Tools & Tips for Searching the Web

Step 1: What kind of information do you need to find?

Is the internet likely to be an appropriate source of information for your topic?

The Web can be a good source for:	- News and current events - Government information - Company or product information - Information related to popular culture
The "Free" Web is not always a good source for:	- Copyrighted articles and books - Web versions of traditional print sources - Databases and indexes - Some types of primary sources and historical data

Step 2: Begin your research at the Library

Good starting points include	- The Library Website - Stop by the Circulation Desk - E-mail us (deb.syvertson@dakotacollege.edu) - The Library Website: Books, CD-ROMs, and information about the journals, magazines, and newspapers to which we subscribe - Databases: Articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers Health and Wellness Center and Academic Search Premier - Virtual Reference Shelf Found on "Other Electronic Links"

Step 3: Use a Web Directory

If you don't find what you need at the Library Website, consider using a Web directory for locating information.

Tips on using Web directories:	- Directories are best for broad topics or for locating information about popular subjects. - Many directories are compiled by

	human beings, not by computers, so your search results are more likely to be relevant. • Directories are smaller than search engines, so they are not always the best choices for narrowly-defined topics.
Good starting points include:	• Librarian's Index to the Internet • InfoMine • Google Scholar • Britannica Online

Step 4: Use a Search Engine

Do you need more information? Try using a search engine.

Tips on using search engines:	• Search engines can be helpful when you are looking for information on a very narrow topic because they index more pages than directories. • You will retrieve more pages with a search engine, but not all of the pages will be relevant. • No search engine indexes the Web comprehensively. • Search Tips: Choose the most specific terms possible ("Jack Russell terriers" instead of "dogs") Enclose phrases in quotation marks "cold war" Mark required words with a plus sign (+) Exclude words by inserting a minus sign (-) Don't forget to read the "Help" screens IF you don't find useful information within the first 20-40 hits, revise your search or use a different search engine.
Good starting points include:	• Google Google Scholar for scholarly literature • AlltheWeb • HotBot • Teoma • Yahoo!

	- Search engines for US Government information
	    FirstGov - Metasearch engines:
	    Vivismo
	    EZ2Find
	    Webcrawler

Step 6: Evaluate What you Find

Be sure to evaluate the information you glean from the Web. This is an important step in the research process!