Boolean Operators: And, Or, Not

Most databases and search engines support Boolean logic (Figure 1).

Boolean operators offer the searcher the ability to broaden or restrict a search, by connecting or limiting search terms. If a resource you are searching offers Boolean functionality, you may do the following:

- **Broaden the search using the “or” operator.** You are more likely to use this functionality in a search when you are aware of similar terms for a concept, e.g., “‘active transport’ or ‘sustainable transport.’”

  Example:
  
  `pedestrian OR bridge` will retrieve items that contain either `pedestrian` or `bridge`

- **Exclude certain terms using the NOT operator.**

  Example:
  
  `pedestrian NOT bridge` will retrieve items that contain the word `pedestrian`, excluding those that also have the word `bridge` in them

- **Most search engines allow more than one Boolean operator to be used in the same search.** Use parenthesis to control the order in which the search items are combined.

  Example:
  
  `(pedestrian OR walker) AND (bridge OR footbridge)` will retrieve items that either use `pedestrian` or `walker` in the same record as either `bridge` or `footbridge`