



Internet Search Mastery: Find Anything, Anytime!

A 5-Week Course

Course Description:

This course is your guide to becoming an expert online researcher. We will move beyond simple keyword searches to master the art and science of finding exactly what you need, when you need it. Over five weeks, you'll learn to use advanced techniques, evaluate information like a pro, and harness powerful tools to save time and get more accurate results. Upon successful completion of all five modules, you will receive a certificate of completion.

Week 1: The Core Principles of Effective Searching

- **Learning Objectives:** Learn the fundamentals of how search engines work and how to formulate smarter, more effective queries.
- **Topics:**

- **How Search Engines Work:** A high-level overview of indexing, ranking, and algorithms.
- **Keyword Selection:** Choosing the right words to get the best results.
- **The Power of Specificity:** Narrowing your search to avoid irrelevant information.
- **Recognizing Search Intent:** Understanding what you're really looking for and how to express it.
- **Practical Activity:** Perform a series of searches using increasingly specific keywords and observe the difference in results.

Week 2: Mastering Advanced Search Operators

- **Learning Objectives:** Unlock the power of search operators to filter results, find exact phrases, and target specific websites or file types.
- **Topics:**
 - **Exact Phrases:** Using quotation marks (" ") to search for an exact string of words.
 - **Inclusion & Exclusion:** Using the plus (+) and minus (-) symbols to include or exclude words.
 - **Site-Specific Searches:** Using **site:** to search within a single domain.
 - **Finding Specific Files:** Using **filetype:** to locate PDFs, spreadsheets, or other document types.
- **Practical Activity:** Use a combination of search operators to find a specific article or report on a government or university website.

Week 3: The Art of Fact-Checking and Source Evaluation

- **Learning Objectives:** Develop the critical thinking skills needed to distinguish reliable sources from misinformation, fake news, and bias.
- **Topics:**
 - **Source Credibility:** How to evaluate the authority, reputation, and purpose of a website.
 - **Lateral Reading:** The technique of verifying information by checking it against multiple sources.
 - **Spotting Misinformation:** Common red flags in headlines, images, and article structure.
 - **Image and Video Verification:** Using reverse image search to track the origin of visual content.
- **Practical Activity:** Select a viral social media post and use the techniques learned to determine if the information is credible.

Week 4: Specialized and Niche Searches

- **Learning Objectives:** Go beyond standard web search to find data, academic papers, and information from specialized databases.

- **Topics:**
 - **Academic Search:** Using tools like Google Scholar and library databases for research.
 - **Data and Public Records:** Finding public datasets and government reports.
 - **Searching Social Media:** Techniques for locating specific information on platforms like Twitter or LinkedIn.
 - **Niche Search Engines:** Exploring specialized engines for things like legal documents or patents.
- **Practical Activity:** Find a recent study or research paper on a topic of interest and locate a publicly available dataset related to it.

Week 5: Staying Organized & The Future of Search

- **Learning Objectives:** Learn how to organize your research and understand how search is evolving with new technologies.
- **Topics:**
 - **Organizing Your Finds:** Using browser bookmarking features and third-party tools to save and categorize information.
 - **Search Engines of the Future:** The impact of artificial intelligence and conversational search.
 - **Your Personalized Search Experience:** Understanding why your search results might differ from others.
 - **Course Wrap-Up & Q&A:** A final review of key takeaways and an open forum for questions.
- **Practical Activity:** Create an organized system for a new research project, including bookmarks and saved articles.

Certificate of Completion

A digital certificate of completion will be issued to all participants who attend all five sessions. The certificate will formally recognize your new skills in advanced internet searching and will be a valuable addition to your professional or academic profile.