What is the Difference between a Database Search and an Internet Search?

Database Search

Databases are massive collections of data which allow for retrieval of the data. Library databases consist primarily of indexes, abstracts, and full-text material. They are **collections of articles** from newspapers, magazines and journals and electronic reference sources. In many cases, the material provided through these services had previously been available in print form. Vendors provide the service of collecting the material and developing software that searches and delivers the information to the subscriber. Databases include searchable key fields, including titles, introductory text, authors, and subject terms. Access to these materials electronically greatly expands and enhances their usefulness. There is a subscription fee paid to the vendor to provide their service. As a TCC student, you have free access to the databases to which the college subscribes. Databases are selected for the quality and variety of resources they offer and are accessed using the Internet.

Examples:

LexisNexis Academic More than 6,000 publications and more than 75 million articles from newspapers, magazines, trade journals, newsletters, radio transcripts, etc.

SIRS-Articles selected from around 1,500 newspapers, magazines, journals, and government publications. Graphics, including charts, maps, diagrams, and drawings, are available with many of the articles.

Internet Search

The Internet is not information organized into searchable fields. However, there are search engine programs that act as indexes for the Internet. Search engines attempt to **locate web pages** with desired information by searching for keywords in which a user specifies. The method for finding this information is usually done by maintaining indices of Web resources that can be queried for the keywords entered by the user. These lists are either built from specific resource lists or created by Web programs, with insect names like bots, spiders, crawlers, and worms. More and more search engines provide search directories. After locating web pages, the web pages are arranged by subjects. Instead of searching with keywords an Internet user can go to a directory and click on the subject they want to see.

Example: About.com, Yahoo.com, Google.com, AltaVista.com, NorthernLight.com

Note: Different search engines are better for different topics. Also, search engines compete for bragging rights to number of pages indexed and how much of a page is indexed. You should try more than one and compare your results. For more information on search engines, view our subject guide on TCC's Searching the Internet Subject Guide http://www.tcc.edu/lrc/guides/search.htm