KEYWORD/BOOLEAN SEARCHING (K/B): an introduction

Keyword searching allows you to search for the appearance of any term, anywhere in an individual item record in LUIS. Internet search engines and many online databases such as journal indexes also use K/B searching to help you tailor your search. By using Boolean operators (discussed below) you may search for more than one term at a time, specify logical relationships between terms, and define their proximity to one another. The limits of traditional searching are removed (e.g., only being able to search by a specific subject heading; needing to know the first word of a title). This handout describes K/B searching in LUIS, the online catalog, but the concepts are the same for most electronic systems. LUIS offers both Keyword and Boolean/Keyword options. Different search techniques are used for each search option.

To search by keyword, select Boolean Keyword Searching. For example, in keyword/Boolean searching, you could search for any word appearing in a title. You could find The Witches of Eastwick by entering: eastwick or witches.

Stopwords: These are "short" words (all, at, some, this, etc.) which cannot be used as keyword search terms. Many databases have stopwords. Use of stopwords in a keyword search yields no search results. LUIS has no stopwords.

Punctuation: Keyword searches are usually punctuation sensitive; omit apostrophes, parentheses, hyphens, etc. For example, type dont instead of don't, CD ROM instead of CD-ROM.

BOOLEAN OPERATORS

Logical Operators: Boolean logical operators allow you to retrieve records which contain your search terms. The primary Boolean logical operators are:

- **AND**: Each record must contain all search terms (AND tends to narrow a search); and
- **OR**: Each record must contain at least one search term (OR tends to broaden a search)

Positional Operators: Boolean positional operators allow you to retrieve only those records in which your search terms appear in a specific order in relation to each other. The primary Boolean positional operators are:

- **Adj**: Search terms must be adjacent (side by side), in the same order;
- **Same**: Search terms must be in the same bibliographic record field, but may be in any order.
- **Near**: Search terms must be next to each other, but may be in any order.

Some databases allow you to specify that words must be in the same sentence, same paragraph, within x/words of each other, etc. In LUIS Keyword searching, 'as a phrase' equals adjacent. In LUIS’ Keyword/Boolean search mode, enter phrases in quotes (e.g., "world wide web"). Also, in LUIS Keyword/Boolean search mode, you must enter the boolean operators in ALL CAPS (e.g., "WORLD WIDE WEB" OR INTERNET).

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ProQuest’s Advanced Search Mode offers these options:

- **Pre/N** [precede by]: Use PRE/N BY to find articles that contain the first specified word or phrase preceding a second by a specified number of words. For example: world PRE/3 web
- **W/N** [within]: Use WITHIN to find articles that contain a specified word or phrase within a specified number of words of another word or phrase. For example: computer W/3 careers
- **W/DOC** [within document]: Use W/DOC to find articles that contain one or more specified words or phrases. For example: internet W/DOC education

**Default Operator:** When you type in a keyword search without specifying a logical or positional operator, the default operator of **AND** is automatically assumed by LUIS.

**TRUNCATION:** Use of the truncation symbol (?) is the most efficient way to look for variant spellings of words, singular and plural, etc. You can use truncation with any other combination of Boolean operators, or by itself. Enter the truncation symbol at the end of whatever stem word you wish to search. Some databases and search engines use the asterisk (‘*) or the exclamation mark (!) for their truncation symbol.

- ? Retrieves all terms beginning with the characters typed before the ? sign.
- ?3 Retrieves only terms beginning with the characters typed plus up to the number of additional characters specified.

Some databases allow for **embedded truncation**; e.g., wom?n would retrieve records containing the words woman or women

**Examples of Truncation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truncation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>colo?</td>
<td>Retrieve color, colours, Colorado, colony, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colo?2</td>
<td>Retrieve color, colors, colour, colon, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NESTING:** As in basic algebra, by using parentheses you may specify the order in which operations take place (those inside parentheses are performed first). More complicated strategies then become possible. Examples:

- (athletes OR sports) AND drugs
- (airport? OR airplane?) AND terror?

The first example will retrieve records in which the words athletes AND drugs OR sports AND drugs appear. The second is a broader search and will retrieve airport, airports, airplane, airplanes in records where the term(s) terror, terrorist, terrorize, terrorists, or terrorism appear in the same record.

Remember, when you are searching in different indexes, catalogs, or search engines, it is important to read the Help screens in order to search successfully in that particular database.

If you need help with keyword searching or other library resources, ask for assistance at the Information Desk (1st floor) or call 237-2580 or use **Electronic Reference** under **Mail Us** on the Library Home Page.