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EDDL 5101
Educational Technology for Learning

ONLINE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Google Search Strategies

I'm often asked for recommendations on how to help students use Google more effectively in their research efforts. Whether you teach elementary school, middle school, high school, or college students these tips can be used by your students. Detailed explanations of these strategies is included in my webinar *Search Strategies Students Need to Know* available at <http://practicaledtech.com/on-demand-pd/>

1. Not every question needs to be Googled.

- One of the bad habits that I see many students fall into when it comes to research is simply entering into Google the first thing that comes to mind. While this strategy can work, it often leads to a lot of time wasted on searches for information that students already have. Before embarking on a research project ask students to make a list of the things they already know about the topic they plan to research. Have them look in their notes to see if they already have information on the topic.

2. Search within a search result.

- One of the worst offenses students commit while conducting web searches is only glancing at the webpages they open from the search results page. Or worse yet, only reading the brief snippet that appears below the links in a search results page. The reason for this behavior that students often give is “it takes too long to read the whole page.” To remedy this teach your students to use “Control F” (Windows) or “Command F” (Mac) when they open a webpage from the search results page. Control F or Command F allows you to search within any webpage for any letter, word, or phrase. This also works for searching within PDFs and other documents that students may download during a web search.

3. Think like someone else.

- When formulating search phrases it can be helpful to think about the words that someone else might use to describe your topic, question, or problem. Try using those terms instead of your own. Learn more about this strategy in the short video available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9dBn3aK4rw&feature=youtu.be>

4. Open the advanced search menu.

- The advanced search menu is often overlooked by students. It is found by opening the gear/ sprocket icon that appears in the upper, right corner of the search results page. In that menu you will find tools for refining search results by file type, domain, language, and more.

5. Search by domain.

- Limit search results to specific top-level domain or to a specific website. For example, if I wanted my search results to be limited to links from [.edu](#) sites, I would enter “.edu” in the domain limitation box.

6. Search by file type.

- Search by file type allows you to find results according to file format. Combine searching by file type **.ppt** or **.pdf** with searching by domain **.edu** or **.k12.me.us** to find PowerPoints or PDFs produced by students and teachers. (replace the .me in .k12.me.us with your state’s two letter abbreviation to find slides and PDFs produced in your state).

7. Try Google Scholar.

- Google Scholar to find academic, peer-reviewed articles on your topic. Often these are articles that you would not find in typical Google search. Google Scholar is also useful for finding court rulings and patent filings.

8. Set Google alerts and Google Scholar alerts.

- Go to <https://www.google.com/alerts> to create alerts for specific search terms. When new information related to your topic is available, it will be emailed to you. Google Scholar also has an alerts function.

9. Search Google Books & Newspapers

- Google Books (<https://books.google.com/>) indexes millions of books and periodicals that you can search within. Many books and periodicals are available to read online for free. The Google News Newspaper Archive (<https://news.google.com/newspapers>) has digitized hundreds of old newspapers that you can search through.

10. Remember that Google isn’t the only search engine.

- Most schools and local libraries has access to databases that are not indexed by Google and or are not accessible without the subscription fee that your school or library pays. Ask the librarian for assistance in accessing those databases.