



Finding Information Online: A Beginner's Guide

KS2 COMPUTING

DIGITAL LITERACY

Ages 9-12 ⌚ 3 min read

What is a Search Engine?

A **search engine** is like a giant library assistant that lives inside your computer. When you type a question or topic into **Google**, **Bing**, or another search engine, it searches through billions of web pages to find the ones most likely to help you. The search engine uses special computer programs called **algorithms** to decide which pages are most useful.

Think of it like asking a librarian to find every book in the world about dinosaurs—except the search engine does it in less than a second!

How to Search Smartly

Finding good information starts with asking the right question. Instead of typing one word, try typing a **phrase** or a complete question. For example, "How do penguins stay warm?" will give you better results than just "penguins."

Use **specific words** related to what you need. If you're researching the **solar system**, search for "planets orbiting the Sun" rather than just "space." The more detailed your search, the better your results will be.

Checking if Information is Trustworthy

Not all information on the internet is correct or reliable. Before you believe something, check where it comes from. **Trusted websites** include educational sites (often ending in **.edu**), official government websites, and well-known news organisations.

Think of it like asking yourself: would you believe a fact from your teacher or from a random person on the street? Websites from experts and institutions are like your teacher—more trustworthy!

Look for **author information** and check when the page was last updated. If a website about current events hasn't been updated in **5 years**, it might be out of date. Always

compare information across **multiple sources** to make sure it's accurate.

Tips for Better Searching

Use **quotation marks** around exact phrases you're looking for. Search for "the water cycle" with quotes, and you'll find pages with those exact words together. You can also use words like "AND" and "NOT" to narrow your search. For example: "Ancient Egypt AND pyramids" will find pages about both topics.

Remember: the internet is a powerful tool, but it works best when you search carefully and think critically about what you find!