

# Effective Online Searching Strategies

## Strategy 1: Using Concepts to Develop Keywords

### Types of Online Searches

#### Keyword Searches = Broad Search

- Make a list of terms before you start to search (see example to the right).
- Use specific words (e.g., Bengal tigers, *not* tigers).
- Search by phrase using quotation marks to find the words together (e.g., "acid rain").
- Narrow your search with related terms (e.g., "Bengal tigers" *and* habitat).
- Use upper and lower case carefully (e.g., java is the coffee, Java is the country, JAVA is the programming language).
- Use initial caps for proper names (e.g., "Green Day," *not* "green day").
- Check spelling and typing (e.g., centre vs. center; colour vs. color; labour vs. labor).

#### Directory Search = Subject/Topic Search

- Search by subject or topic in Internet directories and online subscription databases.

#### Boolean Search = Relational Search

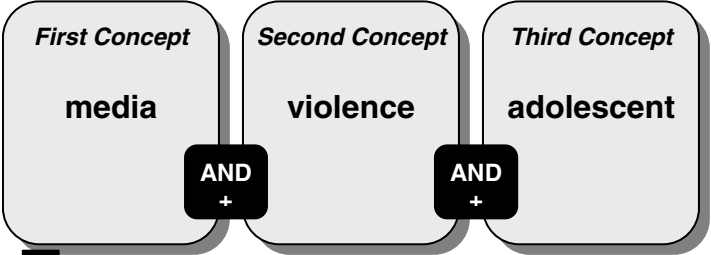
- Use operators **AND(+)**, **OR**, and **NOT(-)** to find relationships between search terms:
  - **AND (+)** for information containing *all terms* (e.g., Renaissance **AND** sculpture; Renaissance **+** sculpture)
  - **OR** for information with *any term* (e.g., "Paul Martin" **OR** prime minister of Canada)
  - **NOT (-)** for information *without a term* (e.g., python **NOT** Monty; python **-** Monty).
- Use the Advanced Search features of search engines and directories to narrow your search.

### Step 1. Briefly Describe Your Topic/Focus/Thesis

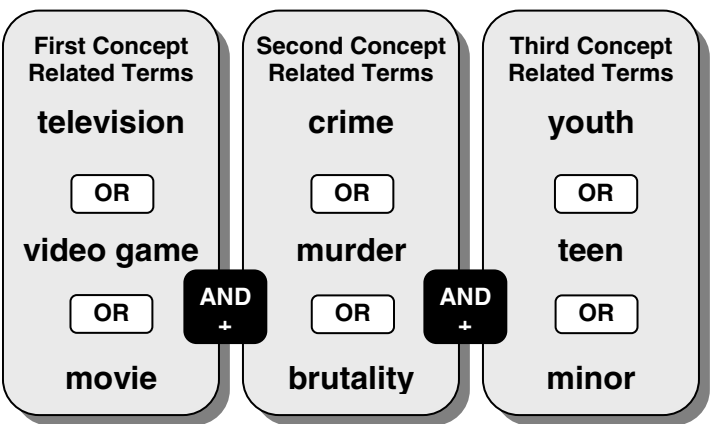
*Topic/Focus/Thesis*  
 Contemporary media celebrates violence in ways that encourage violent behaviour in adolescents today.



### Step 2. Identify the Main Concepts



### Step 3. Think of Synonyms/Related Terms



## Strategy 2: Tracking the Search to Narrow the Results

Types of Searches: K = Keyword P= Phrase S= Subject/Directory Search B= Boolean Search

Search Terms	Type of Search	Number of Hits
<i>adolescent violence television</i>	<u>K</u> eyword	3 178 000
<i>"television violence"</i>	<u>P</u> hrase	25 345
<i>Television and society</i>	<u>S</u> ubject/Directory	950
<i>adolescent AND violence AND television NOT movies</i>	<u>B</u> oolean	300