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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to evaluate five search engines, namely, AltaVista, Excite, Hotbot, Lycos, and Infoseek. These were evaluated in terms of their search features (which composed of composition of web indexes, feature and search capabilities, and result display) and retrieval performances.

The research method used was a survey technique. The search engines evaluation form was used for collecting data. Seven queries in the field of Library and Information Science drawn from real reference questions handled by the librarians at Chulalongkorn University's Main Library were used. The first twenty results of each query from each search engine was evauated and compared in term of the precision. Descriptive statistics including percentage and mean were used.

Every search engine supported both search formats: simple search and advanced search, and the search techniques that were boolean search, word search, phrase search. The format of search engine result display performed by every search engine were relevancy ranking, summary of contents, duplicate detection and meta-tag support.

The effectiveness of search results using the seven queries in Library and Information Science have been evaluated by using precision method. The results revealed that AltaVista obtained the highest precision score ($P=16.90$), followed by Excite ($P=13.81$), Infoseek ($P=11.43$), Hotbot ($P=8.33$) and Lycos ($P=6.67$) respectively.