

Text alternative to video: Parentheses

If we use parentheses in our search we can decide what happens when in the search.

When we use parentheses in our search, we can tell the computer to do the things within the parentheses first or on its own

To look at it we could use this example research question:

Do bats or frogs catch the most mosquitoes?

First, we have to construct our search string, so of course we need the bats, and we need the frogs and last but not least we need the mosquitoes.

bats OR frogs AND mosquitos

We want documents containing either bats or frogs and of course they should contain the word mosquitos.

If we enclose bats or frogs in parentheses:

(bats OR frogs) AND mosquitos,

we sort of create a little box and tell the computer first to find all documents containing bats and or frogs, and then of those documents any documents containing word mosquitoes.

To simply look at what we actually tell the computer when we don't use parentheses or when we use parentheses, we could look at this example:

England OR Britain

AND

Football OR soccer

Here, we have a search string containing England or Britain and football or soccer.

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What we tell the computer without the use of parentheses. are that the document must contain either the word England, or it must contain both of the words Britain and football, or they could just contain the word soccer.

If, however, we use parentheses, we tell the computer that the documents we are looking for should contain either or both of the words England or Britain, and the document must contain either or both of the words football or soccer.

This is how it looks with the parentheses:

(England OR Britain)

AND

(Football OR soccer)

In a search table, the parentheses are usually placed around the different columns or around the different groups of ORs.

Thank you for listening.

Feel free to drop by the library, should you have any questions