

## **Smooth Operators:**

Slide 1: Title

Slide 2: Take a moment and think about how you find information for your research papers!

Slide 3: Do you use online search engines like Google? Or do you use library databases? Do you think about the search terms you've used and how you've typed them into the search box?

Slide 4: Sometimes you will not need anything more than a basic search strategy (like searching for movie times or the capital of Latvia), but other times you will need to use more advanced search techniques to find the best information for your research topic.

Slide 5: Using library databases for your research shouldn't be scary or overwhelming. In fact, you've probably already searched a database today. Don't think so? What about Amazon, Pinterest, iTunes? These are electronic collections of content that you can browse and search through to find what you want. If you keep that in mind, searching a database for information shouldn't seem too different.

Slide 6: An advanced search strategy starts by turning your research idea into a statement or a question. Let's say that you want to research social media usage in teenagers and its effects in their lives. Your research question could be, "Does social media affect the quality of teenagers' lives?" Or your research statement could be, "Social media causes anxiety and low self-esteem in teenagers."

Slide 7: Now that you've expressed your research idea as a statement or question, identify the three or four main ideas or keywords. For example, social media, anxiety, self-esteem, and teenagers can be the keywords for your research statement.

Slide 8: Once you have a list of keywords, brainstorm a list of synonyms or alternative words for every keyword. Try to think of words that are more discipline specific as well as words that may broaden or narrow down your research topic.

Slide 9: Now you're ready to combine your keywords with Boolean operators, which will help make sure you are getting the most relevant results for your research without spending hours staring at a computer screen.

Slide 10: The "AND" operator combines your keywords so that every search result will contain all of your keywords. It will help you connect different concepts or ideas together in order to end up with fewer search results.

Slide 11: Using "social media AND anxiety AND teenagers" as your search terms will find articles that are about social media, anxiety, and teenagers.

Slide 12: The “OR” operator combines your keywords so that every search result will contain at least one of your keywords. OR is useful when it doesn’t matter which keyword shows up in your search results.

Slide 13: Using “teenagers OR young adults” will find articles that describes teens as either teenagers or young adults.

Slide 14: To make sure your search is understood by the database, grouping your keywords and Boolean operators with parentheses can be helpful! Parentheses used in searches are similar to how they are used in mathematical equations.

Slide 15: For your research topic about social media usage in teenagers and its effects in their lives, you can search social media AND anxiety AND (teenagers OR young adults). The parentheses around teenagers and young adults tells the database to find articles about teenagers, social media, and anxiety as well as articles about young adults, social media, and anxiety.

Slide 16: How library databases understand your keywords depends on how you combine them, so use AND and OR with your keywords to become a Smooth Operator! Go to [libraries.ou.edu](http://libraries.ou.edu) for more information, tutorials, and resources.