Boolean Operators

The Boolean Operators are named after British mathematician George Boole (1815-1864). He devised a logical structure that could be used to conduct more precise searching resulting in more relevant results.

**AND**

The boolean AND can be used with your search terms to narrow your search. A search with an AND between your search terms retrieves all those documents that have BOTH your search terms in them. The more terms you add to your search connecting with an AND, the narrower your search becomes.

Let us illustrate this using Venn Diagrams named after the English Logician John Venn.

[Diagram showing Venn Diagrams with AND operations for 2 and 3 words]

**Searching with AND Using 2 Words**

**Searching with AND Using 3 Words**
**OR**

The Boolean OR can be used with your search terms to broaden your search. A search with an OR between your search terms retrieves all documents that contain either one of the search terms or the other or both. The more terms you add to your search the broader it becomes and you will get a larger set of results.

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Searching with OR Using 2 Words

Word 1 OR Word 2
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**NOT** (sometimes used as ‘AND NOT’)

The Boolean NOT is used to remove non-relevant search terms that maybe present with the first search term and which result in large sets of irrelevant results. This is used to Narrow your search and the more terms you use the narrower your search gets.

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Searching with NOT Using 2 Words

Word 1 NOT Word 2
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