

GOOGLE: THE GENEALOGIST'S RESEARCH ASSISTANT

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"Two important fundamentals to a good Google search:

- 1) *Search[ing] is an art not an exact science*
- 2) *High quality search results are not the product of single searches, but a process"*¹

*"Using Google for searching is all about filtering: we sift and sift until we find what we want. And "WWW" is critical for our genealogy research: Who - What - When"*²

I. **Basic Search Techniques**

- A. Google is designed to be most effective with **simple, concise** search queries
- B. Every word counts
- C. Search word order matters - each choice will yield different results
 1. power wisconsin cemetery
 2. cemetery power wisconsin
 3. wisconsin cemetery power
- D. Words are not case sensitive except AND and OR
- E. Punctuation is generally ignored
- F. Abbreviations can yield different results
 1. connecticut vs ct
 2. regmt vs regiment

II. **Basic search operators** - "...terms that can help you further narrow or broaden your search."³

- A. AND, OR, NOT
 1. beldin AND wethersfield
 2. beldin OR belding wethersfield -missouri -belden -belkin
- B. AND is usually assumed in Google, so not usually necessary
 1. beldin wethersfield massachusetts emporium
- C. NOT did not work in my searches but the minus sign, - , did work to eliminate info I did NOT want
 1. beldin massachusetts NOT missouri
 2. beldin massachusetts NOT missouri NOT belden
 3. Forget Family Latour -lest -we -me -not

III. **Using Advanced Google search syntax**

1

Cooke, Lisa Louise. *The Genealogist's Google Toolbox: A Genealogist's Guide to the Most powerful Free Online Research Tools Available!*. 1st ed. ed. Vienna Thomas. United States: 2011. Pg 2

2

Lynch, Daniel. "Google Your Family Tree - Part I." RootsTech 2011: A New Family History and Technology Conference. FamilySearch. Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah. 12 Feb 2011. Lecture.

3

Cooke, Lisa Louise. Pg 14

- A. Command: Use “+” (the plus sign) to narrow your searches
 - 1. beldin +wethersfield +connecticut
 - 2. Adding + before a word disables synonyms.

- B. Using “ - ” is better than using the word “NOT”
 - 1. beldin +wethersfield -deerfield

- C. Quotation Marks
 - 1. Limit proximity between words
 - 2. Do not allow for synonyms or suggestions
 - 3. Help narrow down your searches
 - 4. Place a first name and last name between quotes for exact occurrences of the name.
 - 5. Place location names of 2 or more words in quotes; i.e. “Coeur d’Alene”

- D. Using “*” as a wildcard
 - 1. Using one * replaces one word and the proximity of the words is close
 - 2. Using two ** replaces a string of words and the proximity of those words is further apart
 - 3. City * Directory yields
 - a. City phone directory
 - b. City telephone directory
 - c. City and county directory⁴

- E. Synonym search “~”
 - 1. ~vital records returns *"vital records," "birth records," "marriage records,"* and more.
 - 2. ~obituaries includes *"obits," "death notices," "newspaper obituaries," "funeral,"* etc.

- F. Numrange Search
 - 1. Using two dots to separate a set of dates
 - 2. Search: belding wethersfield 1760..1770
 - a. *Father: Joshua BELDING b: 29 MAR 1768 in Wethersfield Twp, Hartford, Connecticut Mother: Dorothy WHITTLESEY b: 8 MAR 1770 in Newington, ...*
 - b. *Oct 2, 2006 ... 16 Jan 1686; d. 11 Oct 1767; m. Joseph BELDING, 01 May 1707. ii. Sarah Wright,*

- G. Link Search
 - 1. Get a list of sites linked to the site you are visiting
 - 2. Find others who are researching the same people or places you are

- H. Use “site” to search within a website
 - 1. term such as “cemetery” then - site:www....
 - a. Search term can be on either side of site query; results **can** vary
 - b. beldin site:http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/
 - c. site:http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com beldin

- I. Command: intitle: or allintitle

⁴Cooke, Lisa Louise. Pg 16

1. Restrict the results to those with all of the query words in the title bar
 - a. *"allintitle: smith genealogy" returns only documents that have both "smith" and "genealogy" in the title of the webpage*
2. Order of words again defines the search
 - a. `beldin intitle:genealogy`

J. Command: `inurl` or `allinurl`

1. All words after the command must be in the URL
2. Restrict the results to a word or phrase in the URL (`http://...`)
 - a. *Beldin inurl:genealogy yields many more results than*
 - b. *Inurl:beldin genealogy*

K. Cache

1. Look for content in relocated or obsolete Web pages at their old URLs
2. (Not a Google product: Or use the Wayback Machine at Internet Archive.com
<http://www.archive.org/web/web.php>)

L. "Similar pages"

1. link to similar websites for each website in the search results
2. access these links by clicking on the link called "Similar Pages"
3. Can also use the command "related:" and the website
 - a. *Related:http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~havens5/fille_du_roi.htm yielded 36 similar pages*
 - b. Clicking "Similar pages" yielded only 11 similar pages

M. Command: Filetype

1. Limit your search to pdfs, doc or other file formats
2. Search for blank pedigree charts or family group sheets
 - a. "family group sheet" `filetype:pdf`

N. Create an iGoogle page for genealogical purposes

1. Create tabs for places, people, or both
2. Fill screen with gadgets of sites to search
3. Use Notes gadget to keep to-do list for research

IV. **Other Google products that benefit genealogical research**

A. Images

- a. Uses the same query syntax as Google search
- b. Find photos of ancestors, hometowns, churches, cemeteries, tombstones, ships, businesses and schools.
- c. Find documents such as wills, military papers, census, tax rolls or yearbooks

B. Google Alerts

1. Find Alerts under More > Even More > Specialized Search
2. Syntax is the same as described above for normal Google searches
3. Before setting up, test in a Google search
 - a. Are your results too broad?
 - b. Are your results too narrow?

C. Google News Archive

1. <http://news.google.com/archivesearch>
2. Historical newspapers

3. Unfortunately, no new papers will be added; this project has been discontinued
- D. Google News Timeline
1. <http://newstimeline.googlelabs.com/>
 2. Using Google News Timeline for Genealogy and Family History by Lisa Louise Cooke http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrn1gt_CvN0
 3. Discover what was happening around the world when your ancestors were alive
- E. Google Books
1. <http://books.google.com/>
 2. Search using same search syntax
 3. Using Google Books Search by Allison Stacy <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R1lgCRln3k>
 4. Google Book Search: Researching Your Ancestral Roots by Miriam Midkiff Robbins <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwnbCmVrISQ>
- F. Google Reader
1. Set up RSS feeds
 2. Read entries in Google Reader or
 3. Add a gadget to your iGoogle page
- G. Definition searches
- a. Define:drayman
"A Drayman was historically the driver of a dray, a low, flat-bed wagon without sides,..."
- H. Currency conversion
1. Needing to purchase a death certificate from another country?
 2. Use "15 british pounds in us dollars" or
 3. 15 gbp in usd (this = \$24.0045)

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