



# Wichita State University Libraries

## Keyword Search Using Boolean Logic

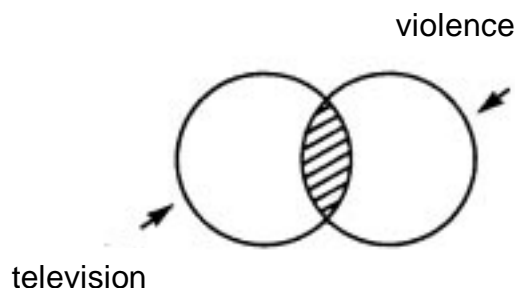
Boolean Logic allows you to group two or more sets of words together by using the connectors **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**. Using these connectors in constructing keyword search statements allows you to narrow or broaden your searches.

**AND:** *Narrows or refines a keyword search.*

AND looks for the appearance of **both** or **all of the search words you specify**.

For example, **television AND violence** retrieves only items that contain **both** the word *television* **AND** the word *violence*.

The shaded area in the illustration to the right represents items which contain **both** words.

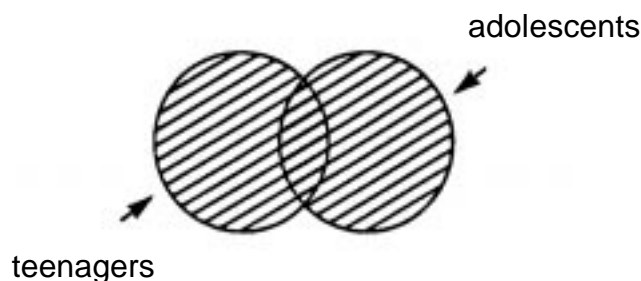


**Or:** *Broadens a keyword search, and allows searching for synonyms.*

OR looks for the appearance of **one, or the other, or both** of the search words you specify.

For example, **teenagers or adolescents** retrieves items with **either** the word *teenagers* or the word *adolescents*, or **both** the word *teenagers* and the word *adolescents*.

The shaded area in the illustration to the right represents items which contain **one or the other or both** words.

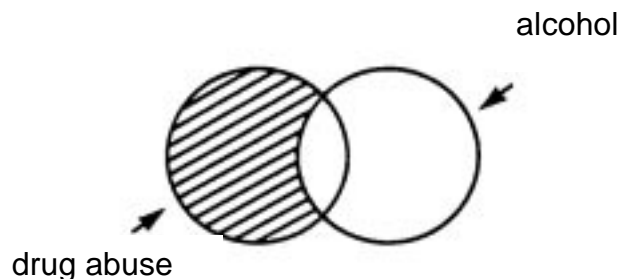


**Not:** Eliminates a keyword from your results.

NOT **removes** all items with the word you specify from your search results.

For example, **drug abuse NOT alcohol** would retrieve items about all kinds of *drug abuse*, except for (or **NOT**) those about *alcohol* abuse.

The shaded area in the illustration to the right represents all items that do not contain the word *alcohol*.



**Nesting:** Groups similar terms together – must be enclosed in parentheses ( ).

For example, **(motion pictures or movies) and (comedy or humor)** would retrieve items that have *either the words motion pictures OR the word movies, AND also have either the word comedy OR the word humor.*

**Truncation:** Used to retrieve all possible Word ending variations.

Truncation allows the computer to retrieve all words beginning with the root or trunk you specify, and having an unlimited number of possible endings

For example, **adolescen?** retrieves the words **adolescent, adolescents, adolescence.**

**econom?** retrieves the words **economic, economics, economy, economical, etc.**

Be careful not to put the truncation symbol too close to the beginning of the word, or you may retrieve unwanted items. For example, **eco?** would retrieve all the words in the previous search statement, but would also retrieve **ecology, ecological, ecosystem, etc.**

Depending on the database you are using, the symbol for truncation may be a question mark (?), an asterisk (\*), a pound sign (#), or an exclamation point (!). Check the online help screens in the database to see which symbol is used.