

Trove Search Tips'n'Tricks

For basic help on using Trove 'Search' follow this link - [Search | Trove](#)

For more complex Trove searches, follow this link - [Constructing a complex search query | Trove](#)

Have a look at the two links above first to get a basic understanding.

Trove is an excellent and unique resource but you still face three battles when searching the database that are beyond Trove's control ...

1. *The database isn't complete.*

As brilliant as Trove is, it should be no surprise that not every issue of every newspaper has been captured. It'd be unrealistic to expect that. Your search may simply never see a relevant article because it isn't there in the database. There's nothing you can do about that.

2. *The Optical Character Recognition hasn't properly transcribed the text.*

The Trove database contains scans of newspapers, gazettes etc. that are read by Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and converted to machine-readable/searchable text. Poor quality scans, whether they're from old or smudged documents, can't be read and interpreted properly by the OCR, as wonderful as it is. So the words in the digital text generated by the OCR don't make sense or are misspelled and that can mess-up your searches. That's why key articles are added to Lists and Volunteers spend so much time proofreading and correcting those articles; to help improve the search results (and to make the articles presentable for the web-page).

3. *You have to fight the Search Engine!*

The techy bit - behind the scenes, Trove uses something called the SOLR search engine - this is a popular commercial piece of software from the Apache Corporation. Think of it as a Google search that only looks into Trove. When you do a search in Trove, the SOLR software uses the words you give it and finds the most 'relevant' articles. How it works out the relevance is based on a calculation called 'term frequency - inverse document frequency' (tf-idf). How that works isn't important to us but there are a few things you can do to help the search and tf-idf calculation behave more like how you're thinking when you do a search instead of letting it do its own thing.

The remainder of this document will introduce a few extra tips you can use when searching Trove and help it find the documents that are most relevant to you.

Newspapers & Gazettes

fremantle~

NEWSPAPERS & GAZETTES

3,489,869 total results [Sort](#)



FRRMANTLE.

 **Article** - The Daily News (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1950)  **Thursday 9 Marc**

A fuzzy search is a way of looking for things that may be spelled wrong. By putting a ~ (shift-6 on your keyboard) after the word, you tell Trove that it can search for things that match the word with up to 2-letters wrong. See the example above - I've searched for 'fremantle', but the first article returned is spelled 'frmantle'.

Wild Cards

Wild cards let you tell Trove that it can more-or-less guess. If you want it to guess just one character use a '?' - searching for 'te?t' would find test, text, tent, teat etc. Using a '*' (shift-8 on your keyboard) would guess any number of characters so 'fish*' would find 'fisher', 'fishing', 'fisherman', 'fishywishywoo' etc.

Proximity Search

This is useful for searching for names and is mentioned in the help for 'Constructing Complex Searches' linked above.

Here's how it works. Let's say we want to find articles on "John Smith". As it says in the help docs, if you want to search for an exact phrase you should put the words in quotes and precede it with 'fulltext:' e.g. fulltext:"John Smith". But if John has a middle name, or two, that could be

used in articles as well and they may not appear in your search results. To match those variations, you would put fulltext:"John Smith"~<a number>, where the number is how far apart you will allow the words to be. So if you put fulltext:"John Smith"~2, you would allow up to two words between John and Smith, e.g. John Billy Bob Smith, which would be a valid result.

Boosting a Word

The exciting-sounding 'boosting' allows you to put more emphasis on a particular part of your search. Remember that I mentioned the tf-idf calculation before? By boosting a word you can increase the importance of that word in the calculation. For example, if I search for "north" "fremantle"^3, Trove will treat Fremantle as 3-times as important as north.

Without 'boosting' fremantle, look at the first article returned ...

"north" "fremantle"

NEWSPAPERS & GAZETTES 1,205,343 total results

 **North Fremantle.**
Article - The West Australian (Perth, WA: 1879 - 1954) 📅 Friday 31 May 1929 - Page 18
... **North Fremantle**. According to a balance sheet which was presented at the half-yearly meeting of ... ratepayers of **North Fremantle** last nijrht that municipality is now in the best finan cial position it has ... 300 words

... but with 'boosting' I get a different article because fremantle is 3-times as important as north.

"north" "fremantle"^3

NEWSPAPERS & GAZETTES 1,205,343 total results

 **Fremantle.**
Article - The West Australian (Perth, WA: 1879 - 1954) 📅 Friday 17 July 1931 - Page 5
... ' FriendlySociety, will be held at Victoria Hall on Thursday next. A children's ball in aid of the **North ... Fremantle**. Miss Muriel Terry, of **North Fremantle**, is spending some weeks, as the guest of Mr. and ... 658 words

[✎ Text corrected by you](#)

There are the same number of results (1,205,343), but in a different order.

Required and Prohibit

If you absolutely have to have a word included in your search results, put a '+' in front of it. If your search gives you a load of results you don't want and they contain a certain word, include that word in your search but put a '-' in front of it.

A search for 'fremantle' returns 3,427,921 results ...

fremantle

NEWSPAPERS & GAZETTES

3,427,921 total results



FREMANTLE.

Article - The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848 - 1957)  Wednesday 30 January 1884 - Page 4

... FREMANTLE Arrived-- January 28--Ribston, from Adelaide Sailed -January 28-- Franklin, for Melbourne. ... 14 words

 Text corrected by you

... but if I 'prohibit' the word 'north ...

fremantle -north

NEWSPAPERS & GAZETTES

2,222,573 total results



FREMANTLE.

Article - The West Australian (Perth, WA: 1879 - 1954)  Wednesday 22 January 1930 - Page 18

... FREMANTLE. UNITED KINGDOM, INDIA, CHINA, JAPAN and EUROPE.— Per Ormonde, January 27, at 10 a ... 147 words

 Text corrected by you

... then number is 2,222,573.

And if you're feeling really techy, here's the link to the documentation on SOLR's 'Standard Search Query Parser'. - https://solr.apache.org/guide/8_9/searching.html