



Finding a way to find your way on the Internet!

	Search Engine	Directory/Portal	Online Database
<p>What is it?</p>	<p>A search engine creates automatic listings by “crawling” the web electronically. Everything that the “spider” finds is then indexed. The search engine then allows you to sift through the millions of pages it has recorded by finding matches to your search terms and ranking them according to a formula.</p>	<p>A directory is “human-powered”. Humans select sites that will be listed. Directories list sites under categories and subcategories, becoming more specific at each level. Directories include a fraction of the sites available via a search engine. Many search engines now include a directory feature. Portals are directories for very specific topics and audiences.</p>	<p>An online database is a directory of a specific type of information. Most online databases are available by subscription only, usually to libraries and educational institutions. They open up access to specialized information not available on the wider net.</p>
<p>Strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locates a high number of resources • facilitates access to the widest range of websites • good for finding information on very specialized topics • useful for searchers with excellent advanced search and critical thinking skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • websites have been selected and categorized by humans. • good for finding information on frequently-researched topics • will likely return better quality sites, since good sites with good content are more likely to get reviewed • allows you to narrow search by browsing while selecting increasingly specific sub-categories • education-oriented, Canadian portals now available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most reliable source for accurate information • non-commercial - search results not confused by market-oriented nature of wider net • allows access to specialized and comprehensive information not easily available on the wider net • often include links to reviewed sites on wider net • best source for academic research
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because searches are not subject-specific, quality and relevance are not guaranteed • returns ranked in many different ways, including fee paid by website owner to search engine to get higher ranking • require advanced search and critical thinking skills to use most effectively • inconsistent metatagging hinders search consistency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • search results limited to areas of more common interest • links not always up-to-date: websites change frequently and not all directories keep up • best-known directories geared to public, not academic use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not useful for finding commercial information (retail, etc.) • subscription databases are expensive, and therefore not available to most individuals, except through access from a public institution • expense prevents full access by many schools
<p>Examples</p>	<p>Google Teoma WebCrawler HotBot</p> <p>Yahoo Alta Vista Excite</p>	<p>Ask Jeeves Kidsclick.org Librarian’s Index to the Internet Internet Public Library Collections Canada Subject Index StudentLink2 (Subscription)</p> <p>Yahooligans InfoPlease</p>	<p>Subscription: Grolier Online Elibrary Canada Licensed (no cost to schools): Estat Canada (Statistics Canada) Non-Subscription: Canadian Encyclopedia</p>