

How can you search for a particular URL (if you know part but not all of the URL)? Many of the advanced search engines provide the capability to enter a search term and then indicate whether you want to make this search apply to title only, full-text, or URL. You would, of course, select the URL option.

How does the search engine rank the web pages it reports? This is a somewhat controversial issue. Some search engines receive payment from Internet advertisers for the privilege of having their pages reported early in the search list. Most search engines, though, report the web pages in order of the greater number of occurrences of the term. Google's patented PageRank system factors in not only the proximity of the terms, but also the number of times other users have accessed the web pages.

How can "taking apart the URL" help you locate the author's qualifications? Consider the following example. You enter "John Rawls" and "social safety net" in a Google search. You get a web page returned to you titled "Notes on 'A Theory of Justice.'" The web page contains some information you find useful, but you have no information about the author other than just the name Chilton. You notice from the URL that the web page comes from an .edu domain associated with something called d.umn, but you don't know what school this is, and you don't know whether the author is a professor or an undergraduate student. The URL is www.d.umn.edu/~schilton/3652/Readings/3652.Rawls.ATheoryOfJustice.html. Take apart the URL to discover more about the author. Click with your mouse up in the URL line and eliminate all of the end of the URL back to schilton; then press Enter. See whether you can find more information about the author. If the URL comes from an educational institution with which you are unfamiliar, eliminate all the end of the URL back to the part that ends in .edu; then press Enter. By clicking the button on the author's web page for "Vita", you can discover information about his background. You find that the author of the web page is Stephen Chilton, associate professor of political science at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and earned his Ph.D. from MIT—a good source. But some additional work is needed to determine his qualifications. It is essential that you find the person or group responsible for authoring the web page. It is NEVER a sufficient qualification that you found it on the Internet.

Google (www.google.com) is the best search engine overall for policy debate research. Other folks have discovered it as well: According to "Nielsen Netratings" of June 2007, Google is responsible for 56.3 percent of all search engine referrals worldwide. The next closest search engine is Yahoo! at 21.5 percent, followed by MSN Search (www.live.com) at 8.4 percent. What makes Google ("Go" "Ogle") so useful for debate research? Two factors: (1) It provides the most comprehensive search, and (2) It performs automatic proximity searching among the terms listed in the search box. Suppose, for example, you enter in the search box the following words: malaria sub-