

LIBRARIOUS VETERINARIUS

In this issue, the *Texas Veterinarian* debuts a new column, Librarius Veterinarius. Librarius is a rarely used word defined as “related to books.” The intention is to symbolize the evolution of what was rare—information and access to information. Until recently, information was available only in printed books, distributed to few with access controlled by even fewer. The evolution of information in format and access should not be rare; it should be broad and openly shared. Veterinarius pays homage to the venerated literature index *Index Veterinarius*, which guided generations of veterinarians in their literature searches in the days of print.

It is a lovely title, but what can you expect here? Each column will provide timely techniques, strategies and resources to improve your practice and save you time.

What, then, is the first topic? The wild, wonderful, scary and unpredictable world of the internet.

We live in an increasingly interconnected world in which many aspects of life are facilitated by online discovery, both in searching and in finding. We search for personal and professional reasons. Do we all search well? Nope. Are there simple techniques to improve both searching and results? Yes.

Where and how you search matters. Many search engines are free to use, but remember the adage that nothing is free. Search engines are not created equally, and not all perform the same tasks equally well. This is by design; search engines are for-profit businesses that use proprietary algorithms to turn your search terms into results and those results into profit. Do you Google? You aren’t alone. It is the most frequently searched with 1.1 billion unique users a month; the next closest is Bing with 350 million¹. With that kind of reach, you could be lulled into believing that you can find anything by using Google. Not so fast.

How big is the internet? Think of the internet as an iceberg. Very little of an iceberg is above the water’s surface. The portion of the internet available to search engines is above the surface, commonly estimated at around 4 percent, and the



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remaining portion is below the surface. Google is the largest search engine, but search engines can only index what they can find. Google estimates that there are 60 trillion individual webpages², and it currently indexes an estimated 45 billion webpages³. This is called the surface web.

How do search engines navigate this? Think of a fishing trawler on the ocean. Websites and webpages near the surface web are the fish the trawler can catch in nets—news, weather, shopping and other openly available webpages. Further down is the password-protected content in the deep web. To access this content, you need some type of permission submarine, like a password or proxy. Examples of content include password-protected medical and financial records, intranets and journals, with the bulk of the deep web being technical data and reports. The bottom of the ocean—the dark web—requires special search engines to access it because content providers and searchers seek to avoid detection.

Your search terms are translated by the search engine through a proprietary search algorithm to determine your search results. To improve searches, pick a search engine and learn more about it. Let’s look at Google, not as an endorsement but because of its market share.

The basic Google search engine, <http://google.com>, searches the surface web, and knowing the following can improve your search:

- Google ignores capital letters.
- Google searches for all the terms you enter. If you enter several terms and want to search for either one term or the

other, use OR between the terms (OR must be capital).

- If you want your search to include similar terms and you want Google to determine the other terms, use ~ in front of the term.
- Use "" around exact phrases.
- Use a - in front of a term you want to exclude.
- Use commands.

- **site:** searches your terms at a specific website. For example, if you search “guidelines site:avma.org” (without the "") your results will be pages at the AVMA website with the term guidelines.

- **inurl:** searches for the term that follows only in the web address (URL)
- **intitle:** searches for the term that follows only in page titles
- **intext:** searches for the term that follows only in the text of pages
- **allintext:** searches for all the terms that follow in the text of pages but not necessarily all together on the page
- **related:** followed by URL searches for sites similar to the URL entered

Want to keep up to date about a search? Set up an email alert for new results at <https://www.google.com/alerts>. Enter your search and email address, and then click “show options” to specify frequency, language, sources, etc.

In August’s issue, we’ll continue by looking at search engines with special purposes. [IV](#)

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1. <http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/search-engines>
 2. <https://www.google.com/insidesearch/howsearchworks/thetheory/>
 3. <http://www.worldwidewebsize.com/>

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