
Activity 2 Accessing a gateway and using advanced search

Introduction

This activity should take you no more than an hour or so to complete. If you wish to spend more time than this you may, but bear in mind that only an hour or so of your total course study time is planned for this, and any additional time you take will add to your total hours of study. It is very easy to allow computing activities to predominate your studies! If you have difficulties with this activity, we suggest that you seek the help of a friend, neighbour or family member, but remember that you yourself should complete the activities, otherwise you will not learn the needed skills. So by all means, if you need to, ask for specific help or a demonstration, but do the activity items yourself.

The activity is split into two: first you will use the advanced search facility of a search engine and then you will access a gateway. *You may find it useful to use your browser to print off this page.*

What you should learn

After carrying out this activity you should be able to:

- find and use a gateway site on a subject of interest to you that relates to the course in some way;
- compare the effect of using a gateway to using advanced search techniques.

The activity

Find out about advanced search

Go again to the main interface page for your chosen browser. Does it offer a clickable phrase or box that says one or more of 'advanced search' or 'search hints'? If not, choose [Google](#) (see Activity 1). Go to that page by clicking on the appropriate box or phrase.

Most search engines allow one or more of the following features:

- a form that can be filled out to create an advanced search. The Google advanced search allows you to search for all websites containing certain words, but removing from their list any websites that contain other words; it also allows you to search for sites where the key words appear in the title, the URL (the address), or anywhere in the website, websites in a particular language, etc.
- Short cuts, such as putting phrases in speech marks (e.g. 'solar power' and 'domestic use'), using plus signs (solar + power) for words that must be included in the website if it is to be selected, or minus signs ('home use' -

'power tool') as a way of indicating that websites containing a word or phrase should be not be selected as part of the results that the search engine should return.

By the way, many search engines offer translation of websites which are not in English. Google presents such websites with a clickable item at the end of the description that says: 'translate this web site'. Translations are machine translations, and the results can be very variable. As an optional part of this activity, if you find a website that is in another language, try the translation facility.

Retrieve documentation about advanced search

Read the information provided in the 'advanced search' or 'search hints' page for your chosen search engine. If you can, it might be worth printing this for future reference.

Use the advanced search facility

Now use the advanced search facility or search hints to conduct your search again, using the following specific items of information:

- family history or genealogy, emigration (or immigration) to a country of your choice
- art galleries in your area, opening hours
- travel by rail in another country (a country of your choice)
- music on the Internet, classical or jazz but not popular
- gadgets for the DIYer that are not power tools
- computing jobs in your area, in web design
- local history of your chosen locality, 19th Century
- cookery pastries with fruit, apples or pears
- gardening design courses in your area, but not water features
- recycling in schools and offices, waste paper and aluminium tins only
- wind (or solar) power for domestic use, water heating (for solar) or electricity production (for wind)

Was this an improvement?

Examine a few of the top 10 sites returned to you. Are these closer to what you feel you wanted to find?

Do you think you will benefit from using more advanced search facilities or tips in future?

Find a gateway

Use a search engine to find a gateway (remember that a gateway is a website which provides links to resources for a specific topic) for at least one of the following topics. We will not expect you to understand the topics covered:

- history of computing
- Shakespeare
- women in computing and mathematics
- cryptography (the science of sending secret messages)
- computer security
- computer art
- computing and music

Examine the gateway

If there is more than one gateway site for your chosen topic, select one to complete this activity. Answer the following questions using the gateway website to find information on the chosen topics:

- Who hosts the website?
 - Is it, for example a library or a company?
 - How often is it updated? Often this information is not available so do not spend a lot of time looking for it.
 - When was it last updated? Often this information is not available so do not spend a lot of time looking for it.
 - Who is the intended audience? Is it, for example, students, business people or researchers?
 - Is there some general information about the subject area that is part of the gateway site itself? If so, read this and rate it as:
 - suitable for complete novices,
 - suitable for those with a bit of knowledge,
 - requires a fair amount of prior knowledge to understand,
 - aimed at experts and so is very difficult material,
 - can't understand it at all.
 - Are there links to related topics as well as to aspects of the main topic?
 - Are there any references to printed materials (books, journals, articles)? Do the references give you any idea of where you might find printed copies to look at? Are there collections of articles in a format that you can read easily on the screen or print (e.g. the pdf format in which the display looks like the printed page, which can be printed from your computer)? Sometimes you will see a symbol which indicates a page that is printer friendly.
 - Is the gateway site illustrated in any way with graphics? Do the graphics add interest to the website? Do they give you any information which is not easily found from the text? Is any use made directly of sound (e.g. sound archive recordings)? Later in Block 2 you will look at some of these aspects of websites and be given tools to judge the quality of a site.
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