

# Search Engines

With Alex

# Topics

This intro to search engines will cover...

- a) different kinds available
- b) how they work and the optimal ways to seek info (wallet card included)
- c) searching in different formats

# What kinds of search?

## Free-form

- Accommodates a large range of queries from simple to advanced. High amount of user control, often text-based.

## Examples:

- Google: 800-lb. gorilla
- Yahoo
- Dogpile combines results

# What kinds of search?

## Limited

- Heavy on forms and restrictions, medium or low user interaction

## Examples

- **Babelfish** is a translation service.
- **Farecompare.com** only returns airline flights.
- Search by color at <http://yotophoto.com/advancedsearch>

# Your search is only as good

## **...as your terms**

- Boolean expressions
- Relevant words
- Customized queries

## **...as the engine's index**

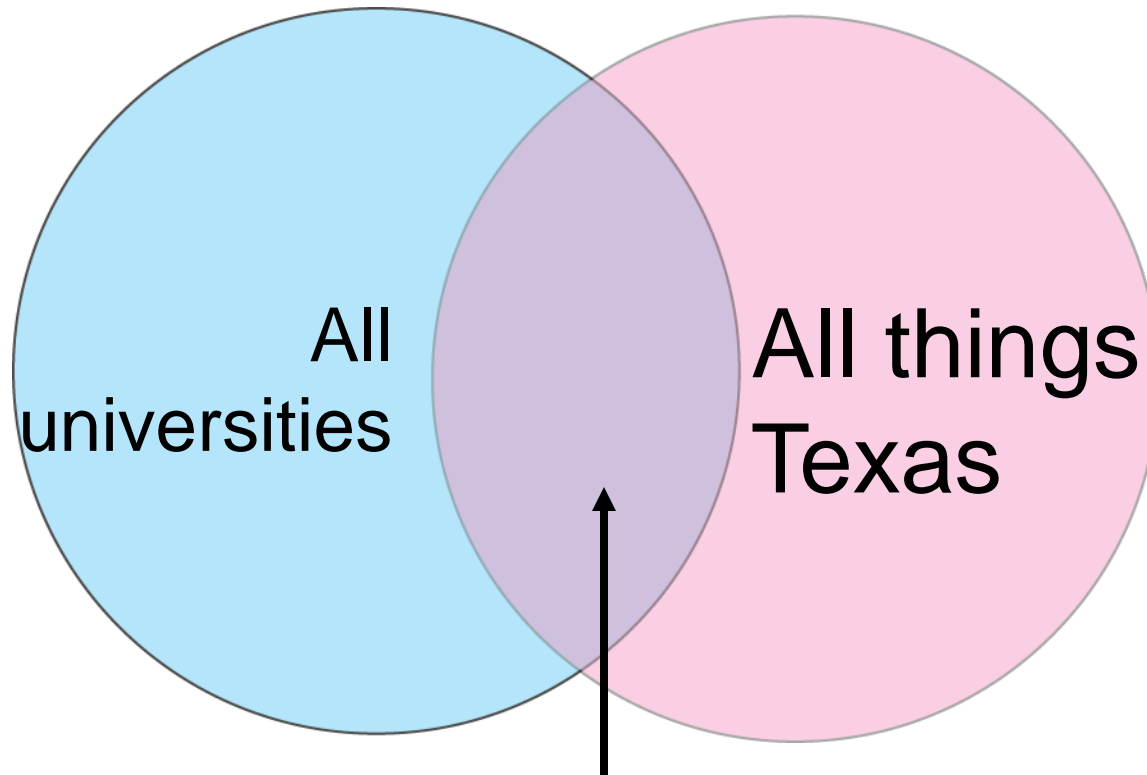
- Recent updates
- Protected or crawler-excluded pages

# Boolean

## The foundation of computer logic

- In a nutshell, Boolean logic is the application of yes/no answers. This is represented by binary code (0 or 1).
- Boolean logic can be used to construct more complex queries.

# Visualizing logic



**All Universities in Texas**

# Common search methods

These work on most engines

- Exact phrase: use quotes

**"a whole lotta shakin"**

v.

**a whole lotta shakin**

- Include / exclude: use plus and minus signs

**Cars +Chevy -Ford**

# Common search methods

These work on most engines

- Use AND / OR. (AND is similar to +).

[garlic | pepper](#)

- [site:yahoo.com manning](#) or

**domain:yahoo.com**

**site:.gov** (note the leading dot)

or

[site:news.yahoo.com australia](#)

# Common search methods

These work on most engines

- [Link: babelfish.altavista.com](http://babelfish.altavista.com)  
Useful as a reverse-lookup method
- Wildcards: use an asterix \*  
[garden\\*](#)

# Seeking formats

- Search by filetype.
  - Google: filetype:pdf searchterm
  - Yahoo, altavista: use Advanced Search
- Most search engines allow you to search images and sounds.  
[www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com) goes one step further, combining queries from multiple engines.

# Try this exercise

- String a couple of boolean functions together to find...
  - Yourself on the internet  
**“firstname lastname”**
  - A car you’d like to drive, but not one for sale  
**porsche 911 -price +club**

# What will these searches return?

- "Genesis" last modified mp3 "index of" -html -htm -php -asp
- Texas music +austin -mp3 -myspace.com
- "my address is" at "dot com"

# That's that.

- Any questions? Please ask!
- In a lot of cases, several people will wonder but only one will speak up...