

## Truncation

Use Truncation to find different forms of words in a Boolean or keyword search. Some databases use the asterisk and others use the question mark. Check the help function of the database you are using to learn the truncation symbol.

Example: **employ\***

will retrieve records which contain the words: **employ, employment, employs, employee, employer** in a record.

You can combine truncated terms with other words using Boolean Operators.

Example: **employ\* and education**

will retrieve records which include the various forms of employ and the word education.

## Nesting

Use Nesting to preserve the "logic" of your Boolean Search. Nesting is the use of parenthesis to put your search words into sets.

Example: **success and (education or employment)**

will retrieve records which contain the word success and the word education or the word employment. Nesting is often used when search terms have similar meanings:

Example: education and (employment or jobs)

## Stop words

Stop words are commonly used words that will automatically stop a computer keyword search because they occur too frequently in records. Stop words are usually listed in the help screens of whatever database you are using. Some stop words are: the, an, at, for, from, then. When constructing a keyword search, choose the most important words.

Example: If you want to find information about "*What are the effects of Global Warming on agriculture?*"

Your keywords are: **global warming, effects, agriculture.**

The words *what, is, of, the,* are not descriptive of your topic.



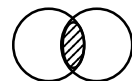
# Basic Database Searching Techniques

The IU Libraries provide access to databases in a wide variety of subject areas. Because of the variety many of the databases the Libraries subscribe to are from different companies. Therefore, some of the databases work differently than others. The following searching techniques will work in most databases. To use any database effectively, read the screens and use the help functions to find the answers to your questions.

## Boolean Searching

Most databases allow the user different searching methods. One of the most common searching methods is Boolean Searching, also called key word searching. This type of search tells the database to retrieve all of the records in the database which contain a word or a set of words. You can alter the results by using Boolean Operators which are the words AND, OR and NOT. See below for an explanation of these terms Boolean Operators

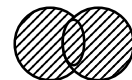
**AND**



Example: **cookies and milk**

will retrieve records which contain the word cookies and the word milk.

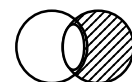
**OR**



Example: **caffeine or coffee**

will retrieve records which contain the word caffeine or the word coffee. This operator is used to broaden the number of records retrieved.

**NOT**



Example: **chocolate not cake**

will retrieve records which contain only the word chocolate but not the word cake. This operator is used to reduce the number of records retrieved.