

http://www.goalexandria.com/v7Docs/index.php/Search_Strings

Search Strings

How do you do boolean searches in Alexandria Search? How would you set a Slideshow for books about China published in the last 2 years? How might you create an Explore button for Christmas *books* only?

The answer to all of these is Search Strings.

Interpreting Search Strings

Alexandria Researcher supports advanced searching using ‘Search Strings’, which are simply terms that have been specially formatted. For this example, let’s look at the string we could use for that Christmas Books question.

((SubjectWords::christmas)&&(Medium::Book))

Before thinking this might as well be another language, look at it this way: it’s an AND search, where the terms have been encased in parentheses. We don’t exactly have to solve for X, just understand the parts of the equation.

First, the whole thing is in parentheses. This identifies it as a search string. The different boolean parts are in their own parentheses, and separated by whatever **boolean term** you need. For AND searches, this is the double ampersand &&.

OR searches are the two vertical lines ||.

AND NOT searches are an ampersand with a minus symbol &-.

Ranges use the double hyphen -- (this can be hard in a text editor if your computer auto corrects it to an m-dash), and quotation marks indicate an *exact* match—for example, the double hyphen is a range in search strings, but it’s also used for subfields in subject headings. So if you are doing something like “Basketball -- Tournaments -- United States” you will want to put quotes around it.

Let's look at this part of the string now:
(SubjectWords::christmas)

This is simply the *type* of term, and the term; in this case it's looking for the word 'Christmas' in the Subject fields. The type and the term are separated by double colon.

Note: These are not case sensitive, and to use this search term by itself you would need to enclose it in two parentheses.

((subjectwords::south america))

So what can you deduce from this second part of the string?
(Medium::Book)

I'm sure you've guessed it—this is looking at the Medium field for the term 'book'. This is an exact match on the term 'book' (although again not case-sensitive).

Building Your Search String

Think of a search string you might use, and we'll look at putting it together.

Got one? I'm going to make a search string for books written in the last 3 years that have a subject of 'Dystopias'.

Your best friend for a while is going to be the Support Center article for Search Strings.

http://www.goalexandria.com/v7Docs/index.php/Search_Strings

Search the page for what you need, in this case I want 'publication year' or 'year'. Then I can just copy that example and make changes.

((year::2013--2016))

This term uses ranges, so if I'm building it in a text editor I have to be careful to maintain the double-hyphen.

I already know the other one is SubjectWords so I think we can build it from here.

Start with the search string parenthesis, the first term with its parentheses, and join the two terms with your boolean modifier, in this case &&. Another parenthesis, then type in SubjectWords-colon-colon, and follow it with the search term in this case 'dystopias'. Close the second term, and end with the parenthesis closing the whole search string.

((year::2013--2016)&&(SubjectWords::dystopias))

Let's try this in Search and see what comes up.

It works! Now we can use this search string for our Explore Button or Slideshow or wherever we need it. For this example let's do a Slideshow. Copy the string.

From Tools, open Preferences. Go to the Researcher area, and choose Slideshow; in the Slideshow Search Term field, paste (or type) your search string.

Save, and View the Slideshow. Perfect!

If you are adding an Explore button, then from Tools, Explore Builder, find your pane, and add a button that Performs a Search.

Conclusion

Just remember the basic form **((type::term))**, or use the Support Center article, and you can build your advanced searches with search strings.

If you need any assistance or want to learn more, call our Customer Support at 1.800.347.4942.