

# Database Searching – Cheatsheet

## Searching Methods

Terms & Connectors	Natural Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also called “Boolean” searching</li> <li>• Very precise</li> <li>• Keywords connected by the logical operators such as AND, OR and NOT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closer to a Google-style search</li> <li>• Less precise</li> <li>• Search by entering keywords, phrases or questions</li> </ul>

### How to design an effective Terms & Connectors search:

- Step 1: Gather Enough Information  
 Step 2: Frame and Articulate the Issue  
 Step 3: Determine Key Search Terms  
 Step 4: Add Alternate Terms  
 Step 5: Determine Relationships between Terms  
 Step 6: Use Fields/Segments to Add Precision  
 Step 7: Use Advanced Boolean Features

## Terms & Connectors

Lexis	Westlaw
<i>Connectors by Priority</i> 1. OR 2. Proximity connectors: W/n, W/s, W/p 3. AND 4. AND NOT	<i>Connectors by Priority</i> 1. OR (spaces between words indicate OR) 2. Proximity connectors: W/n, W/s, W/p 3. AND 4. BUT NOT
<i>Wildcards</i> Single character wildcard: * Root expander: !	<i>Wildcards</i> Single character wildcard: * Root expander: !
<i>Phrases</i> No quotes needed	<i>Phrases</i> Use quotes to indicate phrases

### The “OR” difference in Lexis and Westlaw

*Example – this is the same search:*

*Lexis:*

law school AND student OR college OR education W/5 loan

*Westlaw:*

“law school” AND student college education W/5 loan

### How to use wildcards in searches:

*wom\*n* will return both women and woman (single character wildcard)

*liab!* will return both liable and liability (root expander wildcard)