

Name _____ Date _____

Investigating Search Engines and Directories

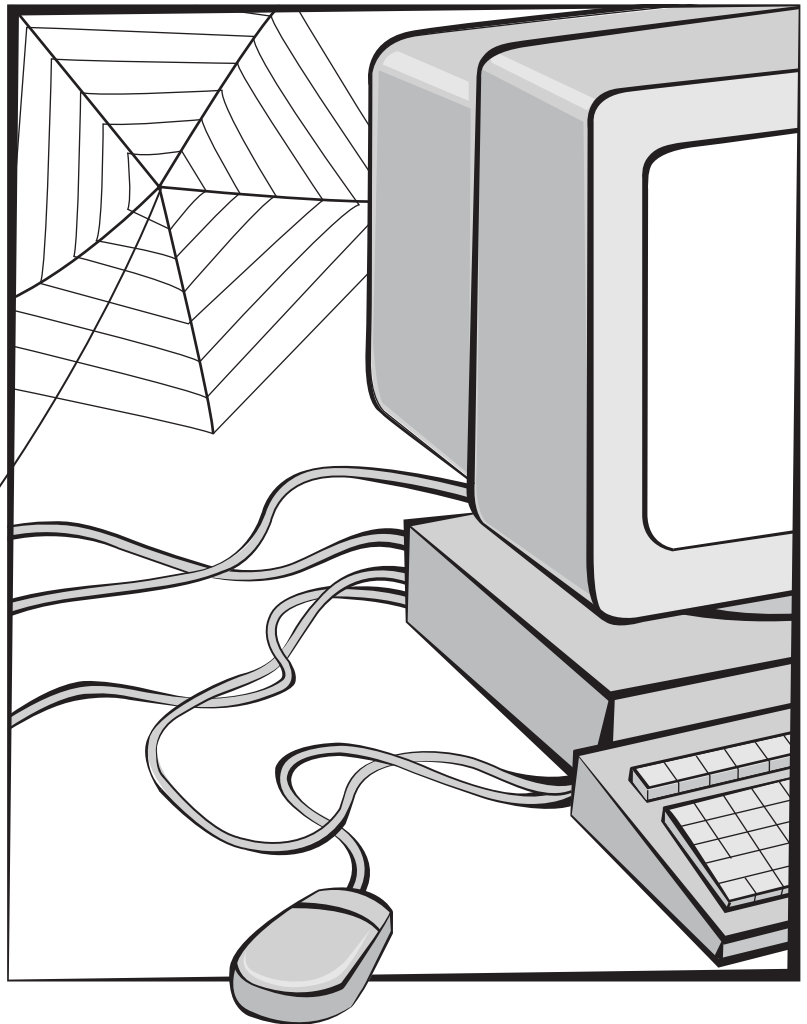
How does a **SEARCH ENGINE** work?

Search engines use a computer program called a **spider** to roam the World Wide Web exploring Web pages and their links. The spider collects information and then a second computer program **indexes** all the information. Each search engine's spider and index organizes Web pages a bit differently.

Search engines also have a third computer program that actually goes into the index to find **matches** between your keywords and Web pages.

The sites with the best matches are displayed first. Each search engine has a different way of identifying the best sites. This is why you are very likely to get different results from different search engines.

These three tasks are all done without any human involvement—so a huge number of sites are indexed quickly.



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How does a DIRECTORY work?

In a directory, **people**, not computers, put the index together. Editors evaluate Web sites and organize them into subject categories.

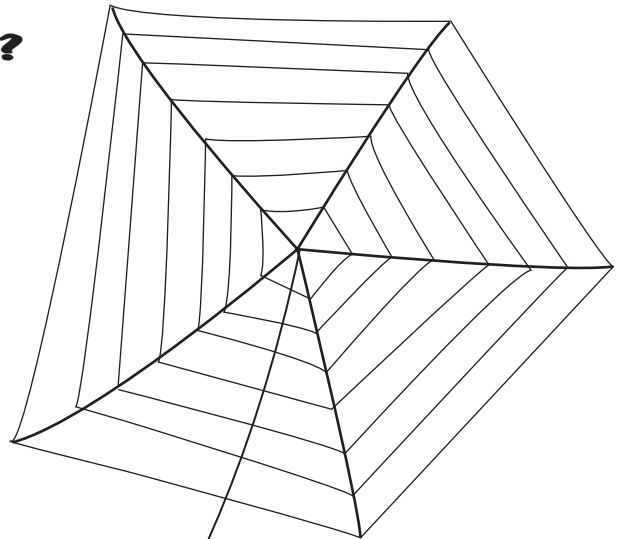
Because people have chosen them, the sites in directories may be of higher **quality**.

However, the number of sites in a directory is usually much smaller than in a search engine's index.

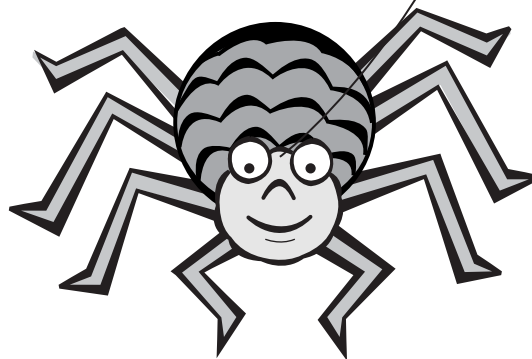
Many people use the term "search engine" to describe either a search engine or directory. And many search sites offer both services.

How does a META-SEARCH ENGINE work?

A meta-search engine sends your keywords to several search engines at the same time. The results from each search engine are organized and displayed on one page. This type of service is useful when your topic is very **narrow** and you want to search as many Web sites as possible.

**Be CyberSmart!**[®]

No one search engine, directory, or meta-search engine covers the entire Web. So, don't get stuck in a rut by using only one. Try them all.



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Search Site Name _____**1.** This site is generally known as a (check one):☐ Search engine ☐ Directory ☐ Meta-search engine**2.** What other kinds of information or activities are on the home page of this search site?

3. Try a quick search for *tandem bicycles*. What kinds of information are provided on the results page?

4. How can you submit questions or comments about the site?

Sum It Up

Make up a slogan to remember this site.

