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:

Example:

pedestrian AND bridge will ONLY retrieve items that contain both words, but not limited to the phrase "*pedestrian bridge*"

- 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*
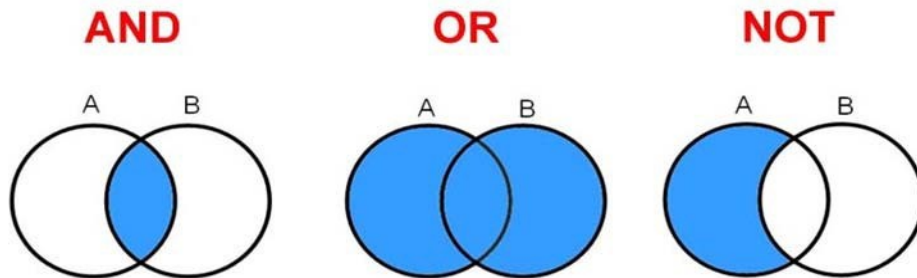

FIGURE 1 Boolean Logic

- Exclude certain terms using the NOT operator.

Example:

pedestrian NOT bridge will ONLY 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*