

Using Operators For Advanced Googling

Google is obviously a great way to search for information online, but its index has now grown so huge that it's easy to be overwhelmed by the results list. How can you find the most useful links when Google claims to have found 25 million pages for you? If your search terms are exact, then the results you need will probably be on the first page. But what if you feel like your search terms *aren't* exact, or if you think they need to be broad because you're unsure of what you're seeking...but you do think it exists out there somewhere? One solution is to improve your Google search methods. It's worth reviewing (or discovering) some advanced tools, so you can find more relevant information.

A great way to improve your search is to narrow it to a particular web location, using the **site:** operator. A search for **history of whaling** will yield many results, not all of them relevant. If you tried narrowing the search to just the New Bedford Whaling Museum's website, for example, you might get much more useful results. You can limit by searching for **history of whaling site:whalingmuseum.org**. To find maritime topics in the Smithsonian Institution's blogs, search **maritime site:blog.americanhistory.si.edu**; you'll be searching for the keyword **maritime**, and only on the blog section, not the entire Smithsonian site. You could also go the other way, and only search US government sites (**maritime site:gov**) or US educational sites (**maritime site:edu**). If you want to limit by country, don't limit with the top-level domain (i.e. **au** for Australia); instead, use Google's Advanced Search—click the gear in the top right corner, select **Advanced Search**, then **narrow results by region**.

It's often good to limit Google's assistance, such as when it automatically searches for misspellings and synonyms. If you search for a ship named **Artic**, Google will also include a search for **arctic**. But if you use the operator **intext:** and search for **intext:artic**, Google will *only* look for **artic**. You can also exclude synonyms this way. Try limiting your results by document type with the **filetype:** operator, followed by

suffixes, such as **doc** for document, **ppt** for PowerPoint, **xls** for Excel, etc. A **related:** operator shows web pages that are similar to the URL you cite. So, for example, try **related:seahistory.org** to find similar maritime history sites.

You can narrow down results by combining terms within quotes. A search for **captain masterson sydney** returns a lot of unrelated items, though all three terms appear on each page. By searching for **"captain masterson" sydney** (quotes around just the first two terms), you keep the two words **captain** and **masterson** together, ensuring much more specific results.

The term *and* is implied in every Google search, but you can use **OR** to broaden your search somewhat. You could, for example, create a search that read **"captain masterson" sydney brig OR brigantine OR schooner OR yacht**—the expectation (though not always met) is that Google will return pages that have the phrase **captain masterson**, the word **sydney**, and *either* **brig**, **brigantine**, **schooner**, or **yacht**. If you *do not* want results to have a specific term, put a minus sign in front of it, to ensure that term will be excluded. For example, try **cleveland schooner -ohio**.

Google has an undocumented **AROUND(#)** operator, which locates terms that are near each other, with the pound sign indicating proximity. A search for **morgan AROUND (4) whaling** returns pages that have the two terms within 4 words of each other. Like **OR**, **AROUND** *must* be capitalized to work. If it's not, Google considers it a keyword.

There are always more ways to search Google, and as its index grows and grows (it's now estimated to be over 25 billion pages!), it is necessary to find better ways of locating the golden needles in this country-sized haystack.

Suggestions for other sites worth mentioning are welcome at **peter@shipindex.org**. See **http://shipindex.org** for a free compilation of over 140,000 ship names from indexes to dozens of books and journals. ⚓




Tired of nautical reproductions? Martifacts has only authentic marine collectibles rescued from scrapped ships: navigation lamps, sextants, clocks, bells, barometers, charts, flags, binnacles, telegraphs, portholes, U.S. Navy dinnerware and flatware, and more. Current brochure - \$1.00

MARTIFACTS, INC.
 P.O. BOX 350190
 JACKSONVILLE, FL 32235-0190
 PHONE/FAX: (904) 645-0150

www.martifacts.com
 e-mail: martifacts@aol.com


Get a **FREE** Copy of...

PowerShips



PowerShips, the ultimate source for stories about maritime ships and their history, is published quarterly by the nation's oldest ship history organization, SSHSA.

Email info@sshsa.org or call 1-401-463-3570 and we'll send you a **FREE** copy and tell you how to subscribe.



STEAMSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA
 INFO@SSHSA.ORG • WWW.SSHSA.ORG

