

## What is a Search Engine?

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### How can I find what I am looking for?

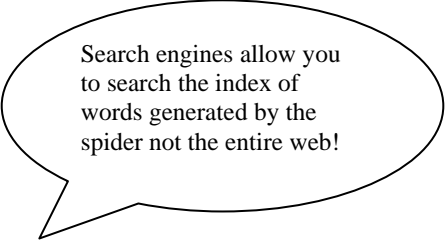
It has been estimated that there may be over 2 billion web documents with over 1 million web sites added daily. How is it possible to find what you're looking for? A Search Engine allows you to find information on a multitude of topics.

### What is a Search Engine?

*Search Engines* are created by special computer programs known as *spiders* (also known as *crawlers*, *robots*, or simply *bots*). These *spiders* locate web documents and create an *index* of words. When a word or words are typed in the *search engine*, a list of web sites that contain that word(s) displays. The words you enter is known as a *query*. The web sites that display are sometimes referred to as *hits*.

### When should I use a Search Engine?

It is best to use search engines when you are searching for specific information.



Search engines allow you to search the index of words generated by the spider not the entire web!

### What are some popular search engines?

Some popular search engines include *Altavista*, *Ask*, *Google*, and *Hotbot*, just to name a few.

### How do I start?

Before you begin a search, think about possible words that describe your topic. The more specific you are, the more likely you will retrieve relevant results. For example, searching for the word fishing will retrieve a ton of results. However, searching for fishing and Wisconsin will decrease the number of hits and provide a more focused set of results. You also have to be aware of different words used to describe a given topic such as cats or felines.

### What is a Meta Search Engine?

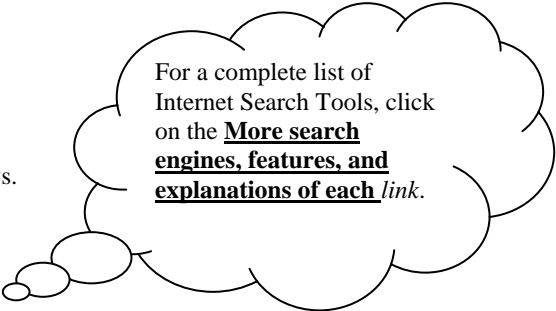
*Meta Search Engines* allow you to search more than one search engine at a time. They provide a fast way of doing multiple searches at once and are useful for locating information on hard to find topics. Popular meta search services include *DogPile* and *MetaCrawler*.

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### Accessing Internet Search Tools

1. From an MPL computer, click the **Start** button on the *taskbar* at the bottom left-hand corner of the screen.
  - The **Start Menu** opens.
2. Click on **Programs**.
  - A *submenu* opens.
3. Click on **Internet Explorer**.
  - The **Internet Explorer** program launches and the MPL web site displays.
4. Click the **Research Resources** link and then click on **Search the Internet**.
  - Several popular search engines display.
5. Click on the **Google** link.

(Note: this exercise continues on the next page)



For a complete list of Internet Search Tools, click on the **More search engines, features, and explanations of each link**.