

Develop Your Search Strategy

Online course learning objectives

This course will provide a clear understanding of the most popular online search strategies, including Boolean Logic. It'll help learners to decide which is the best fit search strategy for their needs, as well as giving lots of practical examples for carrying out a search using the most common approaches and tools.

This course will help learners to:

- Recognize the benefits of an online search strategy
- Understand the most popular types of searches, and the benefits/limitations of each (including Boolean)
- Apply search strategies in response to specific assignments/ research questions
- Search online repositories including Google Scholar
- Recognize when search results are relevant and useful
- Keep effective records of search results

Language: English

Time to complete: 2.5 hours

Level: Beginner

Instructor: Dr Eric Addae-Kyeremeh

Online course full syllabus

MODULE ONE: WHAT IS A SEARCH STRATEGY?

Searching for material for your studies or assignment can be daunting because there is so much information out there. The sheer volume means that finding the most relevant information can be time-consuming if not carefully planned. To help make things easier, it's important that you devise a search strategy to filter your sources *before* you start your essay or assignment. This module is a good place to begin and will give you some ideas on how to kick start your online search.

This module will help you to:

- Recognize the benefits of using online search
- Establish the importance of developing a search strategy before starting your essay or assignment
- Avoid some of the pitfalls in searching for online sources

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MODULE TWO: BOOLEAN LOGIC SEARCHES

Boolean logic is a form of algebra and is used to test conditions. Boolean searches are built on this logic and help us to find more relevant results.

This module focuses on using Boolean operators when searching for information and material in databases accessible through your institution's library.

This module will help you to:

- Determine appropriate keywords for a search on a given topic, including synonyms
- Adapt your use of keywords to improve your search
- Plan and carry out a basic search in a database

MODULE THREE: SEARCHING ONLINE REPOSITORIES

This module introduces online repositories, and how they can aid a search strategy. It takes you through strategies you can use when searching some of the most common online repositories, such as Google Scholar.

This module will help you to:

- Apply search strategies to find information from online repositories
- Use Google Scholar to find information for your studies or assignment
- Search other websites and repositories for materials and digital assets licensed under Creative Commons

MODULE FOUR: MANAGING AND ANALYZING SEARCH RESULTS

This module introduces you to some simple steps that can help you assess the usefulness of your search results. It goes further to provide some guidance on how to organize your search records and keep up to date with new articles and literature.

This module will help you to:

- Quickly decide which of the materials you have retrieved are most relevant for your topic
- Keep a record of what you read and intend to read in an efficient way
- Use online tools to keep up to date with information in your subject or interest area