



# The ITrain Group

***Effective Internet Searching***

***Student's Manual***

*November 1999*

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## Conventions used in this manual

All text in *Italics* is for the instructor. It gives the instructor hints on how to conduct the session. Some of the italicised text also provides sample answer material to questions posed by the instructor. If an instructor follows the approach contained in *Italics*, this will help to produce an interactive session in which participants get involved and learn more.

**Bold text** in the manual indicates key words that instructors and participants will find on their monitor screen when software is running.

### 3-D boxes with notes to instructors

The 3-D boxes throughout the course contain notes to the instructor.

**(r)** This is a 3-D reference box for the instructor. You can use it to indicate resource and reference materials that may serve as background information for the instructor.

**(i)** This is a 3-D information box with notes for the instructor. You can use it to prepare yourself before you conduct a course.

**(C)** This is a 3-D customisation box for the instructor. You can use it to indicate areas of the text that would be improved by customising the text specifically for the intended audience.

### Icons

Icons appear in both the instructor manual and the participant manual. We included icons to draw attention to the text beside the icon and to give an immediate visual clue about the meaning of the material contained in the section.



Also in the instructor manual, the stopwatch icon indicates the estimated time to deliver a section of the course.

**The following margin icons appear in both the instructor and participant manuals.**



This margin icon indicates an exercise that participants are to complete.



This margin icon indicates that the accompanying text is a tip about some aspect of software or the Internet.

# DAY ONE

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## 1. Introduction

Welcome to Effective Internet Searching. In this course you will learn about the ITrain Internet training programme and advanced techniques for finding what you want on the Internet.

In order to complete successfully the exercises in this course, you will need to be familiar with Microsoft Windows and the use of a mouse. You will need to know how to open programmes in Windows, how to select items from pull-down menus, how to use a button bar, how to maximise and minimise a window, as well as how to select items from a Windows dialog box. If you do not meet these requirements, we have developed a computer handbook that you can use to upgrade your skills.

This manual is a reference for your personal learning. Feel free to make notes on it.

You can learn more about the ITrain Collection, of which this manual is a part, at <http://unganisha.idrc.ca/itrain>.

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## 2. Introductions and expectations of participants

1) Please introduce to the group, the person you interviewed.

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2) In a sentence or two, indicate what type of work the person does.

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3) What experience with Internet searching does the person you introduced have?

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4) What does the person you interviewed expect to learn from this course?

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### 3. Course Objectives

#### Objectives

1) Understand the components and the nature for the ITrain Effective Internet Searching Course.

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2) Understand how search services work

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3) Understand how to use a variety of search engine features

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4) Understand how to search for an appropriate web page, download it, copy it to a word processor, and cite it correctly

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5) Understand how to access international development gateways, and development project information

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6) Understand how to use language features and translation services available on the Internet

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7) Understand criteria necessary for effectively evaluating search results

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8) Understand how to access a variety of Internet-based current awareness tools

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9) Understand basic electronic document copyright and citation conventions

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## 4. Essential Terminology

### Objectives

- Explain key Internet concepts and terminology.
- Understand how web documents are constructed and transmitted.

### Basic Internet terminology

1) Internet

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2) World Wide Web

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3) Web Browser

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4) Search Service (Directory/Search Engine):

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5) Meta Data

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**Exercise:** Using either glossary listed in the sources, identify, and present to the class one unfamiliar term.

**Sources:**

University of California at Berkeley – Library

<http://lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Glossary.html>

LearntheNet

<http://learnthenet.com/English>

Webopedia

<http://www.webopedia.com>

## Inside the World Wide Web

In order to fully appreciate how Internet search engines function, it is important to understand how pages on the World Wide Web are created and transmitted.

1) How are World Wide Web documents created?

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2) What is HTML?

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3) What is HTTP?

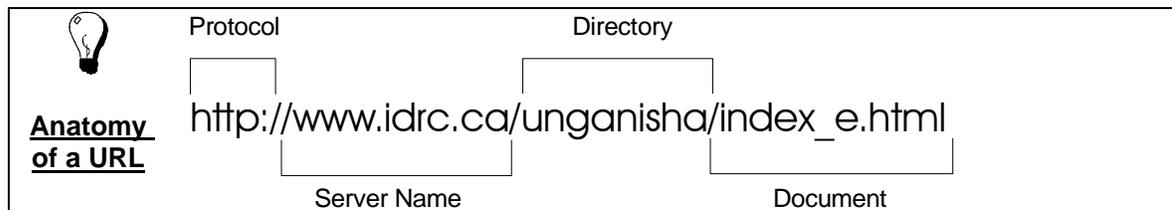
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4) What is a URL?

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## 5. Introduction To Search Services

### Objectives

- ✓ Review basic Internet statistics
- ✓ Introduce concept of search services
- ✓ Discuss search service coverage of the Internet
- ✓ Understand results rankings of the search services

### Basic Internet statistics from 1999

1) Approximately how many websites exist on the WWW?

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2) How many web pages does this represent?

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3) How are these pages categorized (commercial, scientific, educational etc)?

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4) Of the top 25 sites, how many are search-related?

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5) How many users are there on the Internet?

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6) What percentage of Internet users are Americans?

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Note that not all Web documents are publicly indexable. (i.e. retrievably through a search service)

### Sources:

WWWmetrics ( <http://www.wwwmetrics.com> )

Mediametrix <http://www.mediametrix.com/TopRankings/TopRankings>

Greg Notess' Search Engine Showdown <http://www.notess.com/search/>

Search Tutorial: Guide to Effective Searching of the Internet, revised and updated July 1999,

VisualMetrics Corporation, <http://www.thewebtools.com/tutorial/tutorial.htm>

## Definition of search service

- ✓ Provide a brief definition of a search service.

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- ✓ How many search services are currently available?

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- ✓ What are the two basic types of search services, and how do they differ from one another?

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## Search service coverage of the www

According to a recent article in Nature by Lawrence and Giles individual search engine coverage of the publicly indexable web has decreased from approximately 30% in December 1997, to about 16% in the spring of 1999.

The same authors, in an earlier study published in Science, determined that querying six search engines increased the likelihood of finding results by a factor of 3.5. As well, they found very little duplication between search engines, noting that duplication between the popular HotBot, and AltaVista was only 18%.

- 1) Why is the question of search service coverage so important?

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- 2) How might this information affect your searching habits?

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## Sources:

Nature, 400, 107-109, 1999

Science, v. 280, April 3, 1998, pp 98-100

**How results are ranked**

✓ In what areas of a web page do search engines perform a search?

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✓ How do search engines retrieve documents?

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**Tip:** Alta Vista's Advanced search allows the user to adjust the ranking of results by means of the 'sort by' box found below the main query box.



**Tip:** As a general rule, when viewing results, avoid looking beyond the first 30 (usually 3 screens worth), as the relevancy of the results will likely be poor much beyond this point.

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## 6. Search Services

Objectives:

- ✓ Classify different types of search services
- ✓ Learn about the advantages and disadvantages of each type
- ✓ Become familiar with search service help screens
- ✓ Practice downloading a document and converting it to a word processor

### Search Service Types

In this section, participants will begin to categorize search services.

For each type identified, describe and provide examples of actual search services, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages associated with each.

#### **Web Directories**

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#### **Search Engines**

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## Hybrids

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## Metasearch Engines

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## Specialty Engines or Gateways

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## Search Help

Effective searchers are familiar with the capabilities of their preferred search services. To do so requires



Choose two search services from the handout, and locate their respective help screens. Evaluate the help screens of the search services using the following criteria:

- ✓ Are examples provided?
- ✓ Clarity of design and organization
- ✓ Breadth of help topics

time spent testing their search service, and time spent reading the help screens. It is never a waste of time to take a few minutes to review help screens. In addition, search efficiency can be greatly improved by printing a copy of the help screen, and filing it beside your computer.

## Working With Results

Finding results, though the most important component of searching, is only a part of the picture. Knowing how to work with or use your results is essential to fully exploiting the Internet's usefulness. It's important to know how to download, convert, and print electronic documents if you want to incorporate search results into your work.



Download a page from a help screen to your hard drive, and then convert the document to a word processor.

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## 7. Search Service Selection

### Objectives

- ✓ Understand search service strengths and selection criteria.

Broad guidelines for determining choice of search service type:

**Web directory:** Is topic easily classified? i.e. Looking for a government web site vs. looking an article on international development.

**Gateway:** Does topic fall into a thematic area that has a subject directory?

**Search engine or hybrid:** Is topic hard to classify or complex? i.e. looking for a discussion or academic paper on a particular topic.

**Metasearch engine:** For a quick search engine overview of a fairly simple search (1 or 2 keywords). Typically, users will then access the search engines that offer the best coverage of the topic.

Which search service (directory or search engine) might be best suited to finding the following information:

1) University address

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2) Paper on credit union founder Freidrich Raiffeissen

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3) A map of Norway

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4) Participatory agricultural methodology in Southern Africa

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5) The name of an old colleague from school

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## 8. Search Engine Features

### Objectives:

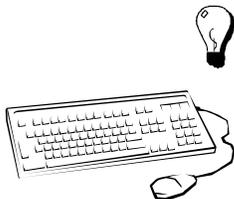
- ✓ Understand what is meant by basic and advanced level searching
- ✓ Become familiar with the features generally available in both search levels

### Basic Level

- natural language searching [Which cover crops are used in Africa?] results: 47,920, 335
- + and - signs [+cover +crops +Africa] 16,678 [+cover +crops -Africa] 57,272
- “phrase” searching for both expressions and proper names [+”cover crops” +Africa] 2,145
- truncation or word stemming [+”cover crops” +Afric\*] 2,620

### Advanced Level

- boolean operators (AND, OR, NEAR, and NOT) [cover and crops and Africa] 9,099 [cover NEAR crops NEAR Africa] 55
- “phrase” searching [“cover crops” NEAR Africa] 52
- using parentheses or nesting [(“cover crops” OR “green manure”) NEAR Africa] 65
- truncation [“cover crops” NEAR Afric\*] 58
- filter/field searching (url, title, anchor) [“cover crops” AND URL:org] 6 [title:cover crops]155
- case sensitivity (always use lower case)



Unless the search term is unusual, always use more than 2 words in your query. Nouns are generally more effective than verbs or adjectives.

Refine a search using some of the advanced features indicated above.

1) Which feature should always be used when searching a person’s name or a multi-word expression?

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2) Which filter would be used to limit results to a specific domain type?

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3) How can you obtain various word endings for your search term?

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4) Which operator will give you a greater number of results, ‘and’ or ‘or’?



Compose your own advanced search query in AltaVista using a Boolean operator, a filter search and truncation. Share results with class.



AltaVista's Advanced Search supports the use of the NEAR operator which enables users to retrieve their keywords within 10 words of each other. I.e. mine NEAR gold will retrieve Web pages where the keywords mine and gold are placed no farther than 10 words one from the other. NEAR is a very powerful operator in narrowing down searches.

## DAY TWO

### 9. Review of Main Search Features and Specialty Options

Objective:

- ✓ Review search engine feature knowledge and explore more specialized search options.



Review the following search features with participants. Describe uses of each through the following examples (or your own). AltaVista's Advanced Search is recommended for demonstration.

**“+” and “-“** `+cancer -astrology -zodiac` This search will pull out Web pages on cancer as a disease, and not as an astrology sign.

**Boolean operators and Parenthesis** ([workshop or tutorial](#)) and [searching](#) This search will find pages dealing with search tutorials or search workshops.

**Filter or Field searches** Many search engines will support some forms of filter searching. Examples include image; title; url; link; anchor. The syntax used for each is the following: `filter: keyword` i.e. `title:peace` or `url:edu` or `anchor:pdf` Ask the participants to choose one or two filters and explore. Have them use glossaries to look up any filter they may not be familiar with.

**Phrase searching** `"sustainable development"` This search will find the words 'sustainable' and 'development' as written in the quotation marks, that is side by side.

**Truncation** `develop*` Using the asterisk indicates to the search engine that different word endings for 'develop' are wanted. It should provide 'developed' 'developing', 'development' etc.



You can search for sites that contain hyperlinks a Web site by using HotBot's (<http://www.hotbot.com>) "links to the URL" found in the "look for" drop down box.



As well as general access to the 'free' Internet, Northern Light (<http://www.northernlight.com>) offers full text delivery of articles from their 'Special Collection', a collection of documents from certain private (commercial) sources. Costs for the articles generally range from \$2.00 to \$10.00 US. Accounts must be set up with Northern Light prior to the delivery of the articles.

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## 10. International Development Gateways and Development Project Information

### Objectives:

- ✓ Become familiar with two important specialty gateways in the field of international development
- ✓ Review techniques and resources for finding international development project information.

### International Development Gateways

In the field of international development the following two sites have proved useful in organizing, and making searchable the information contained in a broad selection of development sites. Eldis and OneWorld provide quality Web portals into the world of international development.

#### **Eldis**

Eldis describes itself as “a gateway to online information on development in countries of the South. Coverage includes social, economic, political and environmental issues. Eldis makes a qualitative selection of materials and structures it for easy access.”

#### **OneWorld**

OneWorld describes its mission as being “dedicated to promoting human rights and sustainable development by harnessing the democratic potential of the Internet.” It provides access to news, special dispatches, and a search engine of partner sites.



Review either Eldis or OneWorld for approximately 15 minutes, and then have them answer the following questions:

Which features from either Eldis or OneWorld did you find most useful?

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Using either Eldis or Oneworld, find an article of professional interest to you.

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Sources:

Eldis: (<http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis>)

Oneworld : (<http://www.oneworld.org>)

### Finding Development Project Information:

Examples of Canadian international development project sites. Include the following:

- ✓ International Development Research Centre (IDRC):  
<http://idrinfo.idrc.ca/scripts/minisa.dll/144/IDRIS?DIRECTSEARCH>
- ✓ Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA):  
<http://w3.acdi-cida.gc.ca/regione.htm>
- ✓ Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT):  
[http://www.dfid.gov.uk/public/working/pipe\\_links.html](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/public/working/pipe_links.html)
- ✓ Global Knowledge Partnership GK-AIMS (ict project information)  
<http://www.bellanet.org/gkaims>

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## 11. Current Awareness Tools

### Objectives

- ✓ Understand what is meant by 'current awareness' tool
- ✓ Review a number of current awareness sites and services for search engine information, new or interesting web sites, journal articles, books etc.

What kinds of current awareness tools are available on the Web?

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Where could you find new information about search engines?

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Where could you go to get the most current Table of contents for a favourite journal?

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Where could you find new books?

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Where could you find new information on a topic of interest?

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Where could you find reviews of new and worthwhile Web sites?

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Where could you get news from a variety of sources?

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## 12. Language Issues

Objectives:

- ✓ Understand limitations of language searching on the WWW
- ✓ Appreciate the rudimentary quality of Internet translation services

1) What is the most effective way to search the WWW for a non-English language term?

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2) Where could you find a translation service on the WWW?

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**Exercise:** Play a game of virtual “broken telephone”. Send a short text in English to the participant closest to you, he or she must then translate it into another language and then send on to a third participant who will again translate it into another language, and so on. Ultimately, the message must be returned to the first participant who will translate it back into English.

Sources:

<http://babelfish.altavista.com/cgi-bin/translate?>

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## 13. Evaluating Results

### Objectives

- ✓ Understand the lack of quality control for information available on the Internet, and need for participants to exhibit healthy scepticism when viewing results.

Anyone with access to a server can upload anything they want to the Internet. Finding a document on the Web in no way guarantees quality, accuracy, or credibility. Always use a healthy scepticism when evaluating your results. The following criteria for critical evaluation may be helpful.

Review the following criteria, and discuss how they can be used to evaluate web resources:

#### 1) Accuracy:

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#### 2) Reliability and Credibility:

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#### 3) Purpose

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#### 4) Author

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#### 5) Currency

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## 6) Links

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**Tip:** To find out when a web page was last modified, click on VIEW from browser bar, and then click on PAGE INFO.



**Tip:** Using a web page's URL (Uniform Resource Locator) can help to evaluate a web site's credibility. Having edu, ac, or org in the first part of the address may indicate a respected academic institution, or non-profit organization. Alternately, if com appears in the URL, then the site is a commercial one that is probably attempting to sell you something.



**Tip:** When viewing a result, if it is not obvious why the web page was returned as a result (i.e. the search term cannot be found on the page), try using your browser's "Edit - Find in Page" feature to locate the position of the search term within the page.



**Exercise:** Use the criteria discussed above to evaluate the exercise web sites provided at Georgetown University Library's site:  
<http://www.library.georgetown.edu/internet/eval.htm>.



**Exercise:** Compare the following sites on Melatonin: 1) <http://www.melatonin.com> and 2) <http://www.aafp.org/patientinfo/melatonin>  
Discuss issues such as author and sponsoring organization, purpose, currency etc.

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## 14. Copyright

Objective:

- ✓ Understand basic copyright conventions

The basic rule for understanding the copyright of Internet documents is this: **Everything** posted to the Internet is copyrighted.



**Exercise:** Using Brad Templeton's site <http://www.templetons.com/brad/copymyths.html>. Discuss the following "hypothetical" situations 1) You find an interesting Web document which you download and print for 10 colleagues. Have you violated copyright? 2) Is e-mail subject to copyright laws too? Can someone post my e-mail message to a website without my permission? 3) Does the author of 10 Big Myths permit reproduction of his article?

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## 15. Citation of Electronic Documents

### Objectives:

- ✓ Learn how to cite the various types of electronic documents.

Just as there exist proper styles of citation in the print format, so too are there recognized styles for citing electronic documents. The following examples, taken from Purdue University's Writing Lab site <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/files/33.html>, represent typical forms of electronic document citation.

### Web page

Author(s). Name of page. Date of posting/Revision. Date of Access <electronic address>.

Example:

Daly, Bill. Writing Argumentative Essays. 1997. 26 Jun. 1998  
<<http://www.eslplanet.com/teachertools/argueweb/frntpage.htm>>.

### Article in online journal

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume. Issue (year): Pages/Paragraphs. Date of Access. <electronic address>.

Example:

Inada, Kenneth. "A Buddhist Response to the Nature of Human Rights." Journal of Buddhist Ethics 2 (1995) : 9 pars. 26 Jun. 1998 <<http://jbe.la.psu.edu/>>.

### E-mail correspondence

Author. "Title of message (if any)." E-mail to author. Date of message.

Example:

Tilton, Martin. "Re: Meeting Agenda for Friday." E-mail to Norit Berman. 18 June 1999.

### Listserv posting

Author. "Title of posting" Online posting. Date when material was posted (for ex. Mar. 1998) Name of listserv. Date of Access. <electronic address>.

Example:

Lin, Michael. "Compressing Online Graphics." Online posting. 27 Apr. 1999. MacWeb. 29 Apr. 1999 <<http://www.graphica.com/digitizing/intro.html>>.

### Other sources to consult

([http://www.mla.org/main\\_stl.htm](http://www.mla.org/main_stl.htm))



**Exercise:** How would you cite Brad Templeton's [10 Big Myths](#) site?

Discuss some of the problems associated with Web page citation? I.e. Web page disappearance; how to retrieve pages based on date of access.

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## 16. Conclusion

Objectives:

- ✓ Assessment of how the search features and tips presented over the course of the workshop will be useful to the participants.

Discuss with the class which of the search features or searching aids presented in the Effective Internet Searching Workshop will be most helpful to you in your work.

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Have most of your information needs been covered by the workshop, and if not, please share them with the class.

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## 17. Evaluation: to be completed by participants

One important part of training is to receive specific feedback from people who use the materials. With that in mind we have created a questionnaire for your comments. Please treat this questionnaire as a guideline. Feel free to add comments about any areas you feel we have missed. Please send your evaluation to the address provided in the introduction to this manual. Evaluation forms can also be filled out online at the ITrain web site: <http://unganisha.idrc.ca/itrain/evaluation/>

Your name and email address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Sex: male / female

Course name: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration in hours: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Number and sex of instructors and coaches: \_\_\_\_\_

Number and sex of participants:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe in a few words your cultural background: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate you answers below with an x or a check.**

	Your level of interest			Level of difficulty		
	High	medium	low	high	medium	low
1) Introduction						
2) Introductions and expectations of participants						
3) Course Objectives						
4) Essential Terminology						
5) Introduction to search services						
6) Search services						
7) Search service selection						
8) Search engine features						

	Your level of interest			Level of difficulty		
	High	medium	low	high	medium	low
9) Review of main search features						
10) International development gateways and development project information						
11) Current awareness tools						
12) Language issues						
13) Evaluating results						
14) Copyright						
15) Citation of electronic documents						
16) Conclusion						

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Questions	Ranking				
	1	2	3	4	5
<i>strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, 5 agree strongly</i>					
17) The introductory exercise was helpful.					
18) The notes for participants were easy to read					
19) The layout of the manual made it easy to follow.					
20) The words used in the manual were easy to understand.					
21) The explanations in the manual were easy to understand.					
22) The manual was the right length.					
23) The graphics of the manual were easy to read.					
24) This course will help me use the Internet.					
25) The training was what I thought it would be.					

27) Topics that should be added.

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28) Topics that should be removed.

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29) Other comments.

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