

## Tips for better Googling

*"I can find what I need on Google"* – Is this a common refrain amongst staff and students in your college? Whilst Google is certainly far and away the most commonly used search engine currently available, it is often not used in the most effective way. There are many useful extras in Google that are under-used, but which go towards making it a far more complete and effective search tool than you would imagine. Here are some of the more interesting, useful and quirky features that you might like to explore in order to get more out of Google.

### Phrase Searches

Search for complete phrases by enclosing your search terms in quotation marks "". This will refine your search to hits where your search terms are included together. This type of search is especially useful for finding famous sayings or proper names.

### Definition search

If you are looking for a definition of a word or phrase, type **define** followed by search term e.g. **define e-learning** If Google has found a definition for the phrase it will be displayed at the top of the screen. You can also try **definition:** followed by word/phrase. (no space after colon) This will return websites that will have definitions within the context of their website. For example try **definition:e-learning** and see what that brings you. If the phrase is not easy to locate within a website you have chosen, click **Edit > Find** and key in the term again to link straight to the term within the text.

### News alerts

Google also has a news service which can be linked to from the google home page or entered directly at <http://news.google.co.uk>

This searches 4,500 news sources worldwide, but International versions are also available. If you want selected news items delivered to your desktop via email, register with Google News Alerts at

<http://www.google.co.uk/newsalerts>



### **Calculator**

Using the search box, enter the calculation you would like done and hit enter. The common operators “+”, “\*”, “\_”, “/” and “/” can be used as well as far more complex calculations.

### **Unit converter**

Units can also be converted through Google. For example, type **200miles in km**

For help with using Google’s calculator and unit conversions go to <http://www.google.com/help/calculator.html> for more help

### **Wildcard search**

This search can be useful if there are variant spellings or endings of your particular search, or if you are unsure of the correct spelling. Simply preface or follow the term with an asterisk \* For example, Mississippi could be entered as **Missi\***, or **\*ssippi**. This is also useful because web authors do not always spell correctly!

### **In URL search**

If you wanted to find websites containing a certain phrase or word, type **inurl:** followed by search term. If you wanted to find websites with the term Further Education in them, type **inurl:furthereducation**. This drastically reduces the number of relevant hits to a far more manageable and focused level.

### **Advanced Search**

Google has an excellent advanced search facility to help refine your searching. Rather than replicate this here, a PDF document can be downloaded for display in your classroom and Learning resources Centre at <http://www.google.com/searchguide.html>

One recent addition to the advanced search is the **synonym search**. By using the tilde “~” symbol in a search Google will automatically look up synonyms of your term. For example **computer~tips** will also yield results help, hints, advice etc.

## Google sets

This has useful education possibilities, as well as being great fun for any obsessive list compilers! <http://labs.google.com/sets> For example key in Leinster and Munster, hit return and google will complete the list of Irish counties for you.



## Image Search

Possibly one of the best features of Google, but be wary....just because you have found an appropriate image to use in teaching doesn't mean it is free to use. For peace of mind in terms of copyright I would recommend free web resources such as <http://www.freeimages.co.uk> or Education image Gallery, available via the JISC Collections [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=coll\\_hultongetty](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=coll_hultongetty)

## Groups

For the more esoteric searches you have in mind, don't forget the **groups** field. If your initial search retrieves little of value, click on the groups button above the search box and this will take you to a surprising range of discussion forums related to that topic

For further advice please contact Andy Kirk at [a.kirk@kent.ac.uk](mailto:a.kirk@kent.ac.uk)