

# Quick Guide to Keywords

Keyword searching means choosing a small number of words or phrases from your topic to help you track down good sources fast. For example:

Discuss the relationship between **social media** and the health of the **Irish language**.

- Choose *the most important words* in your topic to start searching. Usually, these will be nouns. Sometimes adjectives – like Irish or Canadian, for example – are useful.
- Put phrases in quotation marks (for example, “social media”).
- Sort your keywords by topic. Are some broader or narrower than others?
- Pick broader keywords when looking for introductory books (such as media) and narrower ones (such as television or newspapers) when seeking scholarly journal articles or more focused books.
- Questions? Ask Richard: [richard.carter@utoronto.ca](mailto:richard.carter@utoronto.ca)

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## Keyword Searching in 6 Steps

1. **Identify nouns** in your topic or research question
2. **Weed** out the less important nouns
3. **Sort** Your Keywords
4. **Check** the Original Topic / Question
5. **Revise** Your Keywords
6. **Search**

# Quick Guide to Boolean Terms

**AND** – means you need both keywords: it gives you *fewer* results.

*Cornish AND radio*

**OR** – means either keyword will do, so long as you get at least one: it gives you *more* results. Normally you use OR with synonyms.

*(Cornish OR "minority languages") AND (media OR TV OR radio) AND language*

**NOT** – means you don't want the following word or words in your results.

*(Cornish OR "minority languages") AND (media OR TV OR radio) AND language NOT film*

## Horizontal Boolean Search

In the **Simple Search**, you can write a Boolean search horizontally:

*(Cornish OR "minority languages") AND (media OR TV OR radio) AND language*

## Vertical Boolean Search

In an **Advanced Search**, you can often write a Boolean search vertically. Notice that, when crafting the search vertically, you usually don't need parentheses because the rows separate the ideas for you:

Search filters

|       |           |   |
|-------|-----------|---|
| Title | contains  | "minority languages" OR Manx OR Cornish |
| AND   | Subject   | media OR television OR radio            |
| AND   | Any field | Enter a search term                     |

With the **Advanced Search** (above), you can ask the database to look for different words in different parts of the record (for example, the subject, author, or title). The *Any field* option searches the entire record and will usually give you more results. When using Boolean terms with *LibrarySearch*, make sure to capitalize OR and AND.