

When to use which search tool

When, in general terms, is it appropriate to use each of the tools?

Directories

- Best for browsing for general information or gaining an overview of what is available on the Web.
- Useful for searches of a general nature.
- Provide good information on popular topics, common organisations and current issues.

Suggested websites:

- [Yahoo](#)
- [Looksmart](#)

Search engines

- Best for using unique and detailed keywords, phrases and quotes in search.
- Will find information contained in the body of a webpage or document.
- Useful when a detailed or complex search is required.
- Useful when a wide range of responses to a specific search is required.

Suggested websites:

- [Google](#)
- [AltaVista](#)
- [Ask.com](#)

Metasearch engines

- Useful when in a hurry or if an overview is needed.
- Provide an overview of what may be available, but do not provide detail.
- Use for relatively simple searches (common topics with specific key words).

Suggested websites:

- [Surfwax](#)
- [Dogpile](#)
- [WebWombat](#) – Specialises in Australian content
- [Sensis](#) – Specialises in Australian content

Recommended resources

University Libraries 2005, *How To Choose a Search Engine or Directory*, Universities at Albany, <http://library.albany.edu/internet/choose.html>

How To Pick A Search Engine 2005, Virtual Chase, www.virtualchase.com/howto/engine.html