Performing Basic Searches

**Note**

This information is not applicable to Primo VE environments. For more details on Primo VE configuration, see [Primo VE](#).

You can search very easily in Primo. Just type one or more words that you are looking for and click the **Search** button. If you enter multiple words, Primo will return results that contain all of the specified terms.

Once you are familiar with the basic Primo search, you might want to try doing more with the Search panel or use the Advanced Search option (see [Performing Advanced Searches](#)). Both of these options offer numerous features for making your searches more precise and enable you to get results that are more useful.

**Note**

You may search for titles using ISBNs and ISSNs with or without hyphens. If you are not getting expected results with hyphens, please try your search again without hyphens.

How Can I Do More with the Search Panel?

You can do more than just a simple search with the Search panel by placing the following operators between words or phrases: **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**. Searches with multiple operators are processed in the following order, from left to right:

1. **( )** – Parentheses allow you to group search terms and alter the order of precedence. For more information, see [Grouping Terms Within a Query](#).
2. **AND** and **NOT** – left-to-right precedence is used in case of multiple operators.
3. **OR** – left-to-right precedence is used in case of multiple operators.

Primo's search engine uses a sophisticated algorithm that expands and alters queries so that the results are relevant to the user's search. Although operators provide greater control over the search, the full search string is not treated as a phrase and search enhancements (such as the inflection of a phrase based on correlation statistics) are not applied to the full query when operators are used. This means that the following queries are treated differently and may return different results even though they appear to be identical:

- **honey bee communication** – Primo treats the entire query as an phrase and returns results in which all of the words are in close proximity.

- **honey bee AND communication** – Primo treats **honey bee** and **communication** as separate phrases and returns results in which the phrase **communication** may not be in close proximity with the words in the other phrase.

For information on specifying exact phrases, see [Searching for a Phrase](#).
To become familiar with the operators and get the best results from your searches, refer to the following sections:

- Searching for a Phrase
- Searching for Any Specified Words or Phrases
- Excluding Words or Phrases
- Searching Using Wildcard Characters
- Grouping Terms Within a Query
- Selecting Your Search Scope
- Using the Primo Central Search Scope

### Searching for a Phrase

To search for an exact phrase, type quotation marks around the phrase. You can combine both words and phrases in your search.

#### Note

- If you do not enclose the phrase with quotation marks, the system will find items that contain the individual words in the phrase, regardless of whether these words are located next to each other in the order specified.
- If a comma is used to separate words in a list, the comma must be followed by a space. Otherwise, the system will consider the comma to be part of the word and return fewer results than expected.

For example, to search for global warming as one term, type the following in the search box:

```
global warming
```

### Searching for Any Specified Words or Phrases

You can search for items that contain at least one of the words or phrases you type in the Search box. To do so, type **OR** between the words or phrases.
For example, to search for items with the word **Irish** or the word **Celtic**, type the following in the search box:

```
Irish OR celtic
```

**Note**

If you search for words or phrases without specifying **OR** or **NOT**, Primo assumes that you are searching for all the specified words or phrases.

For example, to search for items with the word **Irish** or the word **Celtic**, type the following in the search box:

```
celtic NOT irish
```

**Note**

To use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) within search phrases, you must enter them in uppercase letters. Otherwise, Primo removes them and performs a simple search that includes all search phrases.

**Excluding Words or Phrases**

You can exclude items that contain specific words or phrases. To do so, type **NOT** and then type the word or phrase to exclude.

**Note**

If you search for words or phrases without specifying **OR** or **NOT**, Primo assumes that you are searching for all of the specified words or phrases.

For example, to search for items with the word **Celtic** and exclude any of these items with the word **Irish**, type the following in the search box:

```
celtic NOT irish
```

**Note**

If parentheses are not used for a query that contains multiple operators, it is recommended that you use the **NOT** operator last to ensure that results are excluded from the entire query. For example: **cycling AND safety NOT helmet**. If it is necessary to place the **NOT** operator elsewhere, make sure that you enclose the operation with parentheses. For example: **(cycling NOT safety) OR helmet**.

**Searching Using Wildcard Characters**

You can include the following wildcard characters in your searches:

- **?**—enter a question mark to perform a single character wildcard search. For example, type **wom?n** to search for records that contain the strings **woman**, **women**, and so forth.

- *****—enter an asterisk to perform a multiple character wildcard search. For example, type **cultur*** to search for records...
that contain strings, such as culture, cultural, and culturally.

Note
The system ignores wildcard characters placed at the beginning of search terms. For example, the system treats the search terms ?aying and *aying as if you had searched for aying.

Grouping Terms Within a Query
You can use parentheses to group terms to clarify the order of multiple operators specified in a query.

Example 1: The following query searches for records that contain Shakespeare and either tragedy or sonnet:

(Shakespeare AND (tragedy OR sonnet))

When using more than one operator, it is strongly recommended to use parentheses to clarify precedence. For example, if no parentheses are specified in the above query, Primo will apply the precedence rules (see precedence rules) and instead group the words Shakespeare and tragedy as follows:

(Shakespeare AND tragedy) OR sonnet

Note
After the results are returned, Primo will display the altered query in the search box so that you can decide whether to modify and re-execute your query to get expected results.

Example 2: The following query searches for records that contain either Irish or Celtic and do not contain Gaelic:

(Irish OR Celtic) NOT Gaelic

If no parentheses are specified in the above query, Primo will apply the precedence rules and instead group the words Celtic and Gaelic as follows:

Irish OR (Celtic NOT Gaelic)

Selecting Your Search Scope
The search scope defines where the system should perform the search. A default search scope is predefined based on your login, usually corresponding to your major field of study or some other criteria set up by the institution. However, you can change the scope of your search by selecting a search scope from the drop-down list as shown in the following example.
The Selected Databases scope allows you to search remote databases that you have selected using the Find Databases feature. For information on selecting remote databases, see Selecting Databases.

Using the Primo Central Search Scope

Primo Central is a centralized search index that encompasses tens of millions of records of global or regional significance that are harvested from primary and secondary publishers and aggregators. To search from these resources, select the Primo Central search scope or a search scope that includes it.

If you want to receive results for Primo Central items that do not contain full text, select the Expand beyond library collections check box.