

WHAT IS THE NET?

Listen to sound segments and use proprietary meta tag systems to selectively search through their large collections of songs and music.

An excellent and always available starting point for spelling, translation, thesaurus,

and encyclopedia references, and occasional relevant links is the program Atomic a (<http://www.atomica.ca>) This free program, when installed on your machine, provides instant (ALT CLICK) access to any word in your browser, word processing document, or any other text program—very handy!

Other services function by quickly submitting your single request to multiple search engines and displaying the results on a single (long!) screen. For example

Dog Pile (www.Dogpile.com) "fetches" the results of your search from sixteen different search engines.

Finally, most search engines allow the user to turn on a "kiddie filter" to eliminate

adult content hits, and some such as Surf Safely (<http://www.surfsafely.com/>) or Family Safe Startup Page (<http://www.startup-page.com/>) index only

Family-rated sites.

Once you have decided which search tool to use, refer to that system's online help section.

Not all search engines work the same, nor do they have the same features and commands. Moreover, there is nearly always advice and tutorials available that can be

extremely useful when refining your search. In the end, taking the time to read the

online help documentation will save you time by achieving better search results. Also,

keep in mind that rarely will you be satisfied with your first search results. Be prepared

to try a variety of combinations of Boolean searches and synonyms for keywords.

Finally, all search engines and subject guides have different methods of refining queries

and/or retrieving information. The best way to learn them is to read the help files on

the search engine sites, and don't be afraid to experiment!

TIPS FOR FINDING USEFUL AND RELEVANT INFORMATION

Begin your search by analyzing your needs.

Isolate your keywords.

Select a search tool that matches your needs.

Experiment with a variety of search engines and subject guides!

Although our favorite search engines tend to change over time, we have found Google (<http://www.google.com>) to be the fastest, most effective, and least ad-

cluttered site.

SUMMARY

The Net has evolved into an unstructured network of millions of computers through-
out the world. Today most of us access the Net through the use of a suite of
protocols

known as the World Wide Web (WWW). Besides being described as the most
complicated
network, the Internet has also been described as the largest network ever