Document Search Help

Document Search Help is divided into six topics below. Click the topic you are interested in learning more about.

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Words and Phrases

A word is any combination of letters with or without leading or following spaces. For instance, if the user inputs the word “holiday” (without the quotation marks) and then clicked SEARCH, the search engine to find every document containing the word “holiday” in the currently active document database.

Precise vs Simplified Search

Some Microsearch web portals offer the user two different types of search syntax:

- Precise search, targeting exact phrase searches, features traditional Boolean search syntax
- Simplified search, similar to Google, Bing, Yahoo.

Each convention produces the exact same results for single word searches. That’s where the similarity ends. For all other searches, the differences can be significant.

The site user selects the preferred search syntax by checking or unchecking the check box on the Search Page.

Precise Search Conventions

The Precise Search convention for search query begins with phrase searches. A phrase search is a search for more than one word. If you type in the two words **holiday pay**, Precise Search finds any document in the database where the words "**holiday"** and "**pay**"" exist side by side, i.e. separated by one space. A phrase search is a precise search: the two or more words have to be precisely in the correct order, and each word has to be separated from other words by precisely one space. (Visit Search Hints for more information on Precise Search conventions.)

If you want to find documents containing the two words but the words don't have to be precisely one space apart, you would enter **holiday** near **pay**. The search engine interprets the word **near** as your request to find word #1 within 10 words of word #2. You can alter the distance between search words, measured in number of words, of the word **near**, as explained under Boolean Operators

Simplified Search conventions

Simplified Search conventions differences begin with phrase searches. If you type in the two words **holiday pay**, Simplified Search finds any document in the database that contains either of the two words,or both of them. A space between two words is interpreted as the Boolean operator **OR.** (Visit Search Hints for more information on Simplified Search conventions.).

General Search

A General Search is performed in the General Search dialogue box . The search term may be a single word, a multiple-word phrase search, or even a complex search, but you know you are at the General Search box when it appears alone, without the filters that appear on the Precise Search

page. The General Search box will interrogate all indexed text fields in the selected database, including document, title, memo, and keyword field, if they exist in the selected database. Not every site employs a General Search box, but if one exists, it is normally located in the upper right hand corner of the Home page.

If you were to enter in the General Search box the phrase “Part 60 Air Traffic Rules” (without the parentheses marks), then press the Search button, you would get a Hit List that looks like this:

Different document databases have different home pages but the screen will have a single search box. (If there are multiple search boxes, you are in the Advanced Search screen.) You would open the document by clicking on the document title. Note on the Hit list the indicator on the left that tells you how many Hits occurred in the document, and the date of the document.

Search Results Hit List

Once the user has entered the search terms and pressed Search, Microseach creates a list of all documents that meet the search expression. This is called the Hit List. Below is an image of a Hit List, with comments about the Hit List elements.

1. Element #1 is the number of Hits in the one document
2. Element #2 is the Date of the Document, as included in the database as a metadata information field
3. Element #3 is the Title of the document with the Hits
4. Element #4 is a link that converts and exports the Hit List to an Excel spreadsheet.

5. Element #5 is a link that allows the user to further refine the search expression

At the bottom of each page in the Hit List (if there are more than 1 page of Hits) is the Hit List Page Navigator, allowing the users to jump from page to page within the Hit List, or back to the First Page, or all the way to the Last Page. It looks like this:

In this case, there are 93 pages of hits. The search term that got this many pages of hits, as shown by the highlights, is the word **the**.

Hits in Context

Context is defined as the words around Hits in the Hit List. Context and the amount of context is very useful because by examining the context, users can more easily decide which documents to open. Some users prefer a great deal of context while other users prefer minimal amounts of context. In this demo, DOT document database, note that there are 5 words on either side of each highlighted Hit.

Users of Private Document Databases, and those who register for Public document databases, can change the number of words surrounding each Hit, from none to 100 words. This one of the several Preferences that can be changed under the Preferences Tab, to be discussed later in the "What's Under the Tabs" page.

Additional Search Help Topics

- accessing a Public Web Portal
- registering for access to a Private Web Portal?
- using Precise Search capability
- using Saved Search capability
- setting User Preferences
- writing a Complex Search query
- using a Use Nested Parentheses in a search query
- using Refine a search query
- entering a Boolean operator in my search query
- converting a Boolean operator to a regular word in a phrase search
- conducting a Wildcard Search

Have an interesting search expression you have created to search one of the document databases you can access? Send it along to let us marvel at your creativity.