

A **search statement** is what you type into a library database. It is made up of **keywords**, combined using **Boolean Operators**: AND, OR, NOT. <sup>1</sup>

For example, to learn about the impact of **smartphones** on **society**, you might build your search statement as follows:

**AND** – all keywords or concepts must be found in your list of results

*smartphone AND society*

**OR** – any keyword may be found

*smartphone OR “mobile phone” OR “cell phone”*<sup>2</sup>

**Quote marks** find two or more words always together

*“mobile phone”*

**Truncation \*** captures any combination of letters to follow

*societ\**<sup>3</sup>

**Brackets ()** isolate a concept

*smartphone AND (societ\* OR cultur\*)*<sup>4</sup>

To end up with the following **search statement**:

*(smartphone OR “mobile phone” OR “cell phone”) AND (societ\* OR cultur\*)*<sup>5</sup>

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**NOT** – excludes keywords or concepts

*smartphone AND society NOT “cancer risk”*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some databases require that AND OR NOT be capitalized in order to function as operators, and so it is a good idea to always capitalize by default

<sup>2</sup> This is helpful to anticipate how different authors may use different words to refer to the same idea

<sup>3</sup> This will find *society, societies, societal*, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Brackets and quote marks are not required around independent keywords or concepts, like *smartphone* in this case

<sup>5</sup> Most databases have their own help guides with additional operators, including proximity, mentions, wildcard, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Although NOT is a powerful operator, you may accidentally exclude results of actual interest