Search Operators

Boolean Operators

Boolean operators can be used as conjunctions to combine or exclude search terms in a search, resulting in more focused and productive results.

- Operators allowed: AND, OR, and NOT.
- Boolean operators must be typed in ALL CAPS.
- Type Boolean operators when searching text fields (All Fields, Title, Author, etc.).
- Select from the Boolean popup when searching AutoComplete fields (Keywords & Region/Country). See more help on this topic

AND
The AND operator is the default conjunction operator. AND finds records where both terms exist in the same record or the same field.

Example
To search for records that contain "population distribution" and "West Africa" type: "population
distribution" AND "West Africa".

Note: If multiple words are entered without a Boolean operator and are not enclosed with quotes, the default is AND between each word. For example, typing family planning searches for family AND planning (not family OR planning; not "family planning").

OR
The OR operator finds a record if either of the terms exist in a single record. This type of search typically retrieves more results than if you searched for one of the terms on its own.

Example
To search for records that contain either "population distribution" or geography or both terms, type: "population distribution" OR geography.

Note: If you want to search for the word 'or' in a phrase, such as 'black or white', you should type the phrase into the search box and enclose it in double quotes; for example, "black or white."

NOT
The NOT operator finds all records that contain the first search term but not the second. Use this operator with caution. It excludes the search word immediately following NOT.

Example
To search for records that contain the word paraprofessional but do not contain technician, type: paraprofessional NOT technician.

Note: The NOT operator cannot be used with just one term. For example, the following search will return no results: NOT technician.
Using parentheses with Boolean operators
You can use parentheses to specify the order in which POPLINE finds your search terms, terms in parentheses are searched first.

Example
If you want to find records that either contain the words "family planning" AND contain the words "youth*", "teen*", or "adolescen*" type: "family planning" AND ("youth* OR "teen*" OR "adolescen*")

Using Boolean Operators in Text Fields
When typing your search criteria into a text field, type the Boolean operator in all CAPs. The Advanced Search form will automatically highlight Boolean operators. See example below.

For complex searches using multiple operators and/or using parentheses to group search terms, this feature helps the user visualize how their search terms are combined and in which order the terms will be searched.

Note: You can combine multiple Boolean operators AND, OR, and NOT any way you like in text fields only.

Example:

Using Boolean Operators in AutoComplete Fields (Keywords and Region/Country)

The Keyword and Region/Country fields utilize an AutoComplete or pop-up box to help you discover terms/phrases that can be search in that field. Once you begin typing your search term into the Keyword or Region/Country field:

- Select the term you wish to add from the index.
- The Boolean popup will appear.
- Select a Boolean operator (AND, OR, NOT).
- The Boolean popup will disappear allowing you to type your next term.
- Once you are finished adding search terms, hit the space bar to remove the Boolean popup from the search field. Note: If you selected a Boolean after your last search term, you can back space to remove.
• Click anywhere in the search box and the Boolean popup will reappear.
• To change an operator, click on an existing Boolean and the Boolean popup will reappear over that operator.
• To remove a search term, click on the X to the left of the term.

Note: there can be only one Boolean operator type combining terms in Keywords and Region/Country. To use multiple Boolean types, add another field.

Example:

![Search Group Example](image)

**Wildcard Searches**

To perform a single character wildcard search use the ? symbol. For example, to search for "woman" or "women" you can use the search: wom?n.

Note: You cannot use a * or ? symbol as the first character of a search.

To perform a multiple character (0 or more) wildcard search use the * symbol. You must type at least the first three characters of the word. For example, to search for report, reporting, reports, or reporter, you can type: report*

Note: You cannot use wildcards in Advanced Search fields that have the autocomplete feature, such as Keyword or Country/Region.

**Proximity**

Use the tilde ~ symbol to specify that search words appear within a specified number, or fewer, of intervening words.

For example, searching hiv prevalence ~3 will find the phrases: prevalence of HIV, HIV prevalence, and HIV infection prevalence.

Note: For proximity searches, exact matches are proximity zero, and word transpositions are proximity 1.