Become a Google Power User: Tips and Techniques
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Access our Advanced Google Features cheat sheet.
Mastering Google’s Power Search Commands
Power Search Commands: General Tips

Word order counts
Position keywords in the order of importance by placing the most critical terms first.

Use fewer words, but the right words
The more precise your keywords, the better the results. Too many words can overwhelm and result in less relevant content.
Power Search Commands: Keywords

You will have more success searching if you distill your topic down to main concepts, otherwise known as keywords.
• The more precise your keywords, the better the results.

Example topic: “I want to find information on innovations of medical devices in healthcare, specifically related to cancer.”

Keywords:
• innovation
• medical devices
• healthcare
• cancer
Power Search Commands: Synonyms

Next, brainstorm synonyms for your keywords to broaden your search and ensure you do not miss relevant information. Keep in mind, authors use different keywords to describe concepts.

Example topic: “I want to find information on innovations of medical devices in healthcare, specifically related to cancer.”

Keywords:
- innovation
- medical devices
- healthcare
- cancer

Possible synonyms for each concept:
- **Innovation > disruption**
- **medical devices** - sometimes a keyword stands on its own without synonyms
- **healthcare > health, medical, medicine**
- **cancer > oncology**
Power Search Commands: Trigger Words

Trigger words provide focus and clarity. Think of them as action words that drive Google to return results that target the kinds of content you are looking for.

Possible trigger words include:

- data
- statistics
- impact
- trends
- strategy
- growth
- outcome
- decline
Power Search Commands: Phrases

Always place phrases in quotation marks (" ") so that Google searches for the words together in the exact order you wrote them.

Example phrases:
- “stock options”
- “North Carolina”
- “self-driving” – Note: Treat hyphenated words as a phrase.
- “autonomous vehicles”
- “medical devices”

Conducting a search for autonomous vehicles without quotation marks will return many extraneous results. Without quotation marks, results will include:
- The word autonomous anywhere
- The word vehicles anywhere
- Autonomous vehicles as a phrase
Power Search Commands: Connectors - AND

Google looks for all the individual keywords to appear in each returned document or website. It automatically inserts AND between each search term, unless you tell it otherwise.

Since AND is the default, you never have to include it in your search. But if you choose to, it must be in all capital letters.

Example:

• Healthcare medical devices innovation
  • Google interprets this search as: healthcare AND medical AND devices AND innovation
  • It requires that all 4 search terms be present, in any order
• Healthcare “medical devices” innovation
  • Searching “medical devices” is a more precise search, yielding fewer but more relevant results
Power Search Commands: Connectors - OR

Google requires at least one of the individual keywords to appear in each returned document or website.

- Use OR to separate synonyms, e.g., similar concepts
- Always type OR in all capital letters
- Remember that the benefit of using synonyms is to find the most relevant results

Examples:
- automobiles OR “motor vehicles” OR cars
- innovation OR creativity OR disruption
Use Boolean connectors to create a clearly expressed logic search string, one that will drive Google to return the best content for your research.

**Structuring your search:**
- (synonym OR synonym) (synonym OR synonym)
  - Remember that AND is assumed between the sets of parentheses

**Examples:**
- (cancer OR oncology) “medical devices” (innovation OR disruption)
- (phone OR “mobile device” OR smartphone) (millennials OR “gen z”)
Power Search Commands: Logic – Combining AND & OR

Now let’s break down the logic:

Example: (cancer OR oncology) “medical devices” (innovation OR disruption)
• (at least one of the keywords) AND the phrase AND (at least one of the keywords) must be present in each document or website
• Looks for content that contains: either keywords cancer OR oncology AND the phrase “medical devices” AND either keyword innovation OR disruption

Example: (phone OR “mobile device” OR smartphone) (millennials OR “gen z”)
• (at least one of the keywords or phrases) AND (at least one of the keywords OR phrases) must be present in each document or website
• Look for content that contains: either keyword OR phrases phone OR “mobile device” OR smartphone AND either keyword/phrase millennials OR “gen z”
What does this look like in practice? Let’s put it together.

Research topic:
• Recent trends toward sustainability in the fashion industry

Here are the factors we need to consider:
• What are the essential keywords or phrases?
• What are some synonyms for these keywords and phrases?
• Are there trigger words that might help?
• What should our word order be?
• What logic should we use in our search statement?
Recent trends toward sustainability in the fashion industry

**Step 1: Start with key concepts/keywords**
- sustainability
- fashion
- industry

**Step 3: Which trigger words will help provide specificity?**
- trends
- impact
- outlook
- strategy

**Step 2: What are the relevant synonyms?**
- sustainability
- “eco-friendly”
- green
- recycle
- fashion
- clothing
- apparel
- industry
- market
Recent trends toward sustainability in the fashion industry

Now, group synonyms for each concept together with OR:

**Concept 1:** sustainability OR “eco-friendly” OR green OR recycle

**Concept 2:** fashion OR clothing OR apparel

**Concept 3:** industry OR market

Next, group the trigger words:

trends OR impact OR outlook OR strategy
Recent trends toward sustainability in the fashion industry

Put everything together to create a strong Google search statement.

(sustainability OR “eco-friendly” OR green OR recycle) (fashion OR clothing OR apparel) (industry OR market) (trends OR impact OR outlook OR strategy)

Note: Remember that AND is assumed between words/phrases/parentheticals unless you specify otherwise.
Targeting the Most Credible Sources
Power Search Commands: Who Owns Information

Use advanced search functions to drive Google to return content from credible, authoritative sources.

Consider:
• Who owns the information?
• Where does that information live?
• Who writes about your topic?

Example: Consulting Firms
• Considered experts in multiple industries due to vast client exposure
• Experienced framing real-world business problems and solving business challenges
• Write free white papers that provide key insights into industry trends, data, and competitor analysis
Power Search Commands: Who Owns Information – Domains

Target specific domains, e.g., government, education, non-profit, countries, or a specific website.
- site:edu
- site:org (typically used for non-profits)
- site:gov
- site:emory.edu

Place the site: command after your keywords and at the very end of the search statement.
- enrollment college site:emory.edu
- enrollment college (data OR statistics) site:gov
Power Search Commands: Who Owns Information – INURL

Target a specific URL or websites that are likely to reference that URL. Think of this function as a shortcut when you don’t know that complete URL.

Examples:
- inurl:census
- inurl:deloitte
- inurl:nytimes
- inurl:youtube
- inurl:video

Place the inurl: command after your keywords and at the very end of the search statement.

Examples:
- streaming (netflix OR amazon OR hulu) (trends OR outlook) inurl:mckinsey
- travel (industry OR market) (pandemic OR “covid-19”) (impact OR future) inurl:(nytimes OR fortune OR forbes)
Use the *Tools* function to limit the publication date of returned content to specific timelines (e.g., one year, 5 years, custom range, etc.). The default is Any Time (i.e., all publication dates).

**Example:**
- When researching information about COVID-19, use the *Tools’ Custom Range* filter to restrict content from March 1, 2020 – present.
Power Search Commands: Dates – Filtering with Numbers

Locate data for specific date ranges by adding two dots between two numbers. This is useful for locating historical, current, or forecasted data embedded within web content.

Examples:
• 2014..2025 – searches for inclusion of years between 2014 and 2025
• ("quick service restaurant" OR qsr) (data OR statistics) 2018..2030 site:org

Note: Always add extra years to your date ranges to make sure you don’t miss relevant data and place the number ranges toward the end of the search statement.
Power Search Commands: Document Types

In Google, you can limit returned content to PowerPoint or PDF formats.

- PowerPoint format often captures conference and other presentation decks and is useful for quickly locating data snapshots found in market research reports.

- Sometimes articles, reports, studies, whitepapers and surveys are available on the internet in PDF format.
  - **Note**: Not all content is uploaded in PDF format. Use sparingly.

**Add to your search:**
- filetype:(ppt OR pptx)
- filetype:pdf

**Examples:**
- online shopping “customer journey” usage (data OR statistics) filetype:ppt
- online shopping “customer journey” usage (data OR statistics) filetype:pdf inurl:deloitte

**Note:** Place the `filetype:` command after your keywords toward the end of the search statement.
Power Search Commands: Google Images

Search Google Images to locate data snapshots quickly and to find company lists or rankings.

After running the search in Google web, click on Images.
Google Scholar and Library Linking
Google Scholar and Library Linking

You can connect Emory Libraries’ content to your Google Scholar account.

While this feature does not search all of Emory’s electronic resources (and therefore is no substitute for database searching), it can be an excellent springboard into further research by helping you identify some journal articles on your topic.
Linking Your Google Scholar Account

First, go to Google Scholar and select the three lines in the upper left-hand corner.

Then, select the Settings option.
Next, select Library links.
Type *Emory University* into the search bar and hit enter.

Select the check box next to *Find it @ Emory* and then hit Save.

Now you are ready to search!
You can tell that library linking has worked when you conduct a search and *Find it @ Emory* shows up to the right of some results. This lets you know that Emory provides access to that particular resource.

Note: the linking feature does not search 100% of Emory’s holdings and is not intended to be a substitute for a full database search.
Advanced Search in Google Scholar

You can use the advanced search feature in Google Scholar to locate articles from a specific author, journal title, and within specific publication years.
Citations in Google Scholar

Use Google Scholar to think like your faculty. Consider:
- Who is writing about my topic?
- How is the research/thinking around this topic changing over time?

Find out who has cited specific articles (see Cited by link under each article) and use the citing tool to make sure you are giving proper credit.
Questions?
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