

# Genealogy Research

Week 2

# Week 2

- Database Searching Basics –
- Applying Basic Concepts to Searching *Google*
- Searching other Free Genealogy Databases

# Now on with the Research

## Database Searching Basics

# Database Searching Basics

Based on:

*Google Your Family Tree:*

*Unlock the Hidden Power of Google*

by Daniel M. Lynch 2008

In the **REFERENCE** section of the Richland Place Library

# Two Important Search Concepts

## Recall:

- Finding everything relevant to your search

## Precision:

- Not finding anything irrelevant to your search

# Two Important Search Concepts

- These concepts are almost mutually exclusive.
- The more you maximize one you minimize the other.
- There is a continuum from one to the other.
- **Recall** ←-----→ **Precision**
- One is not “better” than the other.
- It depends on the purpose of your search.

# Boolean Logic to Steer Searches

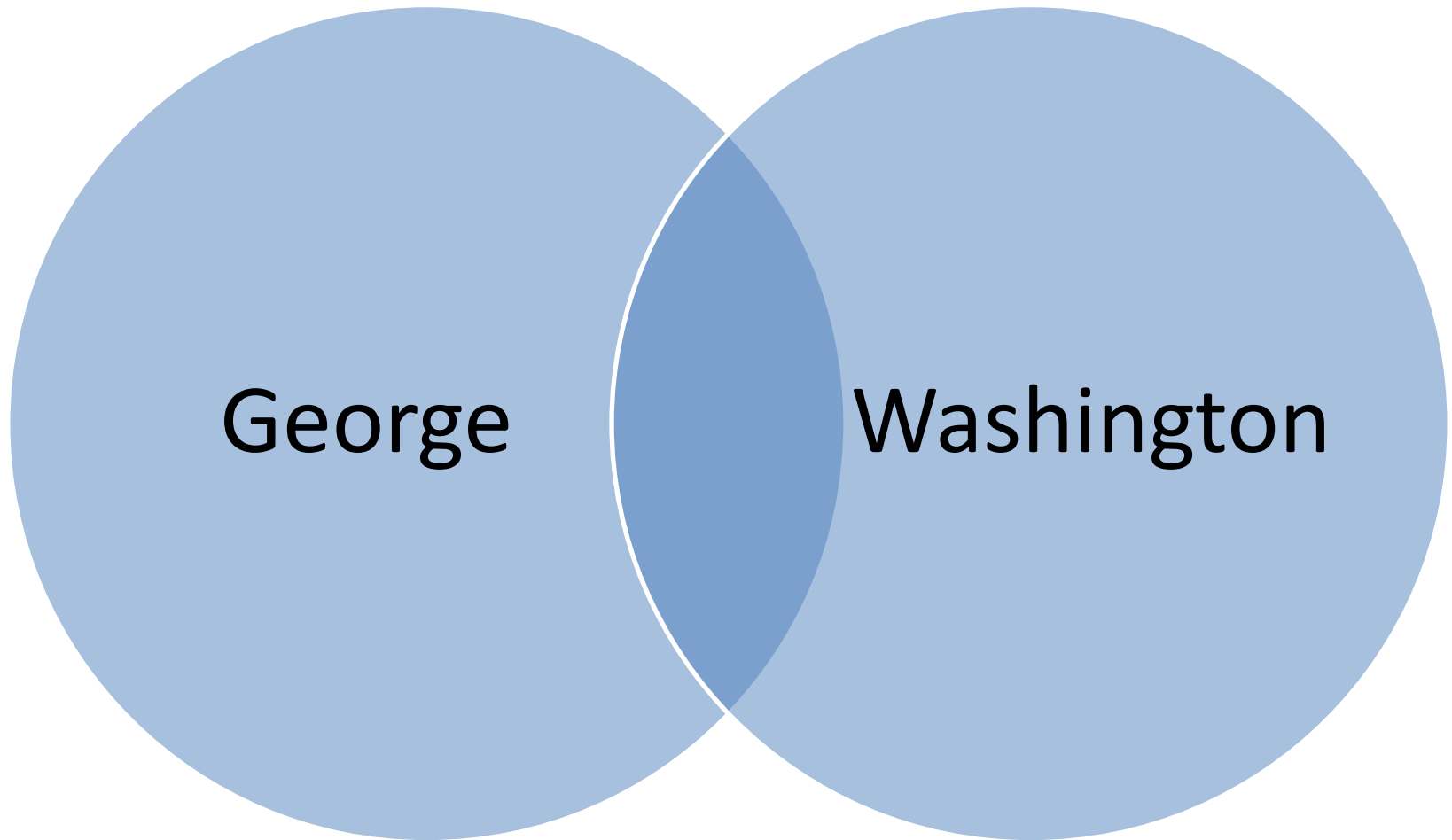
- Boolean Logic: **AND, OR, & NOT**
- **AND** reduces recall but increases precision. **All** terms “anded” together must be present. It is a way to narrow search results
- **OR** reduces precision but increases recall. **Any one** of the terms “ored” together must be present. It is a way to cast a wider net when you are not finding enough.

# Boolean Logic to Steer Searches

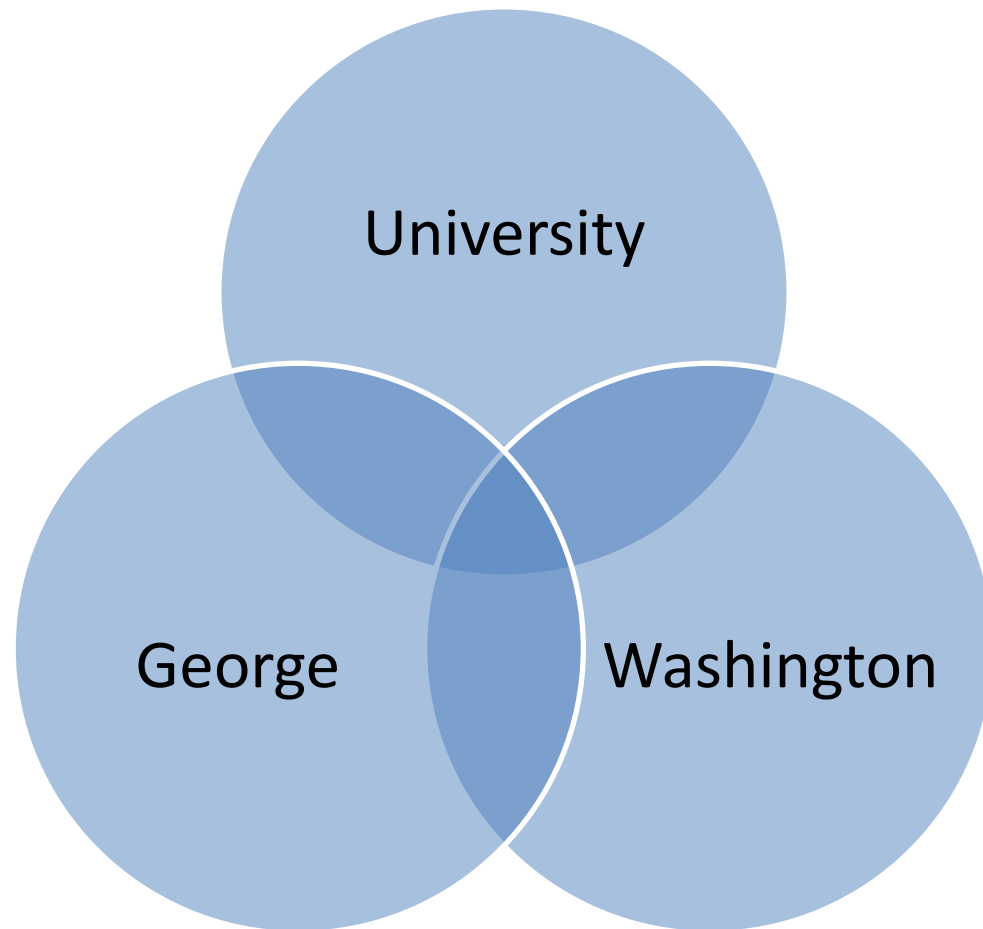
- **NOT** reduces your recall by eliminating false matches but it increases precision. A “**noted**” term can not be present.
- **Proximity** searching means that search terms must be next to or near each other to eliminate irrelevant matches and improve **precision**.
- **Wildcard** is substituted for anything to increase **recall**.



# Searching for “George” “Washington”



# Where are the results of George Washington University?



# Boolean Logic to Steer Searches

- Using these theoretical concepts to “Googlize” your research:
- Any words listed in a Google search must be present—at least in some form.
- Listing too many terms can lead to no results (too much **precision** and not enough **recall**).
- Listing too few terms can lead to too many results (too much **recall** but too little **precision**).

# Boolean Logic to Steer Searches

*Google* uses **AND** and **OR** as Boolean operators but they must be in all **CAPs** for *Google* to recognize them as Boolean Operators.

- The minus symbol is the Google command for **NOT**. There must be no space between –and the term being **noted**.
- ~ The tilde is the Google command to find similar words. Again there must be no space between ~ and the term being “**synonymed**”.

# Boolean Logic to Steer Searches

*Google uses*

- “**..**” to group words that must appear adjacent to each other. They can be an exact name or a phrase.
- \*** as a wildcard which means any word or phrase can appear at that spot in the document. For example a search for “Barack **\*** Obama” should return the following Barack Obama, Barack H. Obama and Barack Hussein Obama.

# Google Search Exercise

- See handout

# Free Sites Handout is online

[www.ddowell.com/class](http://www.ddowell.com/class)

