

- "Give me all the red **and** blue berries" usually means "Give me all berries that are red **or** blue". An alternative phrasing for standard written English: "Give me all berries that are red as well as all berries that are blue".

Also note that the word OR in English may correspond with either logical OR or logical XOR, depending on the context:

- "I start to sweat when the humidity **or** temperature is high." (logical OR)
- "You want ice cream and candy? You may have ice cream **or** candy." (logical XOR)

The combination AND/OR is sometimes used in English to specify a logical OR, when just using the word OR alone might have been mistaken as meaning logical XOR:

- "I'm having chicken **and/or** beef for dinner." (logical OR). An alternative phrasing for standard written English: "I'm having chicken, or beef, or both, for dinner."
- The use of the "and/or" [virgule](#) is generally disfavored in formal written English. Such usage may introduce critical imprecision in legal instruments, research findings, and for computer programs or electronic circuits.

A case where this is an issue is when specifications for a computer program or electronic circuit are supplied as an English paragraph describing their function. For example, the statement: "the program should verify that the applicant has checked the male **or** female box", should be taken as an XOR, and a check added to ensure that one, and only one, box is selected. In other cases, the interpretation of English may be less certain, and the author of the specification may need to be consulted to determine their true intent.

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A Quick Guide To Web and File Searching

Rev 2.03

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USING BOOLEAN LOGIC IN YOUR SEARCHES ON THE Web AND ELSEWHERE

Searching for an answer in the computer world whether its on your computer using the Windows search functions, on Google or Yahoo and the 1000's of other searchings you do they all use Boolean logic. ITS NOT HARD to use and it will really speed up your search and get you to what you want with a minimum of ads and garbage.

The BASIC HOW TO

Step 1.

Phrase your question in plain English. You might even want to write it down. Try to make your question as simple as possible. Do not ask a compound question.

E.g. Give me the pages on the weather in Ventura California. OR

NOT I want to know about the weather and in particular Ventura County Weather.

Step 2.

Take the question and pull out the operative words in it.

I.E. Weather Ventura

Step 3.

Now comes the weird part. Search engines and catalogues on the World Wide Web basically operate on Boolean Algebra (or Boolean Logic). For those over 40 that's the thing your algebra teacher spent about 20 minutes on since nobody knew what to do with it. Computers love it. Most all of your searching in computer databases as well as the World Wide Web is done by using what's known as Boolean algebra.

To use it you simply need to remember the connecting words. **The ones used most often are**

AND - OR - NOT

These connectors, as they are called, will allow you

to reduce your search to get a manageable number of responses. The problem that most people end up with is that they get something like 20,000+ responses back. Obviously, too much. Your search was too general. The Boolean connectors will cut down the number of responses and make them more in line with what you are actually looking for.

In our example, if you try just "weather" you will be flooded with responses but if you restrict it to "**weather and ventura**" you will only get files that will respond to both words. Many fewer results since there is not much on Ventura weather, it being a pretty small part of this planet. I usually never use capitals in these requests but sometimes the systems are case sensitive, so you may want to try things both ways. Its usually a good custom to stick with small letters on the Internet, especially in picking your E-Mail address. Put in a couple of caps in the middle and your friends will never find you. But I guess it can stroke the ego.

You can expand upon this by putting in things like "weather and Ventura or temperature and Ventura". The key is to experiment.

BOOLEAN OPERATOR SUMMARY

Connector	Use
AND	Narrow search and use all words
OR	Broaden search to ANY of the Words
NOT	SEARCHES for ITEMS that DO NOT contain the word
() Or “ “	Group words or phrases in Limiter to search on in order given
No Connector	Finds the words given as written
	The following connectors work on some systems only, test them
Within “X”	Find words within a specified radius , e.g., carbon within 3 fiber retrieves records that contain <i>carbon</i> and <i>fiber</i> in any order and within a three word radius of one other

“NEAR” Find words within 10 words of each other

“BEFORE “ Finds words in a relative order, e.g., **social before security**

“AFTER “ Finds words that contain words in the relative order specified with the **after** expression,

Wildcard symbols can expand the scope of your search.

* This expands a search term to include all forms of a root word

? Single-character wildcard for finding alternative spellings

Note: Only words with characters equal to the number of ?'s present are retrieved, e.g., cell? retrieves cells and cello but not cell. Three characters are required before truncation, therefore h*ophilia will not function in our database.

Tip: When looking for singular and plural forms of short words that have a common root, such as cell, the truncation symbol may retrieve too many irrelevant words, while the wildcard symbol may retrieve too few words. In such a case, do not use wildcards and instead OR together the forms of the word you want, e.g., cell or cells.

Care With English

Care should be taken when converting an English sentence into a formal Boolean statement. Many English sentences have imprecise meanings, e.g. "All that glitters is **not** gold," which could mean that "nothing that glitters is gold" or "some things which glitter are not gold".

AND and OR can also be used interchangeably in English, in certain cases:

- "I always carry an umbrella for when it rains **and** snows."

- "I always carry an umbrella for when it rains **or** snows."

Sometimes the English words AND and OR have the opposite meaning in Boolean logic: