

The screenshot shows the top of the LLRX website. On the left is the LLRX logo. In the center is the CLR logo with the text 'www.currentlegal.com' and 'Free Demo'. On the right is a search box containing 'U.S. CODE ONLINE', with a dropdown menu showing 'CODE OF FED. REGULATIONS' and 'CLR DOCUMENT DELIVERY'. Below the header is a navigation menu with four columns of buttons: 'LINKS in the NEWS' (containing LLRXalerts and LLRXbookstore), 'LLRXfindX' (containing LLRXlinks and On the NEWSSTAND), 'about LLRX' (containing email the editors and email update), and 'library' (containing LLRXawards and search LLRX).



ResearchWire

Search Engines Compared: 1999 Update

By Diana Botluk

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Search engines are constantly changing and growing. With every change, a search engine's creator strives to make it easy for inexperienced users to find what they need, while allowing flexibility for power searchers to gather information with the best possible efficiency. One of the most visible changes in search engines over the past two years has been their evolution from simple web search engines to full blown portals, or places on the web where people can begin to look for information. As such, these sites become an entry to the web, with a wide variety of passageways to pinpoint needed information. Each passageway focuses on a different type of information, such as web pages or e-mail addresses or stock quotes, but they are all designed with one idea in mind...to get you to where you need to be more quickly and efficiently. Thus, the portal options of the various search engines should not be ignored by researchers as invaluable tools in the quest for information.

Can a broad web search engine help legal researchers? Certainly it can, sometimes. Legal researchers should keep in mind that when searching the web for law related material, there is a much greater possibility for finding needed information when the search is focused, using the appropriate tool for the task. For example, when searching for a Supreme Court opinion, a legal researcher would not use a broad search engine like

[Alta Vista](#) or [HotBot](#), but rather would search through the database of Supreme Court opinions at [FindLaw](#). To locate the appropriate web site or database for a specific legal-focused search, a researcher should consult a law related starting point like the [LLRXfindX](#). For a simple chart of quick links to various law related web sites, try [Law Resources on the World Wide Web](#).

However, for those times where a broad based web search is the appropriate path, each of the portals should be evaluated for the strength of its search engine. While there are certainly similarities, search features vary from search engine to search engine, and one may be more suited to a certain task than another. The chart below compares the features of six major search engines, allowing users to judge which might be right for the research at hand. Keep in mind that the best research approach will be flexible and creative, combining a number of different search tools, and possibly several search engines.

****For permission to distribute this search engine comparison chart for educational purposes, please contact [Diana Botluk](#).****

Comparison of Major Web Search Engines

	<u>AltaVista</u> www.altavista.com	<u>Excite</u> www.excite.com	<u>HotBot</u> www.hotbot.com	<u>Infoseek</u> infoseek.go.com	<u>Lycos</u> www.lycos.com	<u>WebCrawler</u> webcrawler.com
Search Content	web pages usenet media files e-mail addresses company information links to abcnews.com for news articles	web pages media files e-mail addresses company information news articles	web pages usenet media files news articles e-mail addresses in cooperation with BigYellow company information in cooperation with at hand	web pages usenet e-mail addresses company information news articles	web pages usenet media files news articles e-mail addresses in cooperation with WhoWhere? company information in cooperation with GTE	web pages news is a WebCrawler channel option e-mail addresses company information
Search Language	<i>Default searching is alternative</i> Include words with plus sign (+) (simple search); AND or ampersand (&) (advanced search)	<i>Default searching is alternative</i> Include words with plus sign (+) or AND Search for alternate words with OR	<i>Default searching is inclusive</i> Include words by choosing "all the words," the option "must contain" on the super search form; using AND, a	<i>Default searching is alternative</i> Include words with plus sign (+) or use "must" on the advanced form Exclude words with	<i>Default searching is inclusive</i> Include words with AND, the plus sign (+), or by choosing "all the words" on the advanced search form	<i>Default searching is alternative</i> Include words with AND or plus sign (+) Search for alternate words with OR

	<p>Search for alternate words with OR or the pipe symbol (advanced search)</p> <p>NEAR or tilde (~) searches for words within 10 of each other (advanced search)</p> <p>Exclude words with minus (-) (simple search); NOT or exclamation point (!) (advanced search)</p> <p>Search phrases by placing words in quotation marks ("") <i>provides forced phrase searching - two terms together compared to internal thesaurus of phrases which receive priority</i></p> <p>lower case searches</p>	<p>Exclude words with minus (-) or AND NOT</p> <p>Search phrases by placing words in quotation marks ("")</p> <p>Truncation not necessary with concept searching</p> <p>Nest searches with parentheses</p>	<p>plus sign (+) or an ampersand (&) with the Boolean expression option</p> <p>Search for alternate words by choosing "any of the words" on the search form; or using OR or the pipe symbol (!) with the Boolean expression option</p> <p>Exclude words by choosing "must not contain" on the search form; or by using minus (-), NOT or the exclamation point with the Boolean expression option</p> <p>Search phrases by choosing "exact phrase" on the search form or by using quotation marks ("")</p> <p>lower case searches</p>	<p>a minus sign (-) or the "should not" option on the advanced form</p> <p>Search phrases by placing words in quotation marks ("" or putting hyphens (-) between them; or the "phrase" option on the advanced form</p> <p>Phrase searching for proper names by searching with upper case initial letters</p> <p>lower case searches are insensitive; initial capitals force case sensitivity</p>	<p>Search for alternate words by using OR, or by choosing "any of the words" on the advanced search form</p> <p>Exclude words with NOT or a minus sign (-)</p> <p>Phrases are searched using quotation marks (""), or use ADJ: words must appear next to each other ADJ/#: terms must appear exactly specified number of words apart OADJ: same as ADJ, but words must be in specified order OADJ/#: same as ADJ/#: but words must be in specified order</p> <p>Also use a wide</p>	<p>Indicate word proximity with NEAR/#, replacing the number sign with the desired proximity (number of words) desired</p> <p>Exclude words with NOT or minus sign (-)</p> <p>Search phrases by placing the phrase in quotation marks ("")</p> <p>Nest searches with parentheses</p>
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	<p>are case insensitive; upper case searches force case sensitivity</p> <p>Truncate words with an asterisk (*)</p> <p>Nest searches with parentheses</p>		<p>are case insensitive; mixed upper/lower case searches are case sensitive</p> <p>Truncate words with an asterisk (*) or use "enable word stemming" on the form</p> <p>Nest searches with parentheses with the Boolean expression option</p>		<p>variety of proximity connectors: NEAR, NEAR/#, ONEAR, ONEAR/#, FAR, FAR/#, OFAR, OFAR/#, BEFORE</p> <p>Nest with parentheses (), brackets [], braces {}, or angle brackets <></p>	
<p>Search Restrictors</p>	<p>Form based date restriction available with advanced search</p> <p>Searches can be limited to a particular language</p> <p>Searches may be restricted by the following: title, anchor, text, applet, object, link, image, url, host, domain</p> <p>Example: to search</p>	<p>Restrict by language, country, or domain type on advanced search form</p>	<p>Restrict by date on the search form or by using after:, before: or within:</p> <p>Searches may be restricted by location, media type, or date. Complete these portions of the search form.</p> <p>Other restrictors available: title:, domain:, depth:,</p>	<p>Field restricted searches are available for the following fields: link:, site:, url:, or title:: these can also be restricted on the advanced form</p> <p>Advanced form also allows restriction by location and category</p>	<p>Restrict to title, url, or language on the form</p> <p>Searches can also be restricted to the Top 5% Best of the Web</p>	

	for web pages with llrx in the url, add url:llrx to the search statement		feature:, linkdomain:, linkext:, newsgroup:, scriptlanguage:			
OtherSearch Features	<p>AltaVista translates results into several different languages!!!</p> <p>Special photo & media finder</p> <p>Related searches can be performed by clicking on terms determined to be related to original search</p> <p>Advanced search give keywords extra weight by placing them in the ranking field</p> <p>Refine feature lists topics and related words which may be specifically included or</p>	<p>Default searching is inclusive/alternative using concept searching. Concept searching will search for other word forms and synonyms beside the keyword typed into the search statement.</p> <p>Use of Boolean operators forces keyword searching.</p> <p>A similar searches option from the results display allows researchers to let Excite construct a new search to retrieve relevant sites. Find a relevant site on the results display</p>	<p>Sophisticated form based search interface makes advanced searching easy. There is no need to investigate appropriate search language.</p> <p>Direct Hit technology displays top ten most popular pages from given results at the top of the results display</p> <p>A list of possible related searches from which to choose appears above the Direct Hit results</p>	<p>Allows searching within a previous set of results by using the pipe symbol () or choosing to search the results from the bottom of the display</p> <p>Allows a new search to find pages similar to a chosen result</p> <p>Offers possible related searches by clicking on a generated list of similar terms</p>	<p>Allows searching within a previous set of results</p> <p>Allows a new search to find pages similar to a chosen result</p> <p>Advanced search form also provides options for searching books, cities, dictionary terms, recipes, stocks & weather</p>	<p>Allows a secondary search to find similar pages from an initial result</p>

	excluded from the search	and click on similar search. Excite uses that page as an example on which to base a new search.				
Results Display	<p>Display reveals short summary, url, file size, page date and language</p> <p>Word count reveals the number of times each search term appears</p> <p>Translation option allows translation of any page</p>	<p>User can sort results by site or relevancy</p> <p>Display reveals url, relevancy score and summary</p> <p>Results show hits in directory first, then web, then news</p>	<p>Full descriptions include relevancy score, summary and url</p> <p>Search form allows users to set results to full descriptions, brief descriptions, or urls only</p> <p>Results clustering prevents all top hits from being from same site</p>	<p>User can hide or display site summaries or sort by date</p> <p>Display reveals url, relevancy score, file size, date and summary</p> <p>Results clustering prevents all top hits from being from same site</p>	<p>Results include abstract and url</p> <p>Results clustering prevents all top hits from being from same site</p> <p>Results also display hits in categories, news articles, and "first & Fast" - the most popular links</p>	<p>User can hide or display site summaries</p> <p>Display reveals url, relevancy score and summary</p>
Web Directory Included?	<p>yes</p> <p>AltaVista Categories</p> <p>Yahoo! Searching also links to AltaVista</p>	yes	Yes	yes	yes	yes
				GO Network	Lycos Web Guides and Top 5%	WebCrawler Channels

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