

Bully Boolean

By William Powell

Photo by Eyewire

Power users may be familiar with the system of Boolean operators for finding specific bits of information quickly on the Web or in large databases. But for those of you who aren't, it's a form of logic created by distinguished 19th-century mathematician George Boole.

Boolean logic uses the operators AND, OR, and NOT to expand, contract, or winnow out what's being considered. It's fascinating stuff. In

fact, it's at the heart of the workings of your computer.

As for Internet users, when Boolean logic is used with browsers that still recognize it, it's a useful tool that lets you search the Net for such things as cheese without the Whiz—though you'd be missing out if you did

◀» www.cheezwhiz.com.

If logic and Victorian-era mathematics put you off (or if your interest is piqued ▶) [The Victorian Web](#)



Surf Shorts

Clark Aldrich

Co-founder, Simulearn, a Norwalk, Connecticut-based company focused on advanced computer simulations for corporate training.

🔗 www.simulearn.net

The Zen of Surfing. We never should assume that the strengths and weaknesses of the Internet are equivalent to the strengths and weaknesses of either computers or e-learning. Some applications (such as Word and PowerPoint) work better installed at the desktop.

Favorite Websites

🔗 www.gamasutra.com

A game development site that profiles developers and techniques. The site had a great article last month on the potential of PDAs as simulation deployment platforms.

🔗 www.cantrip.org/gatto.html

I go to the essay "The Six-Lesson Schoolteacher" by John Taylor Gatto, New York State Teacher of the Year, 1991, about once a week. It's the reason I do what I do. It may make you cry.

🔗 www.doonesbury.com/strip/dailydose/index.htm

Doonesbury has replaced *Dilbert* as the strip I read first thing in the morning. I don't read *Dilbert*

🔗 www.dilbert.com/comics/dilbert/archive until the afternoon.

🔗 www.google.com

My favorite place on the Web. I find new sites constantly that have fresh perspectives on e-learning. I access Google through the downloadable toolbar, which I recommend to everyone.

@ WORK

<http://65.107.211.206/victorian/victov.html>) there's an easier and more reliable way to ramp up your Internet search.

Here's how it works. Instead of AND, OR, and NOT, use +, -, and ". Consider it addition, subtraction, and multiplication. For example, if you want to look up learning but not e-learning, you type, "learning - e-learning," placing the operator directly before the term you want to subtract.

Placing terms within quotation marks groups those terms in the order they were entered and creates a search for that string of terms, producing the product of your entry. As for the + operator, most search engines, such as the popular Google, look up all words regardless, so quotemarks aren't always necessary. However, common words such as "where" are overlooked at Google and do require the + operator to add them to your search.

But a little Boolean still goes a long way. The OR operator is recognized by nearly every search engine and is useful for searches when you're not sure just what you're looking for. If you're more determined, put the search terms in quotation marks: The engine will deliver the most pointed results.

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@Work covers Internet technology trends, news, and tips. Send comments, questions, and items of interest to atwork@astd.org.

UpData

87: percentage of business users that check their email six times or more a day

49: minutes the average business user spends managing his email account

42: percentage of users that check their email while on vacation

🔗 [Source/Gartner](#)

BlackBerry Ripens

They're not new, but away from Wall Street and Silicon Valley, BlackBerrys are still associated with jam rather than email. The palm-sized email device, with its built-in QWERTY keyboard, just hasn't reached the same popularity with casual consumers as the cellphone and PDA.

That could be changing. Research In Motion www.rim.com the Canadian-based creator of BlackBerry, still impresses industry analysts with its resolve to increase sales and strengthen its hold on the corporate market. But new competition from the likes of Motorola and Palm, and the expanding voice and data networks (2.5G), may mean a sweeter berry for all.

RIM has steadily increased its subscribers to nearly 250,000 in more than 12,000 compa-

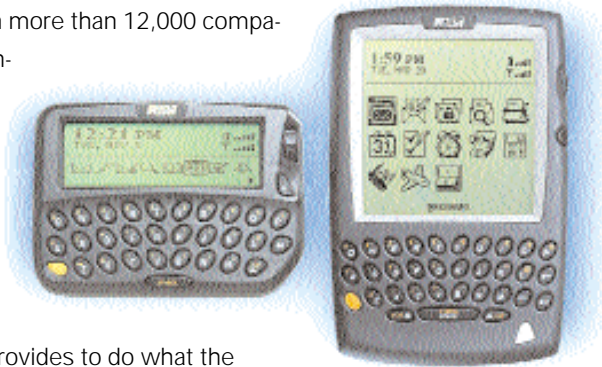
nies, despite a recent downturn in sales of handheld wireless devices. And while the competition aims to take advantage of 2.5G and the always-on email feature of the BlackBerry, RIM is seizing

the opportunity that 2.5G provides to do what the competition does best: voice and personal management.

A recent agreement between RIM and VoiceStream www.voicestream.com who will now become a BlackBerry reseller, lays the groundwork for a new generation of voice-enabled BlackBerry devices. These ripened BlackBerrys will run on VoiceStream's GSM/GPRS network, instead of RIM's current, less-advanced pager network, and offer all of the advantages of wireless voice communication.

In addition, RIM has partnered with AvantGo www.avantgo.com and Neomar www.neomar.com to offer a calendar application, which can be updated instantly, wirelessly.

BlackBerry is already shipping GSM-enabled devices in Europe. The calendar application has been available for months. Expect to see more people huddled over their BlackBerrys—typing with their thumbs or talking to the home office—in the United States later this year.



Notable and Quotable

"I...predict that by the 2003 holiday season, a solid majority of all electronic devices, including television sets and stereos, will come with Internet connections...."

Tony Perkins
columnist
Redherring.com

"Terrorism isn't going to stop technology. It's going to tweak its direction."

Joel Mokyr
professor
Northwestern University
(*New York Times*, "A Time Out for Technophilia," November 18, 2001)