Searching in Google

Google is one of many browsers that allow us access to materials found on the Internet. Google’s automated “Spiderbot” crawls the Web to continually build the Google database which includes billions of web pages. This handout is intended to teach you some of the strategies you can use to structure your searches to zero in on useful resources. Using the example of multiple medication use in the elderly, we will see ways we can find fewer but more precise results.

- **Multiple medications** will find these words both as a phrase and, later in the list of results, instances where the two words are found on the same page, but not side by side.
- By placing quotation marks around **“multiple medications”**, we limit our search to only the phrase.
- Quotations are placed around phrases such as “British Columbia”, “myocardial infarction”, “university of Victoria”, “journal of advanced nursing”, but not around single words such as Alberta, elderly, or pediatrics.
- **Adding more terms** to the search indicates that only web pages with all keywords – in this case, “multiple medications” and elderly -- will be displayed.
- If you want to increase your search results, identify any terms with **synonyms** and enter these with OR (in capitals) between them – (“multiple medications” OR Polypharmacy) (elderly OR geriatric OR aged OR senior)
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- Placing the prefix `intitle:` before our search indicates that the word or phrase which follows must be found in the title of the document.
- This makes it somewhat more likely that our results will be on topic.
- Note that any subsequent search terms (e.g., elderly) might be found in the title, but not necessarily so.

- The prefix `allintitle:` means that all results will have our search terms in the title.
- Note that both `intitle:` and `allintitle:` are used with no space between the colon and the search term.

- `inurl:` allows the search to be limited to a specific jurisdiction, for example ("multiple medications" OR polypharmacy) (elderly OR senior OR geriatric) `inurl:gov.bc.ca` limits the search to materials on this topic from government of B.C. web pages.