Web Search Engine FAQs

Feature	Alta Vista	Google

URL	http://www.altavista.com (Basic Interface)
	http://www.altavista.com/sites/search/adv
	    (Advanced Interface)
	http://www.altavista.com/sites/search/power
	    (Search Assistant)
		http://www.google.com
		http://www.google.com/advanced_search
		(Advanced Search)

Coverage	423 million pages (Search Engine Showdown 4/2001)	625 million pages (Search Engine Showdown 4/2001)
Stop Words	No.	Yes. (However, they are searchable by placing a + sign in front of the word)
Major Commands	Boolean (and, or, and not) Advanced Interface +, - , Boolean (AND, OR, AND NOT) Basic Interface	+ (to search stop words), -, OR
Nesting	Yes.	No.
Default Search	OR (Basic Interface) Interpreted as a Phrase (Advanced Interface)	And
Phrase Searching	Terms inside "quotation marks"	Yes, terms inside "quotation marks"
Truncation/Wildcard	Use * (0-5 character) Internal or end truncation * can be used to represent an entire word inside a phrase	No.
Case Sensitive	Yes.	No.

Search by Field	Many options, including:
	    Title:
	    Link:
	    Domain:
	    Host:
	    Additional Search Fields at
	    http://help.altavista.com/adv_search/syntax
		Yes, options include:
		    intitle:
		    site:
		    inurl:
		    link:
		    filetype:
		    Ticker: <stock information>

Proximity	near (proximity operator, 10 words in either direction) NEAR for basic interface	No.
Directory	LookSmart	Open Directory Project [http://directory.google.com]
Other Searches	News (content provided by Moreover), Image, MP3, and Video	Image Search [http://images.google.com] Google Groups, Usenet material [http://groups.google.com] Uncle Sam, U.S. government content [http://www.google.com/unclesam/)

Special Features	Ticker symbols provide direct links to stock quote, news, SEC filings	Translation
		    Telephone Search (U.S. Home and Business Numbers)
		    Maps
		    Web page cache
		    Dictionary Definitions
		    Similar Pages

Comments	If the Advanced Search interface is used, terms should be placed in the "sort by" box. If terms are not placed in this box, result sets return in completely random order. No relevancy ranking algorithm is applied. All pages are completely crawled up to 100 k of content. After that, any remaining content is not searchable. Up to 4 MB of links are crawled and indexed.	All pages are crawled up to 110 k of content. After that, any remaining content is not searchable. All pages in cache are also limited to 110 k. Only search engine to crawl and .pdf content searchable.

Northern Light	MSN Search	AllTheWeb
http://www.northernlight.com http://www.northernlight.com/power.html (Power/Advanced Interface) http://www.nlresearch.com (Research Interface)	http://search.msn.com http://search.msn.com/advanced.asp (Advanced Interface)	http://www.alltheweb.com http://www.alltheweb.com/advanced?t=all&c=web (Advanced Search)
364 million pages (as of 8/2001)	480 million pages (Search Engine Showdown 4/2001)	539 million pages (Search Engine Showdown 4/2001)
No.	Yes.	No.
+, - , Boolean (AND, OR, NOT)	+, - , Boolean (AND, OR, NOT)	+, - , Boolean (AND, OR, NOT)
Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
And	And	And
Yes, terms inside "quotation marks"	Yes, terms inside "quotation marks."	Yes, terms inside "quotation marks."
* (asterisk) can be used to replace multiple characters. % (percent) symbol is used to replace only one character.	No. (Stemming option available on Advanced Interface.)	No.
No.	Yes.	No.
Yes, options include: 　　url: 　　title: 　　pub: 　　company: (special collection only) 　　ticker: (some special collection only) 　　text:	Numerous fields are searchable using fill-in boxes and pull-down menus on the Advanced Search interface. Additionally, fielded searching can be achieved using special syntax. Here are a few examples: 　　title: 　　domain: 　　linkdomain:	Search by Field In addition to several fields available via pull-down menus on the advanced interface, specific syntax for many fields was introduced in July, 2001.
No.	No.	No.
No.	LookSmart	No.
News content (56 newswires) database updated in real-time Free to read for 2 weeks.	News Search (primarily MSNBC content)	url.tld:　　　　link.extension url.host:　　　　Additional information at normal.title:　　http://www.alltheweb.com/help/basic.html
Alerts (A free service. Results are returned via e-mail) Special Collection (Full-Text material from over 7,100 publications) Investext, Market Research, EIU content is also available. Materials are purchased as needed.	—	Picture Search MP3 Search Video Search Mobile Search
The automatic creation of the Northern Light's "custom folders" organizes content by subject, type, source, and language.	MSN uses an Inktomi database. According to Greg Notess, it is one of the largest available from an Inktomi partner. To identify other Inktomi partners visit http://www.inktomi.com/products/search/products/tryit.html.	Searching from the main interface will also run the search in the Picture, MP3, and Video databases. If results are found they are presented in a box on the results page.