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Search Engine Name	Type of Search Engine	Default Searching	"Information Specialist"		"Ethnic Groups"		"Information Specialist" AND "Ethnic Groups" **	
			Hits	Value* (relating to LIS)	Hits	Value* (relating to term only)	Hits	Value* (relating to LIS)
www.teoma.com	search engine	Default search uses Boolean AND	198,800	1.5	2,041,000:	3	470	1
www.wisenut.com	search engine	Default search uses Boolean AND	4,869	1	45,468	4	86	1
http://vivisimo.com/	meta search engine	Default search uses Boolean AND	198,900	2	2,041,000	4	1,083	2
www.google.com	search engine	Default search uses Boolean AND	534,000	2	5,230,000	4	771	1.5
www.lycos.com	search engine	Default search uses Boolean AND	198,800	1.5	2,041,000	3	463	1
Expanded Academic ASAP	MLIS - database	Default search incorporates proximity; searches for your words within two words of each other in either direction (to allow for variations). Search for phrases by using, for example, ethnic w1 groups.	58	3	6,097	4	0	n/a
ProQuest Newspapers	MLIS - database	Default search uses Boolean AND	2,124	3	85,106	3	1	1

*Value is on a 1-5 scale of Poor to Excellent (Poor (1), Fair (2), Average (3), Good (4), Excellent (5). Value is based on relation of results to search terms, not to LIS, unless a term is LIS related. Value is also based on the first set of results shown (first page length, which varied between 10 and 20 results).

**An additional comparison of these two terms without using a Boolean AND was not done, due to the default being a Boolean AND for 6 of the 7 searches; Expanded Academic had zero hits from the non-Boolean search, and therefore the value was n/a..

Search Engines: The seven search engines I searched and compared were: Teoma, WiseNut, Vivisimo, Google, Lycos, Expanded Academic ASAP, and ProQuest Newspapers. Three of these I felt I had good familiarity with (Google, and the two LIS databases); the other four I had little or no experience with.

Brief Evaluation: Prior to choosing my five Internet search engines, I didn't realize that three of them would produce very similar results (Teoma, Lycos, and Vivisimo). I later found out that Vivisimo, a meta search engine, included options to search specific places on the web, for example: business news, PUB Med, CNN, PBS, New York Times, Lycos, and Teoma. My assumption is that the three search engines had similar results due to interconnections of the data sets being searched. The order of the results were not always the same (Teoma and Lycos were very similar), and when combining the two terms in the final search, there were differing numbers of results. Due to the difference in results orders, the value placed on searches were not always the same.

Results were shown in various ways; all offered the list of results, the web engines all offered sponsored links, but there were still other variations. Teoma provides links to narrow/refine your search (though none of the links for "information specialist" (IS) was relevant to LIS – for example, "medical specialist," "marketing specialist," and "certified residential specialist – as well as offering a list of resources by experts and enthusiasts (though this seemed to work better for simple one word searches, because there were no resources for either terms searched). Additionally, some databases offered ways to view results by a clustered type. Vivisimo clustered by topic; for the IS search, the term "library" was the top cluster group and there were 7 subtopics under library, one of which was "Library, Media." The value of these clustered results was much higher than the simple search, because you could select the results that centered around libraries. Similarly, WiseNut offered "WiseNut categories" in addition to their search results, with categories (for "ethnic groups" search) such as: minority ethnic, racial ethnic, and population and ethnic groups. One of the valuable features of ProQuest was that you could view your results by publication types, and it also suggested additional terms to search with, as well as publications to browse by.

User Friendliness: User friendliness of search engines varies on the needs and experience of the user. For those who don't try to understand how to conduct better searches, the fact that Lycos doesn't have an easy to find "Search Tips" wouldn't be seen as less user friendly. For those users who don't realize there are often advanced search capabilities, they wouldn't mind when Vivisimo doesn't offer it. Those not used to Boolean terms may find Teoma's advanced options of "must have, should have, or must not have," user friendly, while those who are familiar with Boolean terms may be confused by this different wording.

Most search engines have roughly the same layout; the default is to open to a screen with a basic search box, which is usually in the top middle or top left sides of the screen. Near the perimeter of this search box, all of the non-LIS search engines had an Advanced search option, except for Vivismo. The two school databases offered the most advanced type of searching (which add value to the search through more concisely refined results),

but it is only useful if the user takes advantage of it. In ProQuest, in addition to Boolean functions, the user can limit their search by date ranges and can use many types of filters to find words in an abstract, a title, a publication, as company names, or as people. When used, this amount of refining can add value to a search as well.

Though the five free search engines do have merit, and with the right search terms valuable information can be found, the two LIS databases returned a lot less, for lack of a better word, “junk.” Excessive “junk” does not make a search engine very user friendly. Using the same terms in both a web search engine and a library database, the library database will have far less results, but they will tend to be much more relevant. This can be seen in the values assigned to the results of the IS searches. Though still only “fair” and “average” values, the two LIS databases seemed to have more relevant results. Results in Expanded Academic were articles such as a profile of an IS, IS’s and the possibility of a virtual library, social impacts of libraries, and a few types of health and bioinformatics IS’s. One of the reasons these tended to have more valuable results, was because the pool of information was smaller, the terms were searched as “keywords” (Expanded Academic) or in the citation and abstract (ProQuest) by default, as well as all being a better set of information (actual published work). In comparison, the web search engines tended to have lower values because the words IS could be anywhere on the page and wouldn’t necessarily have to do with LIS. I found people’s titles (in varying fields, from computer to medical), descriptions in employment postings, and links to specialty information areas (such as computer IS, cancer IS, etc).

For my LIS database advanced searches of both the term “IS” AND “ethnic groups,” I had very little results: only one document between the two library databases. Incorporating a term like “library” in place of “IS” might have been more helpful. Overall though, my combined search for the two terms did not produce very valuable information in any of the search engines, which leads me to think that the terms I used were not the best; other search terms could produce more beneficial results. Often, the web search engines results would be about an issue that only referenced ethnic groups and included a link to contact an information specialist (for example, (in the five web engines) you could contact an IS from a report about tobacco use among US ethnic groups, a webpage about prostate cancer, and about starting a food business).

Value to the LIS Field: In the right hands, the free web search engines can produce valuable information. Government documents, public records, company information, and local information are just a few types of information that can be found on the Internet. Of the five web search engines compared, Google and Vivisimo had the highest value. However, with an inexperienced searcher, the user may wade through a lot of results before they something they can use. People tend to use less than desirable information from the Internet as well. The LIS databases are so much more valuable to those seeking information; using the right databases can narrow the amount of information being searched by broad topic (a news, business, or education database for example), and the information itself is much more credible, often being peer reviewed. Because most of the information that is provided in LIS databases is not freely provided over the Internet, even the best search attempts will not provide the same caliber materials.