fen-om

Theory

Internet Research

You might think the Internet is useless for research, because, when you try to look something up, you get back 350,000 pages to look through. This is not the Internet's fault; it is your responsibility to learn how to intelligently enter your search requests so as to limit your results. Finding what you want on the Internet is an incredibly important skill, especially as the Internet becomes more and more of an indispensable tool.

There are 3 basic kinds of search tools on the Web: search engines, directories, and the 'invisible Web'.

Directories: These group Web pages into subject categories. The most efficient way to use a directory is to start with a topic and venture down through categories and sub-categories. This is why directories are great for research on general subjects. Directories usually only contain Web sites that have been registered by their owners, and are good when you are interested in searching data categories beginning with a broad topic.

- •Librarian's Index to the Internet: more than 12,000 reliable, trustworthy, librarian-selected Internet resources. Also links to the invisible Web. [http://lii.org]
- •InfoMine: Resources from UC Riverside. [http://infomine.ucr.edu]
- •About.com: Thousands of neatly-organized resources, + links to invisible Web. [www.about.com]
- •Academic Info [www.academicinfo.net]
- •Yahoo! [http://dir.yahoo.com]

Search engines: These are good information sources for the type of research that has been narrowed down and can benefit from refined search technologies. Always remember that the search is being run only on the services database of stored sites (no search engine actually searches through the Internet at your request). The databases are vast, because the engines have robots/ spiders which search out many Web sites, but the number is still always finite (most Web sites are not here, but actually in the 'invisible Web'; see below).

- •Scirus: Successful at pinpointing science-specific data, reports, articles, and relevant scholarly Web pages. [www.scirus.com]
- •Google News: Scours the Web every 15 minutes, capturing news from 4,500+ sources. [http://news.google.com]
- •Google: Indexes records based on their popularity. Includes cached copies of pages. Can search for secondary formats, including PDF, Postscript, MS-Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Rich Text. [www.google.com]
- •AlltheWeb: Similar to google, and can search Macromedia Flash files [www.alltheweb.com]
- •Gigablast: Large search engine [www.gigablast.com]
- •Teoma: [www.teoma.com]
- •AltaVista [www.altavista.com]

The 'invisible Web' refers to all those pages that have not been submitted or discovered by directories or search engines. There are about 2 to 3 times as many pages here as those that have been tracked by engines or directories. Most of these pages are found through specialized searchable databases. Most of these pages are dynamically generated, although some are static (and have simply not been added to established directories/ engines because they have not been found or because they require a login or because they have been purposefully excluded).

- •The Invisible Web Directory: part of a popular book published in 2001. Good resource for locating the Web's hidden content [www.invisibleweb.net]
- •Internets [www.internets.com]
- •SearchIQ [www.zdnet.com/searchiq/subjects]
- •Fossick.com [www.fossick.com]
- •Direct Search: Massive collection organized by Gary Price. [www.freepint.com/gary/direct.htm]
- •LoincOn.com [www.lincon.com/srclist.htm]

• Beaucoup [www.beaucoup.com]
• Lookoff.com [www.lookoff.com]
• Virtual Search Engines [www.virtualfreesites.com/search.html]
• Freeality [www.freeality.com]
• About.com [http://websearch.about.com/internet/websearch/mbody.htm]
• A collection of special search engines [www.leidenuniv.nl/ub/biv/specials.htm#Par62]
• FinderSeeker [www.finderseeker.com]
• Specialized search engines [www.sldirectory.com/search/searchad.html#top]
• Search Engine Guide [www.searchengineguide.com/searchengines.html]
• Special Search Engines [www.ntu.edu.sg/library/specialcat.htm]
• SearchBug.com [www.searchbug.com]
• AllSearchEngines [www.allsearchengines.com]
• Search Engine Colossus [www.searchenginecolossus.com]
• Search Engines Worldwide [www.twics.com/~takakuwa/search/search.html]
• My Search Engines [www.refdesk.com/newsrch.html]
• Profusion: Meta-search engine that lets you select your own subject category of collected search engines and subject directories, allowing you to "target your search by drilling into one of [their] vertical search groups." [www.profusion.com]
• Complete Planet: 103,000 searchable databases & specialty search engines. [www.completeplanet.com]