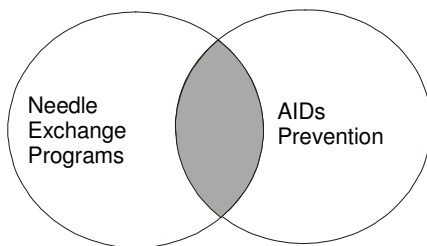


Online Search Logic

Quick Guide

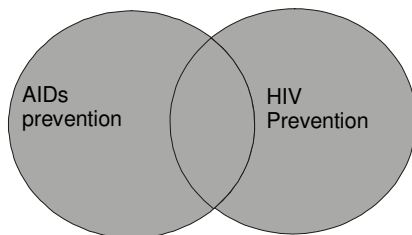
Boolean Operators

Boolean logic is the term used to describe how to combine search terms when searching online databases. The Boolean operators **AND**, **OR** and **NOT** are used to connect search terms. They can be used to broaden or narrow your search.



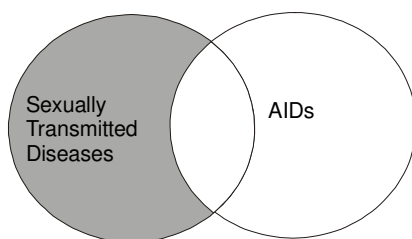
needle exchange programs AND AIDs prevention

AND narrows your search to retrieve only items containing *both* terms.



AIDS prevention OR HIV prevention

OR broadens your search to records containing *either* or *both* terms.



Sexually transmitted diseases NOT AIDs

NOT restricts your search by *excluding* records in which a certain term occurs.

If you have a complex search that requires you to use AND and OR in the same search statement, you must enclose all OR'd terms in parentheses, e.g.

needle exchange programs AND (aids OR hiv) AND (prevention OR harm reduction)

The boolean operators *AND*, *OR* and *NOT* are standard for almost all online databases, the exception is that *ProQuest* databases and *SCOPUS* require AND NOT for exclusion searches.

Combining Search Sets

Many search interfaces will allow you to build a search up in steps. Whenever you enter a search statement, a set of records will be created containing the term(s) represented in the search statement.

Once you have finished searching all the terms you wish to search, you will then have to combine the various search statements you created. This can be done in a couple of different ways depending on the search interface you are using.

Some databases provide a combine feature which prompts you through the combining process, e.g. in *Ovid* databases, using the *Ovid Advanced Search* mode, you can select sets to combine and click on the AND or OR button as appropriate. (NOTE: Do NOT combine sets in the *Ovid Basic* mode as you will get very unsatisfactory results.) In EBSCO, combine different steps of your search from the *Search History/Alerts* tab.

Other databases permit you to enter a combining statement in the database command line, e.g. in *Advanced Ovid Search*, instead of selecting sets and clicking on AND or OR, you also have the option of typing a search statement comprised of the numbers of the sets you wish to combine with the appropriate boolean operator into the command line, e.g. *1 AND 2; 1 AND (2 OR 3)*. In some databases you must precede a set number with a symbol, e.g. in EBSCO, you must precede a set number with S, e.g. S1 and S2; in *PubMed*, you must precede a set number with #, e.g. #1 AND #2.

Truncation and Wildcards

Use a truncation symbol if a word root could appear in variant forms, e.g. **canad*** would retrieve **Canada, Canadian** and **Canadians** as well as any other word with the letters **canad** as its root.

Unless the search interface you use permits you to limit truncation (see below), do not use truncation symbols for very short words, e.g. if you want to retrieve **cat** or **cats**, don't search **cat***, as this would search for far more terms than just the ones that are relevant to you, e.g. *cat, cats, catastrophe, catamaran, category, etc.*

Some databases provide the option of limiting a truncation symbol. In *Ovid* the truncation symbol is *, \$ or : (i.e. asterisk, dollar sign or colon). **The truncation symbol can be used with a number to limit the number of characters that can follow the root, e.g. cat\$1 or cat*1** would indicate that only one letter can follow *cat*, therefore you could use this to search *cat, cats, Cato*. If a number is not used, however, the truncation is unlimited (zero or any number of characters following the symbol) and truncating very short words might be a problem.

Wildcard symbols are also available in some databases to permit internal variation of spelling. In *Ovid* databases the wildcard symbol is #, and therefore if you search **wom#n**, you will retrieve *woman* and *women*.

There are two types of wildcards: "mandated" and "optional".

The *Ovid* # symbol is a "mandated" wildcard. Use of it requires that a character be present -- it can be any character, but the symbol *must* replace a character. If you searched *ne#t*, you would retrieve *neat*, *nest*, and *next* but **not** *net*.

"Optional" wildcards permit searching for words where a character may or may not be present. In *Ovid* the "optional" wildcard symbol is **?**, and therefore if you search **labo?r**, you will retrieve **both** *labor* and *labour*.

Ovid Truncation & Wildcards (In *Ovid Syntax* mode only; do NOT truncate in Basic Mode)

- Truncation: *****, **\$** or **:**
- Limited Truncation: add number to the \$ symbol, e.g. **\$1**
- Mandated Wildcard: **#** e.g. **wom#n** retrieves woman and women
- Optional Wildcard: **?** for characters following another, e.g. **labo?r** retrieves labor or labour; however, **f?etal** will result in an error message, search **fetal** or **foetal** instead.

EBSCO Truncation & Wildcard

Truncation: *****

Limited Truncation: **not available** but use of **? at the end of a term** will result in a single character truncation, e.g. **cat?** retrieves cat, cats, Cato.

Mandated Wildcard: **?**, e.g. **ne?t** retrieves neat, nest, next

Optional Wildcard: **not available**

PubMed Truncation

Truncation: *****

Limited Truncation: **not available**

Mandated Wildcard: **not available**

Optional Wildcard: **not available**

CSA (Cambridge Scientific Abstracts) and ProQuest Truncation & Wildcard

Truncation: *****

Limited Truncation: **? indicate number of characters with number of ?s**, e.g. **cell?** would retrieve **cell**, **cells** and **cello** but not **cellular**; **fib??** would retrieve **fiber** or **fibre**

Mandated Wildcard: **not available**

Optional Wildcard: **not available**

Web of Science/BIOSIS Truncation

Truncation: *

Limited Truncation: **not available**

Mandated Wildcard: **not available**

Optional Wildcard: **not available**

Scopus Truncation & Wildcard

Truncation: *

Limited Truncation: **not available** but **use of ? at the end of a term** will result in a single character truncation, e.g. **cat?** retrieves cat, cats, Cato.

Mandated Wildcard: **not available**

Optional Wildcard: * , e.g. **he*moglobin** will retrieve hemoglobin and haemoglobin.

Adjacency/Proximity Operators

An adjacency operator (also known as a proximity operator) allows you to indicate how close you wish two terms to be to each other within a record/section of a record. Some adjacency operators will also indicate the order in which the terms appear; with other operators, the terms can appear in any order.

Ovid Adjacency Operator: (In *Advanced Ovid Search* mode only; do NOT truncate in Basic Mode)

The *Ovid Syntax* search interface supports the use of only one adjacency operator: **ADJn** where *n* is any number 2 through 99. If you do not include a number, the terms will be searched if they appear side by side in any order.

If you search the term **capacity adj3 building** in an *Ovid* database, this statement will retrieve records where the word **capacity** and the word **building** are within three words of each other in any order. Thus, you would retrieve all of the following: *capacity building*, *building capacity*, *building community capacity*, or *building economic and environmental capacity*.

You do not need to use ADJ when you wish to search an exact phrase, e.g. if you wish to search the exact phrase *change theory*, enter **change theory**. The *Ovid* default when keyword searching is to search phrases entered without boolean or adjacency operators as exact phrases. If you wish to search the exact phrase *change theory* as well as variations of the phrase such as *theory of change*, use the ADJ operator, e.g. **change adj2 theory**.

EBSCO Adjacency Operators

The *EBSCO* interface supports two different adjacency operators: **N** (near) and **W** (within).

Nn: Terms must appear within n words of each other in any order, e.g. **determinant N3 health** indicates that the word *determinant* must appear within three words of *health* in any order.

Wn: Terms must appear within n words of each other in the order specified, e.g. **capacity W5 building** indicates that the words *capacity* and *building* must be within five words of each other the order specified

Exact Phrases: Enter as is; quotes not necessary.

CSA (Cambridge Scientific Abstracts) Adjacency Operators

The *CSA* interface supports two different adjacency operators: *WITHIN n* and *NEAR*.

WITHIN n: Terms must appear within n words of each other in any order, e.g. **determinant within 3 health** indicates that the word *determinant* must appear within three words of *health* in any order.

NEAR: Terms must appear within ten words of each other in any order, e.g. **capacity near building** indicates that the words *capacity* and *building* must be within ten words of each other in any order.

Exact Phrases: Enter as is; quotes not necessary.

Web of Science/BIOSIS Adjacency Operators

Web of Science has two adjacency operators but both do the same thing.

SAME or **SENT:** Terms must appear in the same sentence in any order, e.g. **capacity same building** or **capacity sent building**.

Exact Phrases: Enclose in quotes, e.g. "beauty pagent".

Scopus Adjacency Operators

Scopus supports two different adjacency operators: *PRE/n* and *N/n*.

PRE/n: Terms must appear within n words of each other with the first term appearing before the second term, e.g. **building PRE/3 capacity** indicates that the word *building* must precede the *capacity*, but the two terms must be within three words of each other.

W/n: Terms must appear within n words of each other in any order, e.g. **determinant W/3 health** indicates that the word *determinant* must appear within three words of *health* in any order.

Exact Phrases: Enclose in quotes, e.g. "*capacity building*". Note: Truncation cannot be used within quotes in *Scopus*, e.g. "*capacity build**" would be an invalid statement.

PubMed

Adjacency/proximity searching is not available in *PubMed*.

Exact Phrases: Enclose in quotes, e.g. "*capacity building*"

ProQuest Adjacency Operators

The *ProQuest* interface supports two adjacency operators: **W/n** (within n number) and **PRE/n** (within n number in the same field).

W/n: Terms must appear within n words of each other in any order, e.g. **determinant W/3 health** indicates that the word *determinant* must appear within three words of *health* in any order.

PRE/n: Terms must appear within n words of each other in any order, e.g. **capacity pre/5 building** indicates that the words *capacity* and *building* must be within five words of each other in the same field (e.g. title field, abstract field, etc).

Exact Phrases: If containing more than two words, enclose in quotes, e.g. "*cerebral vascular disorders*".