

# Six tips for more efficient Internet searching

## 1: Use unique, specific terms

It is simply amazing how many Web pages are returned when performing a search. A Google search of blue dolphin returned 2,440,000 results! To reduce the number of results, use unique terms that are specific to the subject you are researching.

## 2: Use quotation marks for exact phrases

Using quotation marks around a phrase will return only those exact words in that order. Example: "Be nice to nerds".

## 3: Don't use common words and punctuation

Common terms like **a** and **the** are usually ignored. Punctuation is also typically ignored. But there are exceptions. Common words and punctuation marks should be used when searching for a specific phrase inside quotes. There are cases when common words like **the** are significant. For instance, Raven and "The Raven" return entirely different results.

## 4: Use the minus operator (-) to narrow the search

Used the minus operator (-), or NOT operator, to remove many unwanted results. For example, when searching for the insect caterpillar, references to the company Caterpillar, Inc. will also be returned. Use Caterpillar -Inc to exclude references to the company or Caterpillar -Inc -Cat to further refine the search.

## 5: Capitalization

Most search engines do not distinguish between uppercase and lowercase, even within quotation marks. The following are all equivalent:

technology  
Technology  
TECHNOLOGY  
"technology"  
"Technology"

## 6: Drop the suffixes

It's usually best to enter the base word so that you don't exclude relevant pages. For example, bird and not birds, walk and not walked. One exception is if you are looking for sites that focus on the act of walking, enter the whole term walking.

Adapted from:

<http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/10-things/10-tips-for-smarter-more-efficient-internet-searching/> [Accessed 25.6.2017]