

WEB SEARCH ENGINES vs. RESEARCH DATABASES

FEATURE	SEARCH ENGINES	DATABASES
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular web sites • Personal web sites • Commercial web sites • Government web sites • Organizational web sites • Entertainment web sites • Current news & information • Advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources selected for their research value • Published sources, many of which aren't available <i>free</i> on the web • Scholarly journal articles • Newspaper articles • Popular magazine articles • eBooks • Encyclopedias • Documentaries • No advertising
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all sites are intended for research purposes • "Good" sites are mixed in with the "bad" • Cannot limit by discipline which may result in numerous irrelevant hits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifically intended for research • Some are focused by discipline (business, education, law, medicine) which retrieve more relevant results • Some are focused by format (journals, eBooks, videos)
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone can publish on the internet • Authority varies & can be difficult to verify • Not all web sites are evaluated or critiqued • May contain intentional or unintentional misinformation • Users must determine authority themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone can publish an article in a reputable magazine, newspaper, journal or have a book published by a reputable publisher • Sources are evaluated/critiqued before they are accepted for publication • Authority easy to determine
Search Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies by search engine • More limited than databases • Cannot limit to scholarly/peer-reviewed • Can limit by document type (.doc, .pdf) but not by format (article, book, etc.) • Date limits not as precise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous advanced search features available • Can limit to scholarly/peer-reviewed • Can limit by subject, article title, author, date, book/magazine title, publisher, format