

Chapter 4

Searching Basics

The main job of the PITA Retrieval Program is to search for and find information from one or more selected books.

Although the PITA Retrieval Program finds data quickly, the speed of retrieval can be optimized by executing intelligent search expressions.

Intelligent search expressions involve writing complex search expressions that best identify what you are looking for, using more than one field in the search and avoiding global search fields, except in certain situations.

In this chapter you will learn how to:

- Select a book to search
- Use the "Word Search" dialog box
- Perform a simple search.

Effectively searching for data

Generally, there are three types of LOIS users:

- Those who have used on-line databases
- Those who have used other CD-based databases
- Those who have never searched a database before.

If you have used on-line databases, you will find that although time is not a constraint to finding data with PITA, there are methods to more effectively use your time.

If you have never searched a legal database before, PITA gives you easy-to-use tools to find the data you need without being overwhelmed by the great amount of data available.

Searching the LOIS databases requires using a series of dialog boxes where you will choose books or documents and type in search parameters.

Using the information you have input, the PITA Retrieval Program retrieves the data it finds and displays it in windows you can view, move the information to your YellowPad, print or save.

Selecting the books to search

The first dialog box displayed when you open LOIS is "Select Books to Search." In this dialog box, you choose one or more law books to search.

The "Select Books to Search" dialog box is displayed in Figure 5.

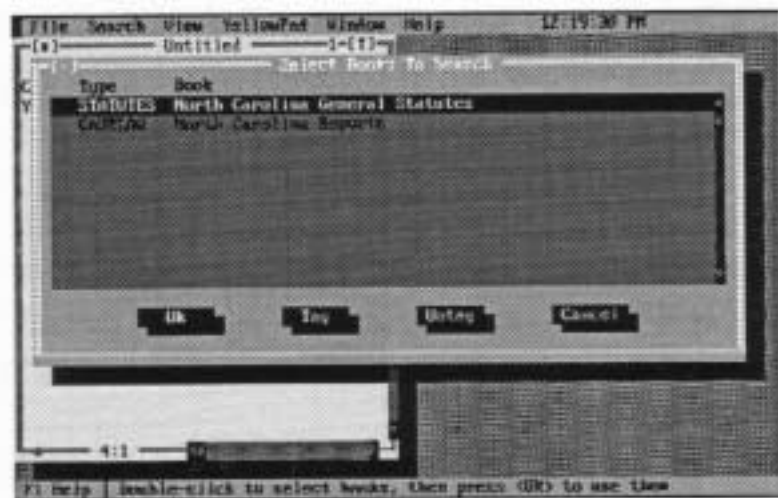


Figure 5: Select Books to Search dialog box

To select a book to use in the search, double-click on the name of the book you want to search. An asterisk displayed to the left of the book description indicates it will be used in the search.

There are two other ways to select a book: press the arrow keys to highlight a book description and:

- Click the Tag button, or
- Press the space bar.

Deselecting a book is similar to selecting one. For instance, double-clicking on a selected book will deselect it. Highlighting a selected book and clicking the "Untag" button or pressing the space bar will also deselect it.

Clicking the "OK" button will activate the search, based on the books you have selected.

If you have clicked the "OK" button, but selected no books to search, the first book in the list will be automatically selected and the "Word Search" dialog box will appear.

You may choose more than one book by tagging all the books you want to use.

If you click the "Cancel" button, the dialog box will disappear and you will see only the YellowPad on the screen.

Understanding the Word Search dialog box

The "Word Search" dialog box is the focal point of the PITA Retrieval Program. It is where you will build search expressions and execute the command to search the selected databases.

In addition, the "Word Search" dialog box lets you see a list of words in the database, as well as potential synonyms for search terms.

The "Word Search" dialog box is displayed in Figure 6 on page 22.

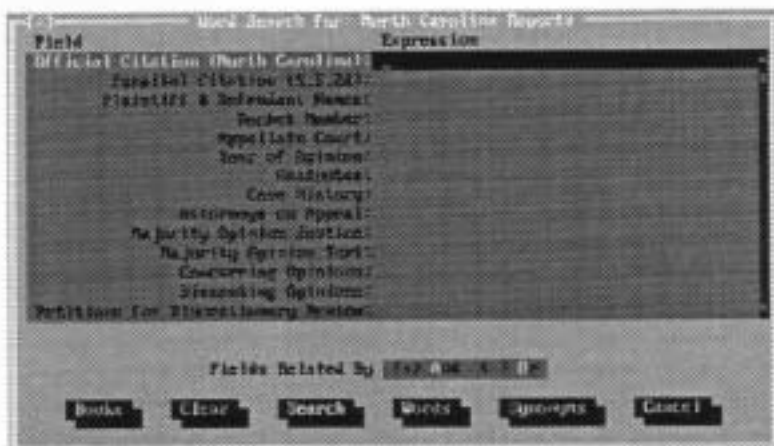


Figure 6: Word Search dialog box

The elements of the "Word Search" dialog box are:

Search field: Lists the database fields contained in the selected law books. This list will vary greatly, depending upon the law books of your state. If there are more fields than there is room in the search field, you can scroll up or down using the scroll bar.

Expression field: An editable field that lets you build a search expression.

"Fields Related" radio buttons: If you have entered search expressions in more than one field, you can choose the appropriate "And" or "Or" radio buttons to relate the fields in the search.

Buttons: There are several buttons available:

- **Books:** Displays the "Select Books to Search" dialog box.
- **Clear:** Clears search expressions from all fields.
- **Search:** Executes the search based on the search expressions entered.
- **Words:** Displays the "Word List" for the currently selected search field.

- *Synonyms*: Displays the "Synonym List" for the currently chosen word in the search expression list.
- *Cancel*: Closes the "Word Search" dialog box without executing a search.

Preparing to search

Before beginning your search, you must first determine how you want the search results to be displayed. This is determined by the preferences you set in the "Preferences" dialog box.

Close the "Word Search" dialog box by clicking the close box in the upper left corner of the dialog box or pressing the Esc key.

Choose "Preferences" from the File menu. This displays the "Preferences" dialog box (See Figure 7).

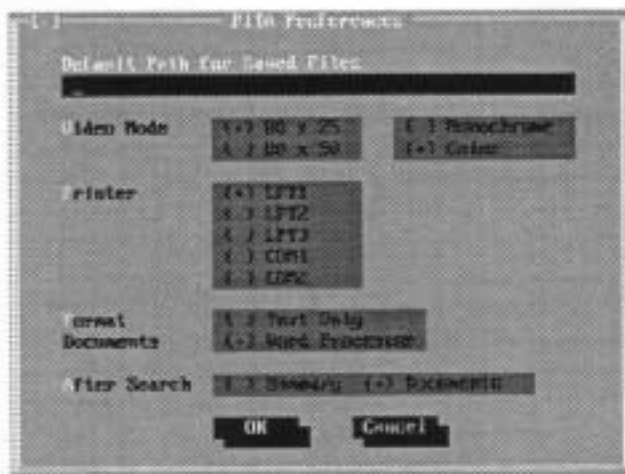


Figure 7: Preferences dialog box

The "After Search" radio button set lets you choose between "Summary" and "Documents."

- "Summary" — Displays the "Documents Found" dialog box following a search. This table gives you a quick glance at the

documents found in the search. You can then choose to browse the appropriate document.

- "Documents" — Displays a Results window, which lets you directly access all the found documents, beginning with the most recent one.

Choose "Summary" or "Documents" and click the "OK" button. Reopen the "Word Search" dialog box by choosing "Search" from the Search menu.

Performing your first search

Simple searches are very easy. In the following example, you use the PITA Retrieval Program to search for and find all the references to the word "robbery" in the database:

1. With the "Word Search" dialog box open, click on the "Search All Fields" field. This highlights the field and places the cursor in the first column of the corresponding expression field.
2. Type the following word:
robbery
3. Press the Return key. This activates the search and displays an "Information" dialog box (See Figure 8).

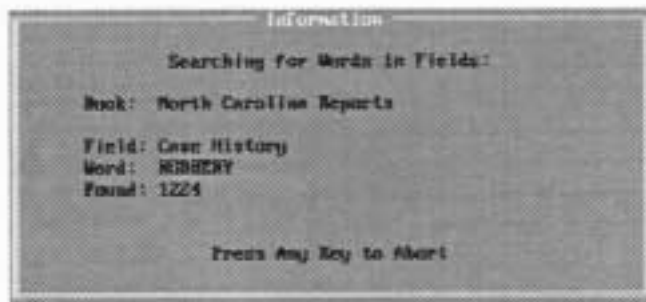


Figure 8: Information dialog box displayed during a search

The dialog box displays information about the ongoing search, including the name of the book being searched, the current field

being searched, the word and how many occurrences of the word have been found in the current field.

When the search is finished, the next window displayed is dependent upon how you have set your preferences:

- If your "After Search" preference is set to "Summary," the Table of Documents dialog box is displayed, letting you see a list of all the documents found in the search. (See *Chapter 7: Viewing documents* on page 39 for more information on using the Table of Documents dialog box.)
- If your "After Search" preference is set to "Documents," the Results window is displayed. It contains the text of all the documents found, arranged in book order.

The default "After Search" preference is set to "Documents," which means the Results window is displayed following a successful search. The first of any found occurrences of the sought word is displayed with its corresponding document in the Results window (See Figure 9).

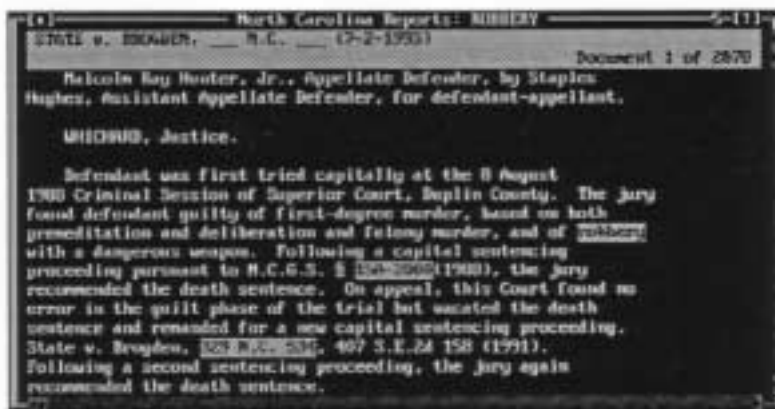


Figure 9: The Results window

See *Chapter 7: Viewing documents* on page 39 for more information on using the Results window.

The simple search you just performed showed you the process the PITA Retrieval Program goes through to search the chosen

database, but, as you will find, it is not the most effective way to find data.

Chapter summary

The important points to remember about this chapter are:

- The PITA Retrieval Program retrieves the data it finds and displays it in windows you can view, move the information to your YellowPad, print or save.
- You can select one or more books to search.
- Upon completion of a search, you can choose to view the full text of the documents or a list of documents found.

Chapter 5

Writing complex searches

It is important to become very specific in your search, but not so specific that you miss relevant data. There is an art to research that can be mastered only after you have spent time writing complex search expressions.

For example, if you are looking for cases related to murder using an ice pick, the tendency is to look for all the murder cases first. However, in a database as large as the ones you will be working with, there could be hundreds or even thousands of cases that mention the word murder.

In this chapter you will learn:

- You can use Boolean operators in search expressions to narrow the search parameters.
- Special punctuation is used to help you pinpoint the search.
- Multiple expressions can be combined to find the most relevant data.

Elements of search expressions

LOIS has a fielded document structure which lets you pinpoint the specific field in a document where relevant search terms are most likely to exist.

The PITA Retrieval Program uses a combination of Boolean operators, proximity expressions, synonymous words, truncation, quoted phrases and parenthetical nesting to help you find documents that best meet your needs.

- The Boolean operators used in the PITA Retrieval Program are AND, OR and NOT.
- The proximity expression used in the PITA Retrieval Program is NEAR.

- The SYN operator lets you find words that are synonymous to a common word.
- Truncation lets you find all the words with similar beginnings.
- Quoted phrases are used to find specific multiple-word phrases.
- Parenthetical nesting is used to pinpoint the search and reduce the time spent searching.

Fielded document structure

Each LOIS document is broken down into logical fields. This lets you perform searches on only the most relevant sections of documents.

Searches can be performed against multiple fields as well. You will find this dramatically improves the performance of phrase and proximity searches.

Full text searching is supported, letting you perform searches against the entire text of each document.

For more information on targeting data in specific fields, see *Chapter 6: Using advanced techniques* on page 33.

AND operator

The AND operator finds documents that contain different words.

For example, the expression **MURDER AND HANDGUN** finds all the documents that have both of the words, regardless of the location of the two words in the document.

All documents that do not contain both **MURDER** and **HANDGUN** are rejected.

The search can be further restricted by adding more AND operators. For example, **MURDER AND HANDGUN AND TENNESSEE** will further reduce the number of documents found.

OR operator

The OR operator finds documents that contain any of the words in the expression.

For example, the expression **MURDER OR HANDGUN** finds all documents containing either or both words.

All documents that do not contain either **MURDER** or **HANDGUN** are rejected.

Multiple OR operators can be added to the expression, although this widens the search.

NOT operator

The NOT operator finds documents that contain the first word, but not the second word of the expression.

For example, **MURDER NOT HANDGUN** finds all documents containing the word **MURDER**, except those also containing the word **HANDGUN**.

This is most useful when searching for words with multiple meanings. For example, the expression **RICO NOT PUERTO** will find all documents containing references to RICO racketeering statutes, while rejecting all references to Puerto Rico.

NEAR proximity operator

The NEAR proximity operator finds words that are in a specific proximity to one another.

It differs from the AND operator in that the AND operator finds words regardless of their proximity to one another. With the NEAR operator, you choose how close one word must be to the second word.

For example, **MURDER NEAR HANDGUN** finds all documents in which the word **MURDER** is within 20 words of the word **HANDGUN**.

You can set the specific proximity by specifying the number of words in the search expression.

For example, **MURDER NEAR 10 HANDGUN** finds all documents in which the word **MURDER** is within 10 words of the word **HANDGUN**.

SYN operator

The SYN operator finds words that are synonymous with the main search term.

The PITA Retrieval Program has a built-in thesaurus which contains many groups of synonymous words.

To see if there are synonyms for a search term you want to use, place the cursor on or immediately following the word in the search expression field of the "Word Search" dialog box and click the "Synonyms" button. This displays the "Synonyms" dialog box (See Figure 10).



Figure 10: Synonyms dialog box

Upon the opening of the "Synonyms" dialog box, all the words are automatically tagged. Specific words can be untagged by double-clicking on them.

When you click the "OK" button, any synonyms you have tagged will be added to the search expression.

For example, choosing synonyms for the word GUN will produce the search expression: **GUN SYN (AUTOMATIC, PIECE, PISTOL, REVOLVER, RIFLE).**

Truncation

The question mark (?) character is available to truncate words in the search expression.

For example, the search expression **GUARD?** finds all documents with words that begin with **GUARD**, including **GUARD, GUARDS, GUARDED, GUARDIAN, GUARDIANS** and **GUARDING.**

You cannot select synonyms for truncated words.

Phrases

The double-quotes (") character delimits word phrases.

For example, the expression **"ICE PICK"** finds all documents with the phrase "ice pick" and disregards all other documents that might include "ice" or "pick," but do not contain "ice pick" as a phrase.

Phrases are particularly useful when searching for a phrase that contains a Boolean operator.

For example, the expression **SEARCH AND SEIZURE** finds all documents that contain the words **SEARCH** and **SEIZURE**, regardless of their proximity in the document. On the other hand, by adding the quotation marks, the expression **"SEARCH AND SEIZURE"** finds only documents that contain the three-word phrase.

In addition, phrases allow for the inclusion of other literals, such as periods. The only exceptions are double-quote marks, colons and semicolons.

Multiple operators and nesting

Search expressions can be made more complex by combining operators and nesting them by using parentheses.

One example of a complex expression is: **"SEARCH AND SEIZURE" AND MURDER NEAR 30 (FIREARM SYN (GUN, HANDGUN, REVOLVER))**.

Use parentheses to combine similar terms and to establish the proper precedence.

Without parentheses, the Boolean operators you use have a specific algebraic precedence:

1. Phrase/Proximity
2. AND
3. OR
4. NOT

As a result, a misplaced operator could give you faulty search results. You should use parentheses to better control complex search expressions.

Chapter summary

The important points to remember about this chapter are:

- You can build complex search expressions using a variety of Boolean operators.
- You can combine expressions using multiple operators and parenthetical nesting.