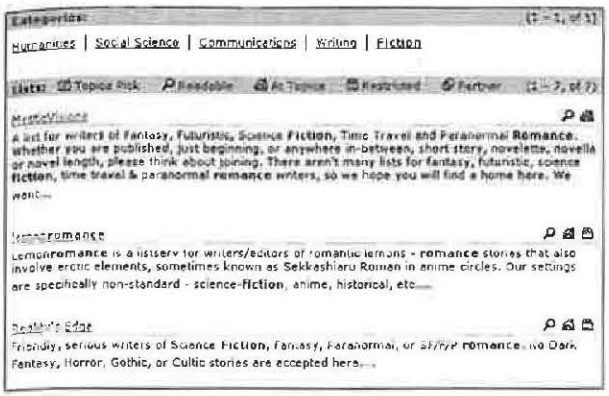


Figure 16.6 Search results are presented like this, with matching categories followed by matching lists.

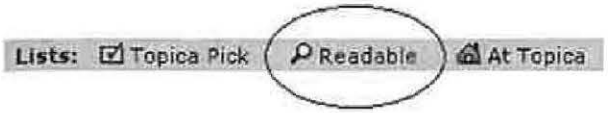


Figure 16.7 Mailing lists with readable archives are identified by a magnifying-glass icon.

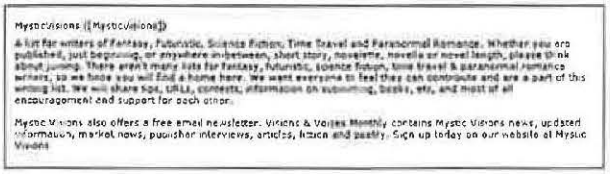


Figure 16.8 Here's the description of a mailing list called MysticVisions, aimed at writers of fantasy, science fiction, and paranormal romance.



Figure 16.9 Along with the mailing-list description, you'll find other useful information, like the availability of a message archive, number of subscribers, and message volume.



Figure 16.10 Topica makes it quite easy to join a mailing list and to read the list's archives.

cases, your best bet is to start by searching for lists, since not all mailing lists include message archives.

5. Click on Search to submit your query and view your results (**Figure 16.6**). Category matches, if any, will be presented first, followed by mailing-list matches. A magnifying-glass icon (**Figure 16.7**) identifies lists that include readable message archives.

6. Clicking on the name of a mailing list will take you to its description in the Topica database. Prepared by the list owner, the description typically includes a brief explanation of the list (**Figure 16.8**) and details on how to subscribe, unsubscribe, communicate with the list owner, and access other features like archives and digests (**Figure 16.9**).

7. In many cases, you can subscribe to a list or read the archives by simply clicking the appropriate button (**Figure 16.10**).

continues on next page

✔ Tips

- Before joining or even sending an e-mail message to a mailing list, do your homework. Use Topica to find out what the group is all about and whether new members are welcome.
- Mailing lists almost always have a special e-mail address for subscribing and unsubscribing. (When you use that address, your request is handled automatically, without any intervention on the part of the list's owner.) Don't make the classic new-user mistake of sending a subscription-related message to the address designated for posting messages to the mailing list (**Figure 16.11**).
- For a summary of Topica search syntax, see the Topica Quick Reference (**Table 16.1**).
- To access Topica's search tips and to find out about new features that may have been added, click on the `Help` link that appears on most Topica pages.

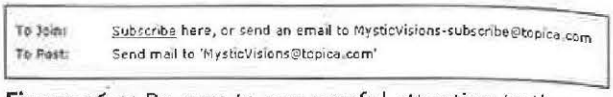


Figure 16.11 Be sure to pay careful attention to the address used for *joining* vs. *posting to* a mailing list. Other list subscribers won't take kindly to receiving your subscription request in their mailboxes.

Table 16.1

Topica Quick Reference

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Phrase Search	Type the phrase as a sequence of words enclosed in **double quotes**.	`"book reviews"`
AND Search (multiple words and phrases, each of which *must* be present)	Use AND to connect two or more words and phrases.	`authors AND mystery`
OR Search (multiple words and phrases, any one of which may be present)	Use OR to connect two or more words and phrases.	`grisham OR turow`
NOT Search (to exclude a word or phrase)	Use NOT in front of a word or phrase you want to exclude from your results.	`"genre fiction" NOT romance`
Nested Search	Use **parentheses** to group words and phrases into more complex queries.	`(fantasy OR SF) AND writers`
Wildcard Search	Use an **asterisk (*)** to search for wildcard characters. The example would find references to *literacy, literature,* and *literary*.	`litera*`

ARGUS CLEARINGHOUSE SUBJECT GUIDES

17



What You Can Search

- Directory of subject-specific guides to Internet resources, prepared by subject-matter experts and reviewed and rated by information and library studies professionals.

Contact Information

Argus Associates, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
734-913-0010
clearinghouse@argus-inc.com
www.clearinghouse.net

We can't do a book about online searching without covering one of our all-time favorite information-finding resources, the Argus Clearinghouse. The quick handle on the Argus Clearinghouse is this: It's designed to make it as easy as possible for you to find "master" subject-specific Web sites or *guides*, as the Argus Clearinghouse calls them.

Guides are assembled and maintained by experts in a particular subject—not by robots and spider programs. They offer links—selected, organized, and annotated—to the most important Internet resources devoted to that subject.

To fully appreciate this incredible resource, a little history is in order. The Clearinghouse (its original name) was created in 1993 as an academic venture at the University of Michigan's School of Information and Library Studies (SILS). As part their Master's Degree program, SILS students would choose a topic and prepare a guide to Internet resources. The guides were critiqued and evaluated by professors and fellow classmates, and the best ones were made available on the Internet.

Graphical Web browsers like Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator hadn't been invented yet, nor had Web search engines and directories like AltaVista and Yahoo. So the Clearinghouse was a most

welcome addition to the Internet. But in the beginning, it was simply a plain-text menu (or *Internet Gopher*) site, and the guides themselves were ASCII text files that you could read or download.

The Clearinghouse has since moved to the Web, of course. It is now owned and operated by Argus Associates, a consulting firm that specializes in information architecture design for complex Web sites and Intranets. Students and graduates of the SILS Master's Degree program are still very much involved, but the guides are now created by subject-matter experts from all over the world. Clearinghouse staff members set rigorous standards and will only accept guides that rate high on content, design, and organization. More than 90 percent of the guides that are submitted for consideration are rejected for one reason or another.

The Argus Clearinghouse doesn't claim to be comprehensive—so you may or may not find the guide you need among its collection. But it's the perfect *first* stop for any in-depth Web research project.

✔ Tips

- For details on how the Argus Clearinghouse evaluates subject guides, visit the site's home page and click on `Ratings System`.
- Another link that's worth checking is the `Digital Librarian's Award`. It's sort of a Clearinghouse Hall of Fame—guides recognized by the staff as being truly exceptional.
- If you don't find the guide you need at the Argus Clearinghouse, try one of these sites:

  Virtual Library (`vlib.org`). The oldest collection of Web guides, VL was started by Tim Berners-Lee, the creator of HTML and the World Wide Web. Volunteers run the site, and the subject guides presented there—prepared by experts in a particular field—are highly regarded by academics and professional searchers.

  About (`www.about.com`). This site takes the idea of Internet subject guides one step further—by hiring people who are knowledgeable in a particular field to not only create and maintain subject guides but also to interact with visitors to the site via newsletters, e-mail, discussion groups, and chat rooms.

Finding Subject Guides

To experience the Argus Clearinghouse for yourself, go to the site's home page at `www.clearinghouse.net` (**Figure 17.1**). Once there, you can click your way through menus or search for guides by keyword.

The menu system organizes Clearinghouse guides into 13 major categories—`Arts & Humanities` through `Social Sciences & Social Issues`. Click on any one of them and you'll be presented with a half dozen or so subcategories that lead, in turn, to a set of keywords. Click on a keyword and you'll be presented with all the guides for that subject.

By all means, take a walk through the menus. But if you have something specific in mind, you may find it's faster to use the keyword search feature.

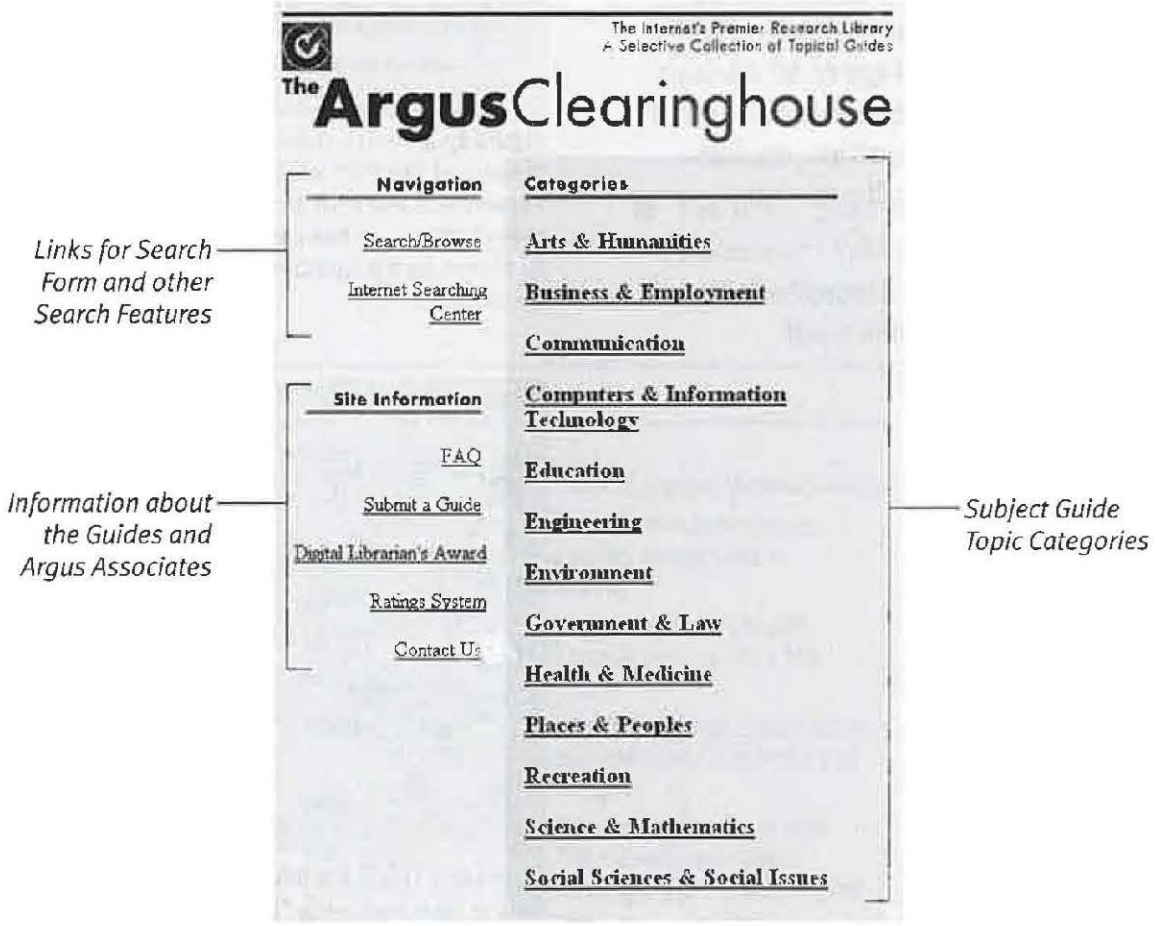


Figure 17.1 The Argus Clearinghouse home page includes a menu of 13 major subject categories.

To search for guides by keyword:

1. Click on Search/Browse (**Figure 17.2**) on the Argus Clearinghouse home page to get to the search page.
2. Type your query in the search form text box (**Figure 17.3**). Coming up with the right search terms might take some trial and error. Keep in mind that what you are searching is a directory of guide descriptions (the Clearinghouse calls them *information pages*), not the guides themselves, so general search terms are likely to produce better results than very specific ones.
3. Click the submit search button to display your results (**Figure 17.4**), which will include the name of each guide, along with its associated keywords and overall rating (one to five check marks).
4. Click on the name of any guide to display its information page (**Figure 17.5**), with the guide's title, Web address, author and professional affiliation, scores on five Argus Clearinghouse criteria, and descriptive keywords.
5. From there, you can click on the Web address to view the guide itself (**Figure 17.6**).



Figure 17.2 The Search/Browse link in the upper left corner of the home page takes you to the search form and a more detailed subject outline.

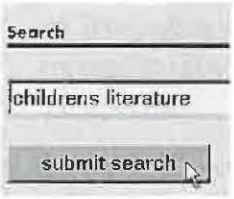


Figure 17.3 Here's the Argus Clearinghouse search form with a sample query you might use to locate guides dealing with children's literature.

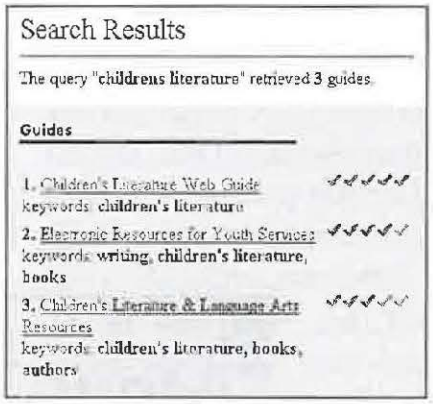


Figure 17.4 Search results are presented like this, with several keywords along with each guide's overall rating—in this case 5, 4, and 3, as shown by the number of bold checkmarks.

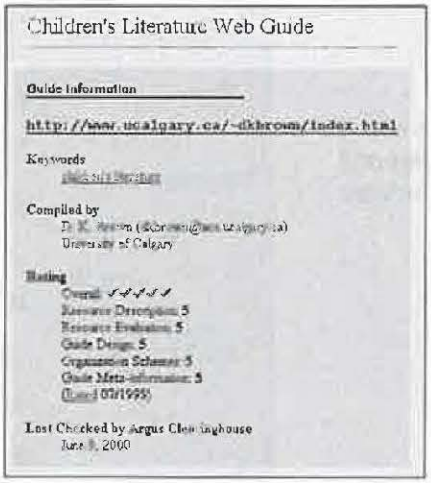


Figure 17.5 This is the information page for the award-winning "Children's Literature Web Guide" created by D. K. Brown at the University of Calgary.

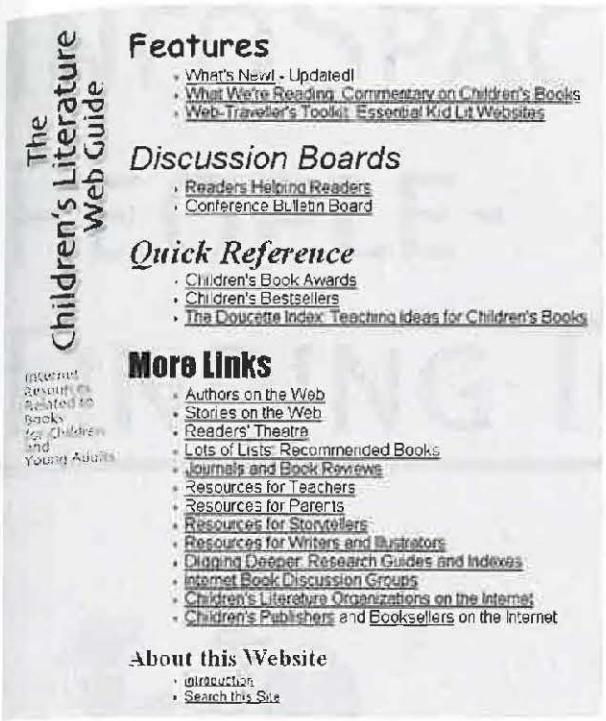


Figure 17.6 And here's the home page for the "Children's Literature Web Guide" itself, well-organized and full of useful information—just what you'd expect from a top-rated Clearinghouse guide.

✔ Tips

- You can search for a single word or use some very basic search operators: AND, OR, parentheses, and wildcards.
- Your best bet with the Argus Clearinghouse is to try to think of some very general search words that are likely to appear on the guide's information page. Searching for `Dr. Seuss AND Beatrix Potter` would be a great way to find children's literature Web pages with a search engine like AltaVista or Google, but *not* with the Argus Clearinghouse. For a Clearinghouse search, you'll have better luck searching with, say, `childrens literature` or `children AND books`.
- The Argus Clearinghouse search software ignores case, so you'll get the same results whether you use uppercase, lowercase, or a combination. Punctuation marks (apostrophes, dashes, hyphens, quotation marks, etc.) are ignored as well, so it's recommended that you leave them out of your searches.
- See the Argus Clearinghouse Quick Reference (**Table 17.1**) for search syntax and examples.

Table 17.1

Argus Clearinghouse Quick Reference*

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:	EXAMPLES:
Word or Phrase Search	Type the word or phrase without any special punctuation.	`news media`
AND Search (multiple words and phrases, each of which *must* be present)	Use `AND` to connect two or more words or phrases. The example would find guides whose titles or keywords include both words.	`Asia AND business`
OR Search (multiple words and phrases, any one of which may be present)	Use `OR` to connect two or more words or phrases, either one of which may appear in the guide's title or keywords.	`justice OR judicial`
Wildcard Search	Use an **asterisk (*)** to search for wildcard characters at the end of a word. The example would find *biology* as well as *biological* and *biologist*.	`biolog*`
Nested Search	Use **parentheses** to group search expressions into more complex queries. The example would find references to *art museum*, *art gallery*, and *art galleries*.	`art AND (museum OR galler*)`

*Note: *Argus Clearinghouse searches are not case-sensitive. Also, punctuation marks (apostrophes, dashes, hyphens, etc.) are ignored, so it's recommended that you leave them out when searching.*

InfoSpace People-Finding Tools

18



What You Can Search

- Worldwide e-mail directory
- Telephone directory for residential listings in U.S., Canada, and Europe
- Reverse lookup directories (phone, address, e-mail, and area code)
- Celebrity directory (athletes, authors, journalists, movie stars, etc.)

Contact Information

InfoSpace, Inc.
Bellevue, Washington
425-201-6100 (voice)
425-201-6150 (fax)
information@infospace.com
www.infospace.com

Sending and receiving e-mail is without a doubt the most popular of all online and Internet features. Newsgroups, mailing lists, and chat rooms all have their devoted fans, and most online users venture at least occasionally onto the World Wide Web. But virtually *everyone* who's online sends and receives e-mail on a regular basis and counts it among their top two or three reasons for being online in the first place.

That being the case, it's no wonder that Web sites specializing in e-mail directories and other *people-finding* tools consistently rank among the Internet's 100 most frequently visited sites. We'll take a look here at InfoSpace, one of several excellent directory sites.

If InfoSpace doesn't have what you're looking for (and that's bound to happen from time to time), try one of these sites:

AnyWho	`www.anywho.com`
Switchboard	`www.switchboard.com`
WhoWhere?	`www.whowhere.com`
Yahoo! People Search	`people.yahoo.com`

There's simply no single, comprehensive source for all the world's e-mail addresses. Nor will there be any time soon. InfoSpace and these other e-mail directory sites provide

a great service, but they currently list only a fraction of the millions of e-mail addresses that are out there.

✔ Tips

- InfoSpace and similar people-finding sites are often referred to as *white pages* because their databases typically include residential telephone numbers and street addresses—just like you'd find in your local telephone directory white pages. The difference is that you can search for anyone, anywhere in the United States.
- When we say "anyone, anywhere," we mean it quite literally. You can use InfoSpace and other such sites to find parents, grandparents, neighbors, and friends who have never so much as touched a computer keyboard, let alone gone online.
- Because they allow you to cast such a wide net, white pages are terrific for locating former classmates, tracking down long-lost military buddies, and doing genealogical research. Yahoo! People Search (`people.yahoo.com`) is attempting to make the process even easier by allowing you to add descriptive keywords when you add or update your listing.
- Learn to use at least a couple of white pages Web sites. But keep in mind that sometimes the best way to find out a person's e-mail address is to do it the "old-fashioned" way: Pick up the telephone and call!

Finding E-mail Addresses

There are just a few things you need to know to take full advantage of InfoSpace's people-finding features. Start by going to the InfoSpace home page (`www.infospace.com`), where you'll find a menu of directory options (**Figure 18.1**). The section to zero in on is White Pages, which includes links for `Phone & Address`, `Email`, `Reverse Lookup`, and `World Directories`.

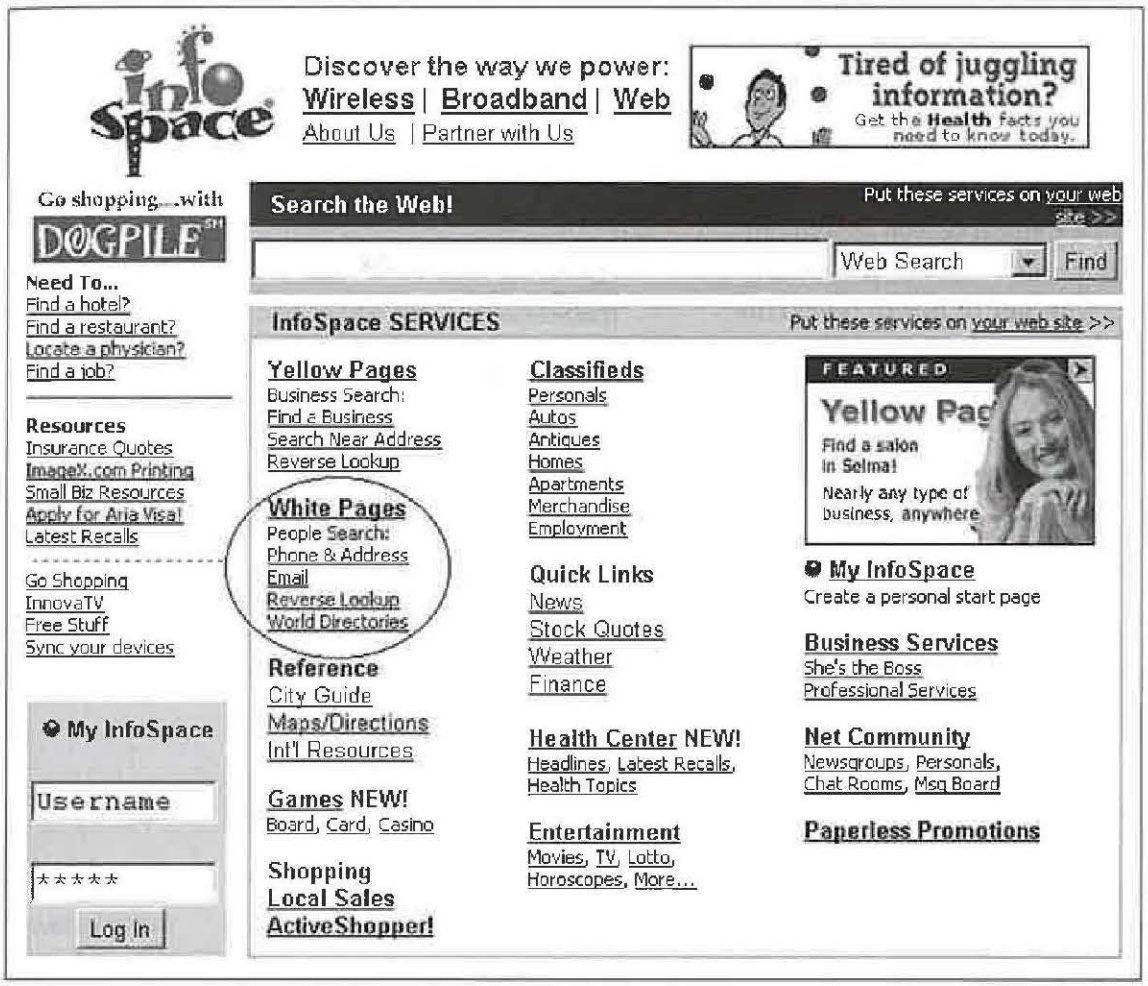


Figure 18.1 The InfoSpace home page includes a set of people-finding tools under the heading *White Pages*.

To search for e-mail addresses:

1. Click on Email on the InfoSpace home page to display the E-mail Search form (**Figure 18.2**). For relatively unusual names, you can probably get by with completing just the Last Name and First Name fields. For common names like Smith or Jones, go ahead and complete the City, State/Province, or Country fields as well, using the drop-down menus to make your selections.
2. Click on Find Email to submit your query. If InfoSpace finds a match, that information will be presented (**Figure 18.3**). If it comes up empty, you'll be given the opportunity to refine your search.
3. If a follow-up search is unsuccessful, try another directory site. See page 253 for other sites.



Figure 18.2 Here's the InfoSpace search form for locating e-mail addresses worldwide.

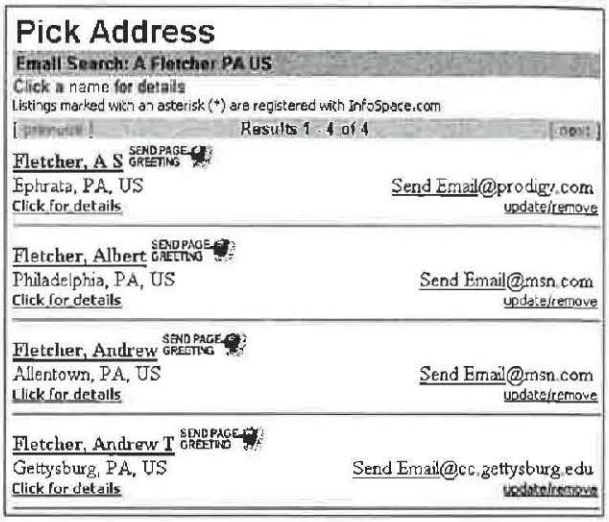


Figure 18.3 Results of an e-mail search are presented in this format. Instead of giving you the actual e-mail address, InfoSpace provides a link you can click on to send the person a message.

✔ Tips

- Unlike its competitors, InfoSpace doesn't actually provide you with e-mail addresses at its Web site. Instead, you're given a clickable link that you can use to send a message to a person you've located in the e-mail directory. The recipient can then decide whether or not to reveal his or her e-mail address by responding to your message.
- It's usually best to start with a name-only search. If you get too many hits, complete additional fields one at a time. If your search returns nothing, try a variation on the person's first name (Margaret instead of Meg, for example). Or use a single letter in the First Name field (E to find *Ed* or *Edward* or *Edwin*.)
- If you're not sure of the spelling of a last name, make your best guess, and then try a couple of variations. Unfortunately, InfoSpace doesn't support truncation or the use of wildcards in the Last Name field. So a search for Meyer will find listings for that name only, and you'll have to do a second search to look for Meyers.

- InfoSpace offers a feature called Reverse Lookup that allows you to search for the *owner* of an e-mail address. You can also use Reverse Lookup to find all the people in the InfoSpace directory who work at a particular company. For example, a Reverse Lookup search for `@microsoft.com` would bring up the names of all the Microsoft employees in the directory.

  To use this feature, just click on `Reverse Lookup` in the White Pages section of the InfoSpace home page.

- For Celebrity e-mail addresses, click on `White Pages` on the InfoSpace home page. Then scroll down the page and click on `Celebrity Search`. No telling what you'll find—some searches return e-mail addresses, some land addresses, some nothing at all. But it's worth checking.

- You'll find a summary of InfoSpace search features in the InfoSpace Quick Reference (**Table 18.1**).

Table 18.1

InfoSpace Quick Reference

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:
E-mail Address Search (worldwide)	Click on **`Email`** in the White Pages section of the InfoSpace home page to display the search form. Start by completing just the Last Name and First Name fields. To narrow a search, complete additional fields one at a time, in this order: Country, State/Province, City. To broaden a search, try a partial entry in the First Name field. Searching for **`A`** in the First Name field and **`Fletcher`** in the Last Name field would find listings for *Albert, Al,* and *A. S. Fletcher.*
Phone Number and Address Search (U.S., Canada, and Europe)	Click on **`Phone&Address`** in the White Pages section of the InfoSpace home page to display the search form. Start by completing the Last Name, First Name, and State/Province fields. To narrow a search, complete the City field. To broaden a search, try a partial entry in the First Name field. Searching for **`Jo Anderson`** would find listings for *Joe Anderson* as well as *Joseph Anderson.* Another way to broaden a search that includes a City field is to select the **`Including SurroundingRegion`** option.
Reverse Lookup (phone and fax numbers, street addresses, e-mail addresses, and area codes)	Click on **`ReverseLookup`** in the White Pages section of the InfoSpace home page.

Finding Phone Numbers and Addresses

InfoSpace allows you to look for e-mail addresses worldwide. But what if the person you're trying to find doesn't have an e-mail address? (Lots of people don't.) And let's say you can't call Directory Assistance because you're not even sure what city the person lives in. What then?

The solution: Use the InfoSpace Phone & Address Search feature. If the person lives in the United States, Canada, or Europe, chances are you can find both an address (including zip code for U.S. addresses) and telephone number.

To search for phone numbers and addresses:

1. From the InfoSpace home page (`www.infospace.com`), click on Phone & Address in the White Pages section (**Figure 18.4**).
2. Enter the person's name in the spaces provided on the Phone & Address Search form (**Figure 18.5**). It's generally a good idea to start with a broad search, completing just the Last Name, First Name, and State/Province. If the name you're looking for is quite common, you might want to take your best guess at completing the City field as well.
3. Click on Find to display your results (**Figure 18.6**). If InfoSpace locates multiple entries in its database, you'll be presented with a list of all the matches. For details on a specific listing, just click on the name.



Figure 18.4 To search for home addresses and telephone numbers, click on Phone & Address in the White Pages section of the InfoSpace home page.

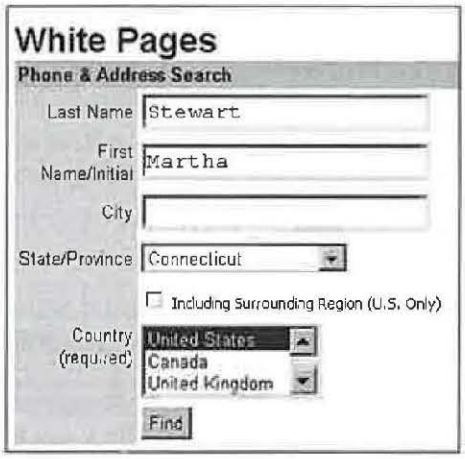


Figure 18.5 The Phone & Address Search form lets you look for residential phone numbers and addresses in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

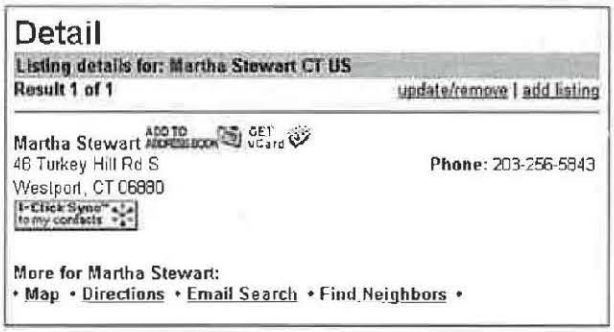


Figure 18.6 The search results include street address, city, state, zip code, phone number, and links for getting maps and driving directions.

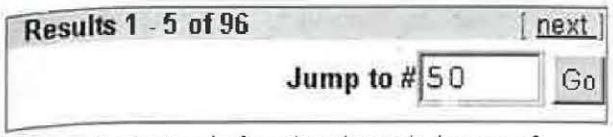


Figure 18.7 Instead of paging through dozens of listings, you can skip ahead by entering a number in the Jump to # box.



Figure 18.8 Click on this link to find all the other residents of a particular street—your own or someone else's!

4. If you get an exceptionally large number of hits, you can use the Jump feature (**Figure 18.7**) to advance more quickly through the list. Alternatively, you can go back and narrow the search. (Try adding a city, for example.)

5. If you get too few hits (or none at all), check your spelling. Or try typing just an initial in the First Name field.

   For United States searches that include a City field, you might also try the `Including Surrounding Region` option, so that your search will be expanded to include the outlying suburbs for a major metropolitan area.

✔ Tips

- InfoSpace gets home addresses and telephone numbers from companies that compile the information published in regional phone books. The InfoSpace database is updated about four times a year. If the person you're looking for has moved recently, it may take several months or so for the new information to make its way into the InfoSpace database.
- Keep in mind that many people list themselves in the phone book with a first initial instead of a full name. If your search for, say, `Janet Parker` is unsuccessful, try searching for `J Parker`.
- Once you've located a specific address that's of interest, you can use InfoSpace's Find Neighbors feature (**Figure 18.8**) to get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all the other residents on that street.

To do reverse lookups of phone numbers and addresses:

1. Click on Reverse Lookup in the White Pages section of the InfoSpace home page.
2. Use the Reverse Phone Number form (**Figure 18.9**) to find out who "owns" a particular phone number. You can even search for a partial number as long as you know the area code and first few digits.
3. To find out who lives at a certain address, use the Reverse Address form (**Figure 18.10**). Fill in the House Number, Street Name, and City fields, and select a State from the drop-down menu.

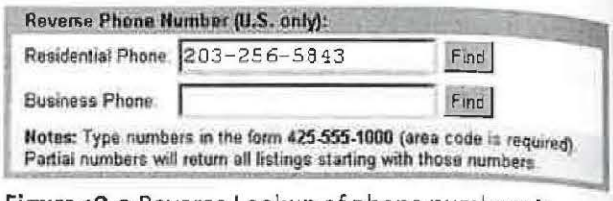


Figure 18.9 Reverse Lookup of phone numbers is a neat feature. You can even look for a *partial* number—when you can't read your handwriting, for example, or your answering machine garbles the sound.

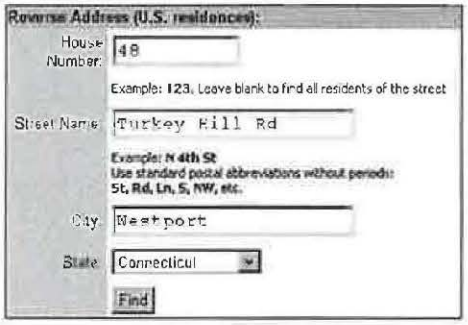


Figure 18.10 The Reverse Address form lets you search for the name and phone number of the residents of a particular street address.

✔ Tips

- The one caveat when using the Reverse Address form is that you may have to go through a couple of iterations on Street Name. The search software isn't very sophisticated and requires that you use "standard postal abbreviations." Consequently, if you type, say, `River Road` in the Street Name field, you won't find listings for *River Rd* and will have to try again using `River Rd` (no period).
- InfoSpace's Reverse Phone Number form allows you to search for partial numbers only if you know the area code. If that's the part of the phone number you *don't* know, try AnyWho (`www.anywho.com`). Its Reverse Lookup feature lets you look for phone numbers that begin or end with certain numbers.

Zip2 for Business Searches

19



You can use virtually any Web search engine to find information on businesses like Barnes & Noble, Disney, Federal Express, and Microsoft. Product announcements, catalogs, press releases, stock quotes, earnings reports—all these (and more) are available on the World Wide Web.

But what about the vast numbers of businesses, large and small, that have yet to establish a presence on the Web? The fact is, most companies, like most people, are *not* online.

And what if the information you're looking for is pretty straightforward—you want a street address or phone number so that you can visit the company or call to ask a specific question? Surprisingly, many business Web sites don't even include this information, or they bury it so deep that it's almost impossible to find.

For situations like these, what you need is an online *yellow pages directory*. The one we'll focus on here is the Zip2. It's well designed, easy to use, and extremely fast.

What You Can Search

- Directory of U. S. businesses, searchable by name and type of business
- Database of maps and driving directions

Contact Information

Zip2 Corporation
Mountain View, California
650-429-4400
webmaster@zip2.com
www.zip2.com

With Zip2, you can search for businesses by name or type—a standard feature of all the major yellow pages directories. Zip2 far outshines the competition, however, when it comes to displaying the *results* of a search. Look for, say, `Italian restaurants` or `dry cleaners`, for example, and Zip2 will present you with a list that includes the name, address, and phone number, organized by distance from your home or office (or any other location you specify).

Another Zip2 feature you'll appreciate is the ability to set up a *search profile*. Fill out a simple form with your home and work addresses and tell Zip2 to store the information. From then on, whenever you do a search, you can automatically look for businesses that are "Near My Home" or "Near My Work." No need to worry about specifying multiple cities, zip codes or area codes. Zip2 will present the results in order by distance, with the closest ones listed first.

Good as Zip2 is, you may from time to time have to check another yellow pages directory—either because the site is down or overloaded, or because you need to do a type of search that Zip2 doesn't offer. On those occasions, try one of these sites:

AnyWho	`www.anywho.com`
InfoSpace	`www.infospace.com`
SuperPages	`www.superpages.com`
Switchboard	`www.switchboard.com`
Yahoo! Yellow Pages	`yp.yahoo.com`

✔ Tips

- For general searching, SuperPages comes closest to Zip2 in ease of use. AnyWho and InfoSpace offer Reverse Lookup for phone, fax, address, and area code searches, a feature not currently provided by Zip2. AnyWho is also the home of the AT&T Toll-Free Directory.
- As we've said, many business Web sites don't include a phone number or street address—either purposely or because it simply hasn't occurred to them that people might want to reach them that way. Furthermore, some companies operate on the Web using an entirely different business name from the one that's listed in print and online yellow pages directories. But that doesn't mean you can't track them down.
- One way to do so is to consult the Whois database maintained by Network Solutions. Just go to the Network Solutions Web site (`www.networksolutions.com`), click on `Whois Lookup`, and enter the *domain name* (for example, `xrefer.com` or `westward.net`) for the Web site that you're interested in finding out about. The Whois database will provide you with the name of the company that owns the domain name, along with the mailing address, phone number, and often even a contact person.

Finding Businesses with Zip2

To look for businesses with Zip2, go to the Zip2 home page at `www.zip2.com` (**Figure 19.1**). On your first visit to the site, scroll down the page, click on `Personalize`, and complete the form asking for your home and work addresses.

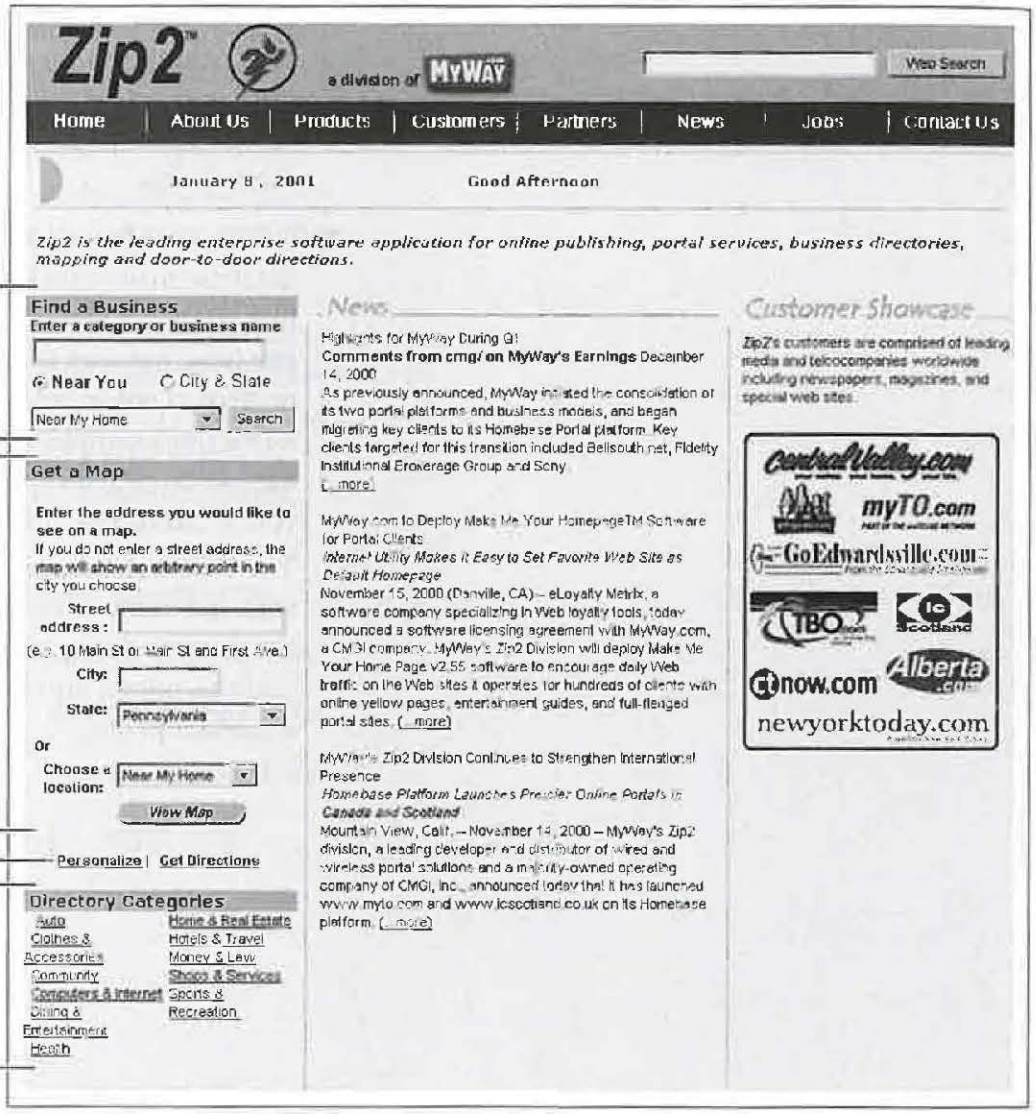


Figure 19.1 The Zip2 home page lets you search for businesses by type or by company name. And once you've clicked `Personalize` and entered your home and work addresses, you can search automatically for businesses that are nearby.



Figure 19.2 You can browse businesses by category using this subject directory on the Zip2 home page.

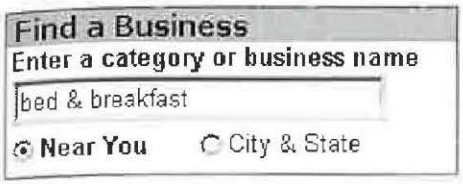


Figure 19.3 The Zip2 search form makes it easy to locate businesses in a particular area.



Figure 19.4 To search for businesses near your home, office, or some other location, use this drop-down menu.

Once you've done that, you can search automatically for businesses that are near your home or office. You can also browse local businesses by category, selecting from a menu of options (**Figure 19.2**) on the Zip2 home page.

To search for businesses:

1. Enter the type of business or a specific business name in the space provided on the search form (**Figure 19.3**). Then select the radio button to tell Zip2 whether you want to search Near You or by City & State.
2. If you choose the Near You option, you can use the drop-down menu (**Figure 19.4**) to further refine your search. You can look for businesses Near My Home, Near My Work; or near some other address you've entered using the Personalize feature (a vacation house, your parents' home, etc.). Zip2 tailors this menu so that it also includes surrounding towns and geographical areas that you might have occasion to search.
3. Click on the Search button to display your results. If you specified a Near You search and Zip2 finds multiple listings, they'll be presented in order by distance (**Figure 19.5**). City & State searches are presented alphabetically.

continues on next page

4. Click on any item on the results page for more information—which typically includes a map and driving directions, along with links for locating related businesses.

   If you're searching for a country inn, for example, the detailed information (**Figure 19.6**) would include a link for other `Bed & Breakfast Accommodations`—very handy if it turns out that your first choice is booked up. Or you could click on `Find Nearby Businesses` and search for a list of restaurants or tourist attractions close to a specific inn.

5. To do a new search, use the drop-down menu (**Figure 19.7**) that appears at the top of the page. You can also use this menu to choose other options available at the site—getting maps and driving directions without doing a search, finding a person, personalizing your page, and browsing a directory of businesses organized by type.



Figure 19.5 Here's a sample of Zip2 search results. The icon to the right of each listing leads to maps and driving directions.

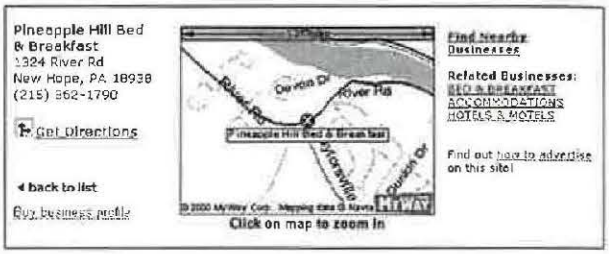


Figure 19.6 Details like those shown here for a Bucks County inn called Pineapple Hill Bed & Breakfast are presented when you click on the business's name on the search results page.

✔ Tips

- Zip2 always performs an AND search, looking for business listings that match *all the words* in your query. (There's no way to do an OR search.) Searches are *not* case-sensitive, so you can type your queries using uppercase, lowercase, or a combination and you'll get the same results.
- If you want to look for a particular type of business but aren't sure what search terms to use, start with a single, very general term like `pets` or `roofing` or `travel`. Zip2 will then present you with a list of business categories that you can choose from to focus your query.



Figure 19.7 Use this drop-down menu to do another search or access other features, including the Zip2 business directory organized by subject and the Find a Person feature.

- In order to show up in a yellow pages directory, companies must have a "business listing" with the telephone company. Many home-based businesses choose not to pay the higher rates for such listings, so you won't find them in the yellow pages. Instead, do a Zip2 `Find a Person` search using the drop-down menu (**Figure 19.7**) on the search results page. Look for the business owner's name rather than the company name.
- For a summary of Zip2 search features, see the Zip2 Quick Reference (**Table 19.1**). To find out about new features that may have been added, click on the `Feedback` or `Help` link that appears at the bottom of all Zip2 pages.

Table 19.1

Zip2 Quick Reference*

FOR THIS TYPE OF SEARCH:	DO THIS:
Business Name Search	To search for a specific business, enter its name (or one or two unique words) in the search form text box. Click on the radio button to specify whether you want to search `NearYou` or `City& State`. If you select `NearYou`, make sure the drop-down menu is set to `NearMyHome`, `NearMyWork`, or whatever location you want to use as a starting point.
Business Category Search	To search for all the businesses in a particular category, type one or two unique words in the search form text box. Be sure to specify the area you want to search (`NearYou` or `City&State`), as described above.
Point-to-Point Driving Directions and Maps	Click on the Get Directions icon that appears next to every listing in your Zip2 search results. (The Get Directions icon will be either a car in a circle or a double-pointing arrow in a square.) To get maps and driving directions without searching, use the Get a Map section of the Zip2 home page.

**Note: Zip2 always performs an AND search, looking for all the words in your query. (There's no way to do an OR search.) Also, Zip2 ignores case.*

20 Other Search Tools from A to Z

You've seen what a breeze it can be to use highly specialized search engines like InfoSpace (www.infospace.com) and Zip2 (www.zip2.com). Because they're designed for a single, relatively narrow task—looking for people and businesses in *white pages* and *yellow pages* directories similar to those used by telephone companies—the search forms are simple and there's very little complexity to master. Just fill in the blanks and away you go.

For the most part, that's what you'll find with the 29 special-purpose search engines profiled in this chapter. Each is designed to handle searching for a particular *type* of information really well—whether it's the latest book by a favorite author or Microsoft's Technical Support phone numbers or your Aunt Harriet's zip code. Many offer help pages and search tips, but for most of them, you won't need to learn any special search rules and commands. In our experience, about the only thing that's difficult about special-purpose search engines is remembering to use them.

That being the case, what we'll focus on here is where to find these special-purpose sites and the subject matter or type of information you can search with each one. Read the descriptions and visit some or all of the sites. Then add the ones you think you might use on a regular basis to your Web browser's Bookmarks or Favorites list. That way, you can get to them easily whenever you need them.

Where to Find Specialized Search Engines

When you need a special-purpose search engine for a subject not covered in this chapter, try one of these sites:

Invisible Web
invisible.com

Search Engine Guide
searchengineguide.com

Search Engine Watch
www.searchenginewatch.com/links

www.amazon.com

Amazon.com

Amazon.com's mission is to sell books, and they do a superb job of that from their Web site, also known as "Earth's Biggest Bookstore." But the Web site (www.amazon.com) is worth learning about even if you have no intention of ever placing a book order. Imagine being able to search a database of some 2.5 million books by author, title, subject, ISBN, or publisher. You can produce a master list of all the books by a favorite author, for example, or search for every book with the word *chocolate* in the title.

You can also tap into a rich collection of reader reviews, current bestseller lists, author interviews, and book reviews from *The New York Times*, NPR, Oprah, and elsewhere.

If there's a book you're looking for that's not in the Amazon.com database (either because it's out of print or not yet published), let them know and they'll try to find it for you.

✔ Tips

- You can do a quick search for books from the Amazon.com home page. But for more precise queries, click on Books and then on Search and use the form that allows you to specify Author, Title, Subject, etc.
- Barnes & Noble (www.bn.com) and Borders (www.borders.com) also offer searchable databases of current books. For used and out-of-print titles, try Alibris (www.alibris.com) or Bibliofind (www.bibliofind.com).



www.cdnow.com

CDNOW

Like Amazon.com, CDNOW (www.cdnow.com) is in the business of selling things—in this case CDs and videos. To do so, they offer a searchable database of more than 500,000 CDs and VHS/DVD movies. You can look for a particular artist, album title, song title, record label, video title, or actor/director.

But what if some elusive melody keeps going through your head and you can't think of the artist or song title? CDNOW has that covered as well. You can send an e-mail message to managerfb@cdnow.com and the company's crackerjack team of music experts will try to track the song down for you. Just give them as much information as you can—bits of lyrics, style of music, approximate release date, and so forth.

The CDNOW site also includes Top 20 lists, buyer's guides, sound clips, biographies, and entertainment news.



www.cdc.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

There's enough medical and health-related information on the Internet to make your heart race and your head spin. So it's no wonder that the Web site operated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has become such a popular destination for people seeking reliable and timely information about healthcare issues.

You can do a keyword search of the entire CDC database, or limit your query to the health department for a particular state. Other highlights of the CDC Web site (`www.cdc.gov`) include the following:

- **Health Topics A-Z.** A directory of fact sheets on specific diseases and medical conditions.
- **In the News.** CDC press releases and current health news.
- **Travelers' Health.** Advice for international travelers on disease outbreaks and other health-related matters.
- **Hoaxes and Rumors.** Official responses from the CDC on health-related misinformation circulating via the Internet and other forms of mass communication.

✔ Tips

- Other reliable sources often cited by medical professionals include Health A to Z (`www.healthatoz.com`), Healthfinder (`www.healthfinder.gov`), and the National Library of Medicine (`www.nlm.nih.gov`).
- All three of these sites provide access to Medline, a highly respected database of medical literature, with abstracts and article summaries from *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and elsewhere.



www.shareware.com

CNET Shareware.com

CNET Shareware.com is a "virtual software library" that let's you search a catalog of 250,000 shareware programs of all types—games, utilities, screensavers, word-processor add-ons, fonts, and so forth. (Shareware is "software on the honor system." Try the program for a designated period—usually 30 days—and then register and pay for it if you decide to keep it on your system.) The programs themselves are located in shareware archives and corporate sites throughout the Internet, but they can be downloaded directly from Shareware.com (`www.shareware.com`).

A related CNET search service called Download.com is also offered on the Shareware.com home page. The names are confusing at first, since, as we've said, you can both search for and download shareware from Shareware.com. So what's Download.com? It's a searchable catalog of demos, drivers, and patches offered by the creators of *commercial* (rather than shareware) programs.

✔ Tips

- For best results, use Shareware.com's drop-down menu to specify your computer platform (Windows 95/98, Windows NT, Macintosh, etc.).
- You can use double quotes to search for phrases (`"download accelerator"`), and plus and minus signs to include (+) or exclude (-) search terms.
- Searching Shareware.com and downloading software are the easy parts. The hard part is identifying the really good stuff. (We know, because we've been evaluating and writing about shareware for almost two decades.) For our recommendations on the best tools and utilities for Web searchers, see Appendix D.



consumerworld.org

Consumer World

Consumer World (`consumerworld.org`) is a master site for consumer-related information. Created in 1995 by consumer advocate and educator Edgar Dworsky, the site provides links to over 2,000 consumer resources available on the Internet (categorized for easy browsing), as well as a search form you can use to zero in on a specific topic.

Consumer agencies, product reviews and buyer's guides from *Consumer Reports* and other sources, travel bargains and airline farefinders, the best credit card deals, health insurance options, tips for reducing junk mail and getting off telemarketing lists—you'll find information on these and more with a Consumer World search.

✔ Tips

- Searching online for product reviews and buyer's guides is a lot easier than storing all those back issues of *Consumer Reports* and paging through them when you're ready to make a purchase decision.
- If you're a *Consumer Reports* subscriber, you might want to consider signing up for the searchable online version of the magazine, which gives you access to the current issue and four years of back issues. The annual fee is $19 for magazine subscribers ($24 for non-subscribers). For more information, go to Consumer Reports Online at `www.consumerreports.org`.



www.cuisinenet.com

CuisineNet Menus Online

How's this for a neat idea: collect reviews, menus, and prices for hundreds of the best restaurants all over the United States and make them available (and searchable) on the Web? That's what CuisineNet Menus Online (`www.cuisinenet.com`) offers for these major metropolitan areas:

Atlanta	New Orleans
Boston	New York
Chicago	Philadelphia
Dallas	Portland
Houston	San Diego
Kansas City	San Francisco
Los Angeles	Seattle
Miami	Washington, DC

You can search for restaurants in a given area by location, type of cuisine, price, or "amenities" (things like wheelchair access, parking, special menus, smoking rules, entertainment, outdoor dining, and so forth). You can also specify that you only want to see listings for restaurants whose write-ups include menus.

✔ Tips

- To display the menus for a specific restaurant, click on the Menus link that appears right below the ratings section in the write-up. (If you don't see a Menus link, that particular restaurant hasn't yet made its menus available online.)
- For a second opinion on a restaurant's food, decor, service, and price, consult the popular *Zagat Surveys*, available online at Zagat.com (`www.zagat.com`). Both the Web site and the familiar pocket-sized burgundy guides are the creation of Nina and Tim Zagat—whose name, the Web site helpfully explains, is pronounced "za-GAT" (rhymes with "the cat").

www.edmunds.com

Edmund's Automobile Buyer's Guides

Edmund's Guides are required reading for anyone in the market for a new or used car. This Web site (www.edmunds.com) lets you search online for the following information and more, whenever you need it:

- Reviews by make and model
- Road test reports
- Dealer prices
- Used car and truck prices
- Loan and lease quotes

It's actually a directory rather than a search engine, but the site is so well designed and organized that you really won't mind.

www.elibrary.com

Electric Library

Electric Library (www.elibrary.com) is an incredible research tool. It gives you access to a searchable database of more than 150 full-text newspapers, 800 magazines, 2,000 classic books, two international news wires, and countless maps, photographs, and TV and radio transcripts.

You can pose a question in plain English and launch a search of the entire Electric Library database, or focus on one or more types of sources (newspapers, magazines, books, pictures, maps, or transcripts). This is a subscription service, but at $10 a month or $60 a year, it's a real bargain. You can sign up for a 30-day free trial at the Electric Library Web site.

✔ Tips

- For search tips and details on the specific sources that are included in an Electric Library search, go to the home page and click on Customer Service and then on Where Can I Find Help About.
- Infonautics, the company behind Electric Library, also offers a free service called NewsDirectory. Located on the Web at www.newsdirectory.com, this site organizes more than 14,500 news sources (magazines, newspapers, TV stations, government agencies, etc.) into a searchable directory.



www.britannica.com

Encyclopedia Britannica

If you own a musty, outdated, 32-volume set of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, you'll be pleased to know that the full text of this venerable reference work is now available—and searchable—online. In fact, there are two services, one free and one requiring a subscription:

- **Britannica.com**, located on the Web at `www.britannica.com`, is a free service, supported by advertising. It gives you complete access to the *Britannica* database, along with original commentary, special multimedia presentations, and a searchable and browsable directory of outstanding Web sites, selected by *Britannica* editors to supplement your database searches.
- **Encyclopedia Britannica Online** (`www.eb.com`), the subscription service, gives you faster access to the *Britannica* database, plus all the other features associated with the free service, but without the advertising. You can also format articles for printing and set up a personal workspace for storing articles associated with a particular research project. And you can tap into *Britannica Intermediate*, designed for students in elementary and high school. The annual subscription fee is $50.

✔ Tips

- You can use plus and minus signs in your *Encyclopedia Britannica* queries to include (+) or exclude (-) words and phrases. To search for a phrase, enclose the words in double quotes.
- Both sites also support the use of the Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT, and ADJ (to look for two words adjacent to each other).

epicurious
FOR PEOPLE WHO EAT

www.epicurious.com

Epicurious Food

Created by Condé Nast, the publisher of *Gourmet* and *Bon Appétit* magazines, Epicurious (`www.epicurious.com`) is a cook's and food-lover's delight. You'll find complete menus, practical cooking tips and techniques, and cookbook reviews and recommendations. But the best part about the site is its Recipe File, a searchable database of more than 11,000 recipes that have appeared in *Gourmet* and *Bon Appétit*.

If you're a subscriber to one or both magazines, you'll appreciate not having to root through the recycle pile to find a recipe you forgot to clip out. Just search the database, using one or two keywords to identify the type of recipe and a unique ingredient: `eggplant` and `appetizer`, for example. Chances are, you'll find it.

✔ Tip

- Recipes from Martha Stewart's magazine and television show are also available online at `www.marthastewart.com`. As Martha herself would say, "It's a good thing!"



www.expedia.com

Expedia Travel Information

When we're going on a trip that involves air travel, we prefer using a travel agency to actually book our flights and issue the tickets. After all, they're the pros and are much more likely to know about the best fares and any special deals that might be available. But we often use the Net prior to calling our travel agent to get an idea of airline schedules and fares. And one of the fastest and most reliable places to do that is Microsoft's Expedia travel Web site (`www.expedia.com`).

You can also use Expedia to check the status of a specific flight, search for hotels and "specialty lodgings" (apartments, country inns, and bed-and-breakfast accommodations), and locate the best car-rental deals. There's also a handy currency converter so that you can check the exchange rate just prior to leaving for a foreign country.

✔ Tips

- Sign up for Expedia's Fare Tracker service and they'll send you an e-mail message each week alerting you to the best fares for up to three travel destinations.
- Travelocity (`www.travelocity.com`) is another good choice for travel information. It's quite similar to Expedia and offers most of the same services, including airline fare-finder and fare-tracker features.



www.fedex.com

FedEx Package Tracking

If you use overnight courier services on a regular basis, the FedEx Web site (`www.fedex.com`) is one you should definitely get to know. It can be a real time-saver when the FedEx phone lines are jammed up, or any time you want to get a question answered quickly.

With FedEx Package Tracking, you can search the company's shipping database by airbill number to find out exactly when your shipment was delivered and who signed for it. The Drop-off Locator, another searchable database, will help you identify the nearest self-service and staffed FedEx locations and the cutoff times for dropping off your package.



www.findlaw.com

FindLaw Legal Resources

FindLaw (`www.findlaw.com`) is one of the premier sites for doing legal research on the Web. You can browse the site's legal resources directory, which is organized by topic. Or use one of several FindLaw search services:

- **LawCrawler**, to find cases, codes, and regulations at legal sites throughout the Internet.
- **Supreme Court Center**, for Supreme Court decisions dating back to 1893.
- **Find a Lawyer**, to locate a lawyer or law firm by name, practice, or city/state.
- **Forms**, for over 8,000 Federal and State Court forms and sample agreements for small businesses.
- **Legal News**, for current news articles on a specific subject.
- **Library**, for background information in articles written by top attorneys, bar associations, and government agencies.

✔ Tips

- To display FindLaw resources geared to your particular interests, click on the appropriate link in the navigation bar at the top of the home page (`Legal Professionals`, `Students`, `Business`, or `Public`).
- For best results, be sure to click on `Help & Information` at the bottom of the home page and get to know the material presented there. The search tips and advice provided in `FindLaw Help` and `LawCrawler Information` are likely to prove especially useful.



firstgov.gov

FirstGov

An official Web site of the United States government, FirstGov (firstgov.gov) is designed to give you one-stop access to all local, state, and federal government resources that are available online. The site offers three ways for locating information:

- Search by keyword using the FirstGov search form.
- Browse the FirstGov subject directory, which is organized into topics like "Agriculture and Food," "Federal Benefits and Grants," and "Money and Taxes."
- Click on the link for a specific branch of the U. S. Government (Executive, Legislative, or Judicial).

✔ Tips

- FirstGov doesn't currently offer much in the way of search tips and help information, except to say that, in choosing your search terms, you should "try to be as exact as possible."
- Give the search form a try, but if you don't find what you're look for after a couple of queries, use the subject directory or the links for branches of government.
- If it's Congressional activities you're interested in, for example, click on Legislative Branch and you'll find information about the United States Senate and House of Representatives, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Library of Congress.

  Then click on Library of Congress and you'll find a link for Thomas Legislative Information. Named in honor of Thomas Jefferson, this site (thomas.loc.gov) gives you access to the full text of the *Congressional Record*, all legislation currently under consideration by Congress, and historical documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.