

# Distance Learning Systems

## Teaching Tips #12 — Beyond Google... The Invisible Web

Whatever subject you teach—regardless of the delivery method you use to reach your students—the World Wide Web can be a valuable resource. However, finding what you really need in that wealth of material can be a frustrating task. For many, the advent of Google appears to have solved this problem and rendered other general web search engines obsolete at the same time. But educators, researchers, and other academics often have needs which go beyond Google and its kin, into a realm known as the *invisible web*.

### Exposing the Invisible Web

The invisible web (or the *deep web*) is that mass of information available on the web that is not indexed by general web search tools like Google. Generally these resources—including databases, archives, and specialized search engines—are themselves indexed and searchable... if you can find them! Google is a fantastic index that should be the logical starting point for most web searching, but limiting yourself to what these traditional search engines are able and allowed to index is like assuming you know the contents of an entire department store based on perusing a sale flyer. In fact, Danny Sullivan, editor of The Search Engine Report [<http://searchenginewatch.com/>], writes that as little as 1/500<sup>th</sup> of the information available on the web is actually indexed by common search engines at all!

### Searching the Invisible Web

Although the landscape of web resources is in a constant state of flux, there are a few useful starting points for moving beyond the simple keyword search (in truth, even general keyword searching is not as simple as you might think, a topic for a future teaching tip). These sites will allow you to locate relevant sites and/or search them directly:

- The Invisible Web – <http://www.invisibleweb.com/>
- CompletePlanet – <http://www.completeplanet.com/>
- Librarian's Index to the Internet – <http://lii.org/>
- InfoMine – <http://infomine.ucr.edu/>
- Direct Search – <http://www.freepint.com/gary/direct.htm>

### UAF Databases

Many of these deep resources are free for everyone... however, some carry a substantial access fee. Fortunately, the Rasmuson Library and the State of Alaska have made a number of stellar fee-based archives and indexes available at no charge to members the UAF community. Explore these at:

- Rasmuson Library Online Databases - <http://www.uaf.edu/library/onlinedatabases/>
- Databases for Alaskans - <http://www.uaf.edu/library/dfa/index.html>

### Going Further

For additional information, including more links to search engines, directories, and articles about accessing and searching the invisible web, check out our web resources at: <http://distance.uaf.edu/dls/resources/tt/invisiweb/>.

For more Teaching Tips and other Distance Education information, please visit the new and enhanced Center for Distance Education Distance Learning Systems website at:

<http://distance.uaf.edu/dls/>