

# Understanding Basic Internet Skills - How to Conduct Online Research

In today's world, the internet is a powerful tool that can help us find information on almost anything. Whether you're looking for facts about a topic for school or simply trying to solve a problem, knowing how to search the web effectively is an essential skill. In this article, we'll learn about basic internet skills, focusing on how to use search engines, evaluate websites, and organize the information you find.

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## What Are Search Engines?

A **search engine** is a website that helps you find information on the internet. Popular search engines include **Google**, **Bing**, and **Yahoo**. You type in **keywords** (important words related to your topic), and the search engine gives you a list of websites that may have useful information. For example, if you're researching "the solar system," you would type those words into the search engine, and it would show you pages about the planets, their features, and more.

## Effective Search Strategies

To get the best results, you need to be specific with your search. This means using **keywords** that are directly related to your topic. For instance, instead of just typing "animals," try using specific terms like "endangered species" or "wildlife conservation."

Here are some tips for better searches:

- **Quotation Marks:** Use quotation marks around phrases (e.g., "global warming effects") to find exact matches.
  - **Advanced Search:** Use filters to narrow down results, such as by date or type of content (images, articles, videos).
  - **Boolean Operators:** Words like **AND** or **OR** help refine your search. For example, "polar bears AND climate change" will give you results about both topics.
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## Evaluating Sources for Credibility

Not all websites are trustworthy, so it's important to check the source. Look for these signs to know if a website is reliable:

- **Author:** Who wrote the article? Are they an expert on the subject?
- **Date:** Is the information recent or outdated?
- **Website Domain:** Websites ending in **.edu** (education), **.gov** (government), or **.org** (organization) tend to be more reliable.

For example, a website from a university (like **Harvard.edu**) is generally a trustworthy source for scientific facts, while a personal blog might not always provide accurate information.

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### **Practical Use of Internet Skills**

Knowing how to search the web and evaluate sources is useful in many real-life situations. For example:

- **School Projects:** When you need to write a paper or create a presentation, you'll need to find information. These skills will help you gather facts and cite them correctly.
  - **Problem-Solving:** Whether you're figuring out how to fix something or learn a new skill, the internet is full of tutorials and expert advice.
  - **Everyday Decisions:** Searching for product reviews or comparing prices can help you make informed choices when shopping online.
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### **Conclusion**

Learning basic internet skills helps you find information quickly and safely. By using search engines effectively, evaluating websites for trustworthiness, and organizing your findings, you can become a more efficient researcher. These skills are useful not just for schoolwork but for everyday tasks as well.

For more information on how to improve your internet skills, check out these resources:

- Google's **Search Help:** <https://support.google.com/websearch>
- Common Sense Education's **Digital Literacy:** <https://www.commonsense.org/education>

By practicing these skills, you'll be ready to tackle any research challenge that comes your way!

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### **References:**

- Google Search Help. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://support.google.com/websearch>
- Common Sense Education. (n.d.). Digital Literacy and Citizenship. Retrieved from <https://www.commonsense.org/education>