BOOLEAN SEARCHES

A ‘HOW TO’ GUIDE

NOT

AND

OR

CUSTOMER TRAINING CENTER
INTRODUCTION

Searching through social media monitoring platforms can seem like a daunting task. With millions of posts, how can you be sure your searches are finding the right results? Searches that use boolean logic, otherwise known as ‘Boolean Search,’ are simple, yet effective ways to search through massive amounts of data for certain words or phrases.

Before we jump straight into teaching you how to search using boolean logic, it’s helpful to gain a quick understanding of a few key terms and ideas:

- Writing an effective search query helps define the quality and volume of your results.
- Using keywords and boolean operators such as AND, NOT, OR and NEAR, allows you to restrict or widen searches to find the most relevant results.
- Guide your boolean logic by using brackets (Think back to high school math class and how parenthesis guided your mathematical formulas).

EXAMPLE SEARCH QUERY

Search queries can include one or more of the following elements, depending on the scope or complexity of your search. The search query below shows examples of keywords, boolean operators and brackets.

```
("social media monitoring" OR "social media listening" OR smm) NOT "social media marketing"
```
KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS are the words that you are looking for in a search, based on the topic you are researching.

("social media monitoring" OR "social media listening" OR smm) NOT "social media marketing"

RULES

1. Keywords must always be in lower case.

2. If your keyword is a phrase (i.e., it contains a space), it must be enclosed within quotation marks, as shown above. Additionally, for non-Latin based languages, each keyword needs to be individually enclosed within quotation marks.

3. Synthesio supports a limited set of special characters (#, @, &, +, - and _) which can be used in the Boolean searches. Additional special characters should be replaced with a space (i.e., yes/no should be written as "yes no").

BOOLEAN OPERATORS

Boolean operators are words that provide a search engine with some criteria to use when searching a database. Used correctly in search queries, they will help to ensure that you retrieve the relevant data you are looking for from the billions of verbatim indexed within Synthesio's database.

THE MOST COMMONLY USED BOOLEAN OPERATORS ARE:

AND  OR  NOT  NEAR

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF BASIC RULES THAT NEED TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN USING OPERATORS:

1. Operators must always be written in UPPER CASE.

2. An operator cannot immediately precede/follow another operator (i.e., AND NOT).
**THIS IS HOW **AND** WORKS:**

AND means that **both keywords must be present**

The data retrieved by your search will be a subset of all verbatim containing the keyword X and all verbatim containing the keyword Y (i.e., x AND y).

When you search a database, **AND** can help narrow and refine your search to return the most relevant results.

**SEARCH QUERY**

- mobile

**SAMPLE RESULTS**

- Is touch ID secure enough to keep your iPhone safe? #mobile
- Enterprise Mobility and Mobile Device Management
- Get started building enterprise-grade mobile apps today. Download free trial now

**SEARCH QUERY**

- mobile AND "operating system"

**SAMPLE RESULTS**

- The #Mobile Operating System Battle Begins
- Why’s everyone tweeting about this new mobile operating system?
- Check out my new blog post on the leading proprietary mobile operating system
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**THIS IS HOW OR WORKS:**

OR means that **either or both keywords will be present**

As shown above, the data retrieved by your search will be verbatim that has the keywords X or Y or both X and Y (i.e., x OR y).

When you search a database, OR can help you if you want to get more results. Still need more results? Think of other keywords you can use to describe your topic, alternate spellings, hash-tags and singular/plural forms (i.e., desks OR chairs OR desk OR chair).

**SEARCH QUERY**

| desks | 1,007 RESULTS |

**SAMPLE RESULTS**

I'd do more in school if the desks were more comfortable.

Why can't we have these desks in school?

Ready to trade in desks for free-range learning? Take a look at what a desk-less classroom looks like

| desks OR chairs | 2,156 RESULTS |

**SAMPLE RESULTS**

I feel like everyone would enjoy school more if the desks/chairs were comfy

Take a seat: 8 dashing modern chairs.

I'm not clumsy. The floor just hates me, the tables and chairs are bullies, and the walls get in my way.
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**THIS IS HOW NOT WORKS:**

NOT means that **one keyword but NOT the other will be present**

As shown above, the results will include verbatim containing the keyword **Y**, but not verbatim containing the keyword **X**, even if **Y** is present (i.e., **y NOT x**).

When you search a database, **NOT** can help you refine your results and exclude irrelevant content.

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**SEARCH QUERY**

cars

**SAMPLE RESULTS**

More pre-owned Cars for sale!
Cheap Old Cars for Sale
Buy Used Cars On Sale: For information on where to find used cars for sale

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**SEARCH QUERY**

cars NOT "for sale"

**SAMPLE RESULTS**

"The cars we drive say a lot about us." What car defines **YOU**?
The Bikes vs. Cars campaign is up and running! Spread the word. Let’s show that **WE ARE MANY**!
The most amazing new science discoveries: flying cars are finally here!
THIS IS HOW **NEAR** WORKS:

NEAR means **two keywords are close to one another in proximity**, within 5 words by default.

**Need to be more specific?** Use a number from 1-9 to specify the maximum number of words between your two keywords, (i.e., *hybrid NEAR/3 car*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEARCH QUERY</th>
<th>SAMPLE RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hybrid <strong>AND</strong> car</td>
<td>A <strong>hybrid</strong> vehicle is a vehicle that uses two or more distinct power sources to move the vehicle. Advances in technology and lowered battery cost and higher capacity etc. developed in the <strong>car</strong> industry are already filtering into truck use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1,000 RESULTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hybrid <strong>NEAR</strong> car</td>
<td><strong>Hybrid</strong> technology, in today’s <strong>car</strong> market, has gained so much importance. A car that is hybrid essentially uses petrol <strong>AND</strong> an electric engine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>337 RESULTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DID YOU KNOW...**

Boolean logic dates back to 1854 and was first introduced by George Boole.
BRACKETS

Brackets are used in advanced searches to combine operators to improve search results.

EXAMPLES

(desks AND chairs) NOT (tables OR table)
(desks OR desk) NOT (chair OR chairs OR table OR tables)
(desks OR desk) AND (chair OR chairs) NOT (table OR tables)

SPECIAL CHARACTERS

Synthesio supports the use of selected special characters in your search queries. The supported special characters are #, @, &, +, - and _. Any keyword that contains one of these special characters must be enclosed within speech marks as shown in the examples below.

FOR EXAMPLE:

“prius+”
“@btsport”
“#dealoftheweek”

Please note that if your keyword is prius you will pick up mentions of both prius and prius+. So if you want to monitor the Prius exclusively (not the Prius+), then your query should look like the example below.

FOR EXAMPLE:

prius NOT “prius+”
TIPS FOR EFFICIENT BOOLEAN SEARCHES

Reduce the number of keywords where possible. The higher the number of keywords, the longer it takes the system to process. In the sample query below, ‘financial’ in the second keyword is redundant, as any mention of this keyword would already be returned by the first keyword.

FOR EXAMPLE:

financial OR “financial crisis”

When writing a query, always consider ways in which users might mention the topic you’re searching for. For example, new Twitter hash-tags originate and evolve constantly. Consider using them in your searches, where relevant.

FOR EXAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING IS OFTEN WRITTEN AS:

#socialmediamonitoring OR #smm OR “social media monitoring”

A good way to write a Boolean search for this example would be as follows

((“social media” OR socialmedia) NEAR/1 monitoring) OR smm

Please note that NEAR/1 means that there can be a maximum of 1 word between the keywords, regardless of the order in which they appear.

Visit the Synthesio Training Center for support resources and webinars.