

**Lecture no.: 15**

**Department: Information and Library Science**

**Subject: Information Storage & Retrieval**

**Name of the lecture: Search Strategies-2**

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## Use Boolean Searching or Operators

Boolean operators: computerized searching allows words or phrases expressing different ideas to be combined or contrasted choosing which of these search terms to use (and whether to search for these terms in the article text, the abstract, or subject heading) creates a search strategy.

Using Boolean operators (**AND OR NOT**) can help to focus and define your search. They can help broaden (increase) and narrow (decrease) search results.

These operators can be useful when searching the Library Catalogue, databases and the internet.

**AND** narrows a search because **ALL TERMS** must be present in each hit.

If you enter the following search:

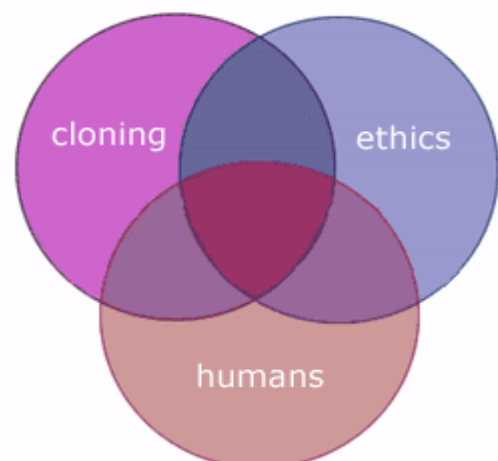
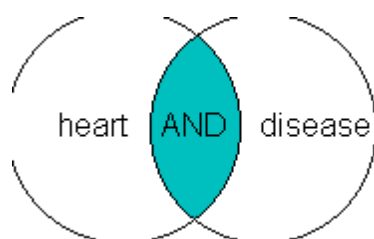
**Education AND Iraq**

Each hit should contain both the word 'education' and the word 'Iraq'  
Adding 'Iraq' to 'education' is a good strategy to use when you only need to limit your search to information about education in the Iraq. Education is such a broad subject that a search with just 'education' as the search word is likely to result in hundreds of hits, most of which will be irrelevant if you are only looking for Iraq related information.

**Use AND in a search to:**

- **narrow your results**
- **tell the database that ALL search terms must be present in the resulting records**
- **example: cloning AND humans AND ethics**

aThe purple triangle in the middle of the Venn diagram below represents the result set for this search. It is a small set using AND, the combination of all three search words.



**OR** widens a search because each hit will contain either 'education' or it will contain 'Waikato'. These terms may or may not appear in the same record. If you enter the following search:

Education **OR** Iraq

All the records containing the word 'education' will be retrieved, as well as all the records containing the term 'Iraq'

The best way to use **OR** is when you want to make sure that you cover synonyms. Have a look at the following two examples:

education **OR** teaching **OR** schooling

bike **OR** cycle **OR** bicycle

**Use OR in a search to:**

- **connect two or more similar concepts (synonyms)**
- **broaden your results, telling the database that ANY of your search terms can be present in the resulting records**
- **example: cloning OR genetics OR reproduction**

All three circles represent the result set for this search. It is a big set because any of those words are valid using the OR operator.

