



Boolean Basics

Before You Begin – The Process

1. Understand the goal
2. Tools required
3. You can search by...
4. Add keywords, location, etc.
5. Construct query
6. Search engines are different

Step 1 – Understand The Goal

Boolean searching is simply using search engines to find resumes or people based upon specific keywords. For example, you can use it to discover [Project Managers nearby Dallas TX](#). Or you can find [people who have worked in either IBM or AT&T](#). Or a whole slew of other goodies as well.

It's really not that difficult at all! You simply have to give yourself permission to learn something new. It might take some time, but hey, all good things do!

Step 2 – Tools Required

Boolean searching is done at a search engine. Thus you need a search engine. Popular ones for this method of sourcing are:

- [Google](#)
- [Yahoo](#)
- [Ask](#)

Wasn't that simple?

Step 3 – You Can Search By...

You can search by page components. Visit <http://www.risetrends.com> – see that “RISE Internet Recruiting Training” at the top of your browser? That's called the **title** of the webpage.

And see the actual address displayed in your address bar? That's called the **URL**.

Apply this to your free resume finding – you want to find documents in which the **title has the word “resume”, or the URL has the word “resume”**.

But that's not enough – you also want to find the above in [Word documents, or PDFs, or Word Perfect, or Text](#) as well.

But that's not enough either! You also want to add specific keywords (ie, [IBM OR AT&T, 972 OR 469 OR 214, Unix AND Security](#), etc.etc.etc.)

So! You can search by:

URL: think “keywords in the address”

Title: think “keywords in the **title**”

Filetype: think “doc or [pdf](#) or txt or ...”

Site: think “limiting searches to [1 site](#)”

Domain: think “limiting searches to 1 domain”

Link: think “finding who else [links to a place](#)”

“”: think “exact expression”

AND: think “must have BOTH”

OR: think “must have one OR the other”

Anchor: think “keywords within links”, ie, find pages that have a [“view resumes”](#) link (note, of course you'd want to add keywords).

Step 4 – Add Keywords

Now, think about going to a library and saying, I want to find information about cars. Then think, gee, that's too broad, I want to find information about family cars. Then think, nope, still too broad, I want to find information about family cars made by Dodge and has remote entry, GPS and a hot tub.

Wait a sec – that “hot tub” requirement probably just toasted your search! No matter, simply remove that requirement from basic searching...get at least the Dodge minivan general information...and from there, you can search for, well, customizing, in the future.

Boolean searching works in the same fashion. *Car and Dodge and GPS and remote entry and hot tub* are simple keywords...much the requirements you see listed in your REQs. Some requirements are very helpful for your search (think, must have MS Office experience), some requirements are much more specified (think, must have MS Office experience in a cross hardware platform), and some requirements are like hot tubs in a MommyMobile (think, must have MS Office experience in a cross hardware platform and translate documents from Sanskrit to Ancient Greek).

When thinking “keywords”, think “skills required” and “location” and “certification” and company names etc.

Take phone numbers, for example. Let's say you want to find people in Dallas, TX. The area code there is 972. But surrounding area codes might be useful as well - 241, 469. The way you find files that have this is to include them within parenthesis, separated by Ors like so:

(214 OR 972 OR 469) AND TX

Hey! Notice that “AND TX”? That helps focus your searches on files that have one of the above area codes as well as “TX”. But TX can be written another way, right? So your query could really be:

(214 OR 972 OR 469) AND (Texas OR TX)

Now, here is the true key to successful Boolean searching. It's the way you group your searches together. Let's say you wanted to find someone in either Dallas or NJ...but you want either person to have specific skills. It's simply a matter of building up your query like so:

((214 OR 972 OR 469) AND (Texas OR TX)) OR ((NJ OR “New Jersey”) AND (201 OR 973 OR 908 OR 732)) AND “project management”

Notice there are **2 blue paranthesis** – these enclose all of my location parameters. There are **4 red paranthesis** – two each enclose the Dallas Boolean search, and the other two enclose the NJ Boolean search. And there are **8 black paranthesis** – they close ONLY area codes or ONLY state abbreviations etc. And you see how I put “New Jersey” in quotes? That ensures I don't pull up NEW documents about JERSEY cows.

Of course, if you're searching for passive resumes, you also need to state that (next)...

Step 5 – Construct Query

Constructing the query is very easy IF you give yourself permission to take it easy and make mistakes. All you're doing is putting each bit of requirements in parenthesis and stringing them together with ANDs or ORs when needed.

Here's what I like to use as a template:

ResumeType AND Location AND SKILLS AND “make sure the word “resume” appears in the title or url”

ie,

((filetype:doc OR filetype:pdf OR filetype:html OR filetype:txt) AND (intitle:resume OR inurl:resume OR intitle:CV OR inurl:cv)) AND (NY OR “New York) AND hospitality

And that's Boolean searching. All you're doing is viewing the search engine as an automated librarian...who can only return information if you ask it in this really weird way.

Now, you can also help that automated librarian by stating what you DON'T want. Ie, you probably don't want files that have the word submit, but you want the phrase “available upon request” (as in references). Gaze upon:

((filetype:doc OR filetype:pdf OR filetype:html OR filetype:txt) AND (intitle:resume OR inurl:resume OR intitle:CV OR inurl:cv)) AND (NY OR “New York) AND hospitality -submit - fax “available on request”

Notice how I didn't put the ANDs towards the end? Google, bless its heart, automatically assumes you require “AND” so you really don't need it! Ain't life grand! But! Other search engines do, which brings me to:

Step 6 –Search engines are different

Search engines are all different. What works in Google might require additional ANDs or ORs in Yahoo. In that case, simple look at their advanced search help (see how easy advanced stuff can be...if you approach it fearlessly?).

Let me close with some nifty ideas for Boolean searching. If you tack on [site:linkedin.com](http://site.linkedin.com) you can [limit your searches](#) to [LinkedIn](#) profiles.

If you want to find people who have had prior experience within IBM OR AT&T, you could try:

site:linkedin.com AND (IBM OR AT&T) AND profile

Ain't that grand?

You can accomplish all sorts of nifty-cool searching achievement by simply asking yourself, how would the words that I need....appear in any document....I can find? Remember – Boolean searching is new, it's different...but if you take the time to face it confidently and give yourself permission to make mistakes while learning, it can really be quite a powerful tool in your hands.