



Chronicling America Search Strategy Video Transcript

Any vs. All vs. Phrase Searching – S.S. Sultana Disaster

Background

In collaboration with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress, the National Digital Newspaper Program in Ohio developed and produced a series of video tutorials to teach users advanced search strategies and highlight interesting topics in Chronicling America. These build on the search skills demonstrated in the Using Chronicling America Podcast Series.

About Any vs. All vs. Phrase Searching – S.S. Sultana Disaster

Description	If your search in Chronicling America is receiving too many or irrelevant results, one strategy to improve your search results is to combine search terms. This video will show why it is useful to use multiple search terms and the difference between the any of the words , all of the words , and with the phrase search options available through Chronicling America's Advanced Search feature.
Hosts	Jenni Salamon
Duration	3:50
URL	http://www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/resources/tutorials

0:01	Hi, my name is Jenni Salamon and I work on the National Digital Newspaper Program in Ohio at the Ohio Historical Society. Today, I am going to show you an advanced search technique for the Library of Congress's Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers website. This is a great resource for historical research because newspapers covered a wide range of topics. I'm going to show you how to find information on a topic related to transportation in this screencast: specifically, the S.S. Sultana tragedy of 1865.
0:30	The S.S. Sultana was a steamship that exploded on the Mississippi River just north of Memphis, Tennessee, on April 27, 1865. Some estimate that over 1,700 people died—many of whom were Union soldiers on their way back home after fighting in the Civil War. Let's go to the newspapers and see what we can learn about the S.S. Sultana.
0:49	With over five million newspaper pages, Chronicling America can be overwhelming to search so it is important to use search strategies that will eliminate irrelevant results from the beginning. One way to do this is by combining search terms. Let's try it out.
1:02	First, we'll search <i>Sultana</i> using the basic search option on the front page. We're only using one word for this search to show why it's useful to combine multiple words into one search.
1:12	As you can see, we received 21,323 results! I performed these searches ahead of time and know that none of the results on the first page are accurate—although the word <i>Sultana</i> does appear on these pages, none of the articles are about the steamship. What we did find was information about female sultans and animals, among some other items.



1:31	Let's combine <i>Sultana</i> with another search term—there are several terms you could choose, such as <i>reunion</i> , <i>boat</i> , <i>survivor</i> or <i>explosion</i> , but let's use <i>disaster</i> . And although you can combine your search terms using the Basic Search right here, we're going to open up the Advanced Search by clicking on the gray tab so we can determine the best way to combine our words.
1:51	As you can see, there are quite a few limits to choose from here, but we're going to focus on the first three search boxes at the bottom, with any of the words , with all of the words and with the phrase . Let's clear out our previous search and type in <i>Sultana disaster</i> in the first search box: any of the words .
2:08	This time we received over 300,000 results. This search finds pages that have the word <i>Sultana</i> , the word <i>disaster</i> and both words. On the first page, only half of our results are relevant.
2:21	Let's go back to the Advanced Search and move our search terms over to the all words search box.
2:27	This time we received just under 1,400 results. This returns only pages on which both words are present. 14 of our first 20 results are relevant. Some results are not relevant because <i>Sultana</i> and <i>disaster</i> are in two separate articles on the page—one might be about a female sultan and the other might be about another disaster.
2:47	Let's go back to the Advanced Search one last time and search this as a phrase.
2:54	This time we received 99 results. All of them on the first page are relevant. This search found pages on which <i>Sultana disaster</i> were side-by-side and in the exact order that we typed them, as you can see here.
3:10	The best search strategies were the all word and the phrase search. We have fewer results to look through and more of them are relevant. If you're doing your own searches on <i>Chronicling America</i> and are receiving too many or inaccurate results, think about other terms to add to your search and how you can combine them so that you can more easily find the information that you are looking for.
3:28	Do you want to learn more about the S.S. <i>Sultana</i> or other topics covered by America's historic newspapers? Try your own searches— <i>Chronicling America</i> is freely available, and more newspaper pages are added on a regular basis.
3:40	Visit the Ohio Digital Newspaper Portal to view additional resources such as Subject Guides and the Using <i>Chronicling America</i> Podcast Series. Thank you for viewing my screencast!