

# Boolean search

(cheat sheet)



## What is Boolean search?

Boolean search is a manual type of search (as opposed to a wizard) used in search engines. While most searches are done by entering a keyword and waiting for the result (in Google, YouTube, social listening tools, etc.), Boolean search allows entering keywords combined with Boolean operators such as AND, NOT, AND NOT, etc. to produce a more complicated search query.

## When is Boolean search used?

Boolean search is used when you require stricter search criteria to eliminate unwanted results. For example, when your brand name is a common word. Also, when you need to do something specific: for example, find all mentions of your brand that don't contain links to it.

## Which tools have a Boolean search option?

Boolean search is mostly used in [social media monitoring tools](#) so that people can effectively search for their brand names and use the tools for other marketing tasks such as social selling and link building.

## Do all social listening tools have a Boolean search mode?

Boolean search mode is usually available in advanced social listening tools like [Awario](#).

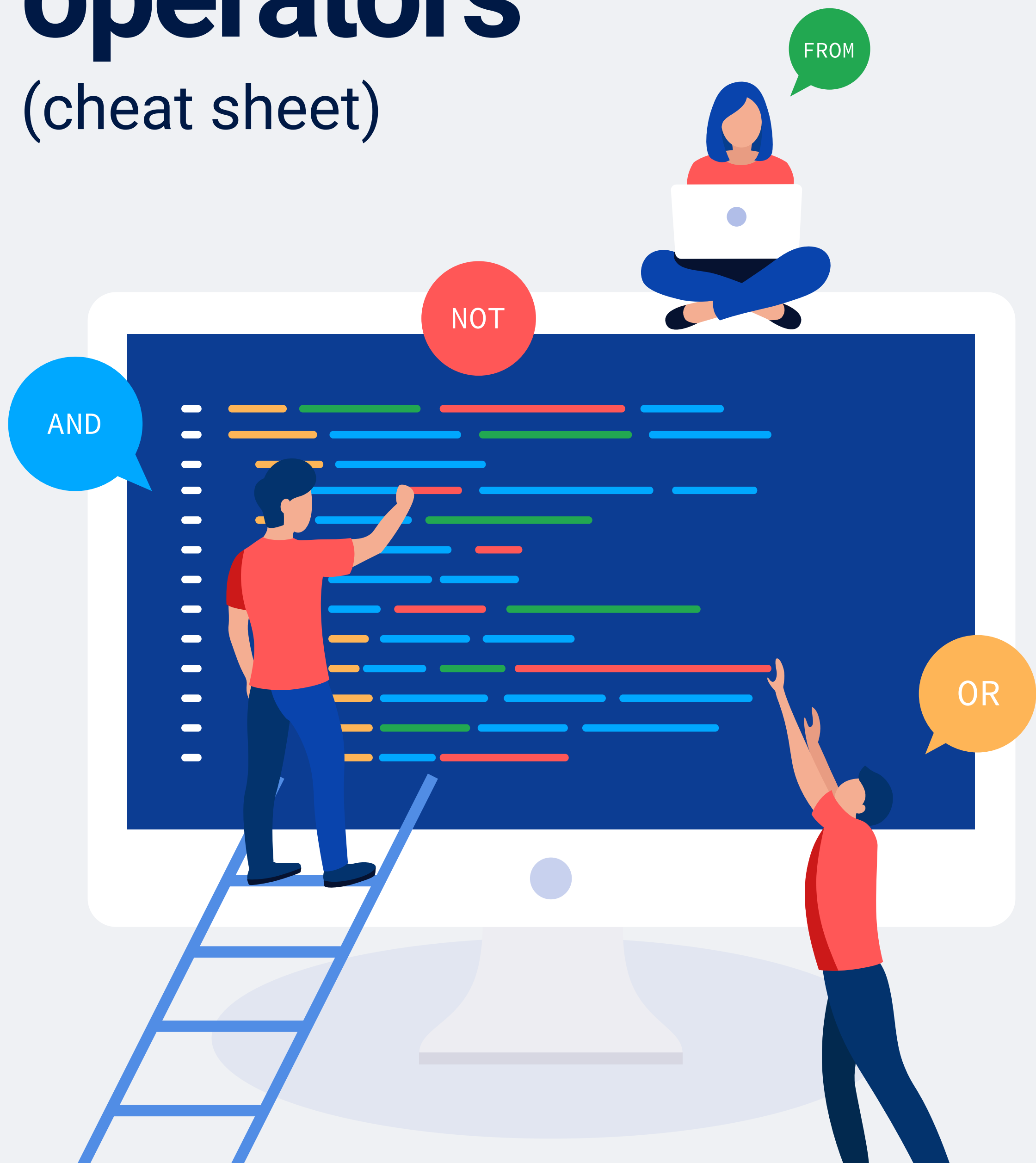
Every Boolean search query is built using a combination of your keywords and [special Boolean operators](#).

Note that operators may differ in social listening tools. However, the overall logic stays the same: AND means both, OR means either, AND NOT means a negative keyword. Pay attention to details as they may differ and *a*lways check out the social listening tool's own Boolean search guide.



# Boolean search operators

(cheat sheet)



## AND

AND means you are looking for documents that contain BOTH keywords.

Cheeseburger AND McDonald's

## OR

OR means you are looking for documents that contain any of your keywords.

Pepsi OR Coca-Cola

## near/n:

Near/n specifies the closeness of your keywords to each other. It means the program will show you only the documents where the keywords appear within n or less words away from each other. The word order is ignored by this operator.

Pepsi OR Coca-Cola

## onear/n:

Onear/n specifies the closeness of your keywords to each other while taking the word order into account. For example, we have the name William Johnson and need to exclude any mentions of Johnson William, but allow all second names and nicknames:

onear/4:William,Johnson

## AND NOT

AND NOT excludes documents that contain a particular word(s). In this case, you're telling the program to include all documents that have the X word in them AND don't have the Y word in them.

graphic designer AND NOT logo



Brackets are used to group terms, so that operators like AND, OR, and AND NOT can be applied to all the terms in the brackets.

```
Tesla AND (electric vehicle OR energy company OR automotive company)
```



The exact match takes into account special characters and punctuation of your keyword (this is normally ignored) but ignores lower and upper cases. This operator should be used for keywords that consist of two or more words.

```
+\"Duck Tales\"
```



Case sensitive exact match takes into account special characters, punctuation, and lower and upper cases of your keyword.

```
++\"CAT\"
```

---

## FROM

FROM specifies the source(s) you want your mentions to come from. If no source is chosen, you'll get mentions from all of them. You should type the sources in the following way (in brackets the shortened variants are provided): twitter (tw); facebook (fb); instagram (insta), youtube, reddit, web, news-blogs. Note that this parameter should always be at the end of the query.

```
BMW FROM tw,fb
```

---

## lang:

The Language operator specifies the language of your results. Ignore this parameter to get mentions irrespective of their language.

```
lang:de,en,es
```

## country:

The Country operator specifies the location of your results. Note that some social media profiles don't have information about the location and some platforms like Reddit don't even show such info! So when you choose a specific location you might be missing relevant mentions if you don't have the UNKNOWN setting turned on.

country:US,DE,UNKNOWN

## link:

Look for any document that contains a link to a website. This operator has 4 options:

link:"\*.site.com/\*" - find any document that contains a link to site(dot)com, including all its subdomains, pages, etc.

link:"site.com/" - find any document that contains a link to site(dot)com, excluding the subdomains.

link:"site.com/page" - find any document that contains a link to the exact pages site(dot)com/page.

link:"site.com/?p=\"123\"" - if your link contains quotation marks, include a backslash before each quotation mark that belongs to the link, as in the example.

For more Boolean operators, check out the [link](#).

# Got some examples?

Sure we do! Here're some of the coolest (and most useful) things you can do with Boolean search.

## 1. Find linkless brand mentions

If SEO is something you're interested in, here's a Boolean-inspired life-hack. Find all mentions of your brand name in blogs and news sites that don't contain a link to your brand. Reaching out to webmasters and journalists will be logical and justified as the mention is already there and it's only fair for them to add the link and give you some credit.

The Boolean search query will look like this:



```
Netflix  
AND NOT  
link:"*.netflix.com/*"  
AND  
lang:en  
AND  
country:US,UNKNOWN  
FROM:web, news-blogs
```

Note that I've also specified that the tool should find mentions in English and from either the US or the unknown location. The latter is vital to include as some sources hide their location.

## 2. Find mentions of your brand's specific product

Sometimes, you're only interested in mentions of one specific product of your brand and don't need all your other products to crowd up the feed. In the following query, I want to find documents that contain the words Tesla and Model 3, but exclude results with any (or all) mentions of model x, model s or roadster.

Here's how the Boolean Search query will look like:

```
((Tesla AND +"Model 3")  
AND NOT  
(+ "model x" OR + "model s" OR roadster))  
AND  
country:US,UNKNOWN  
FROM:web,news-blogs,twitter,facebook,youtube,  
reddit,instagram
```

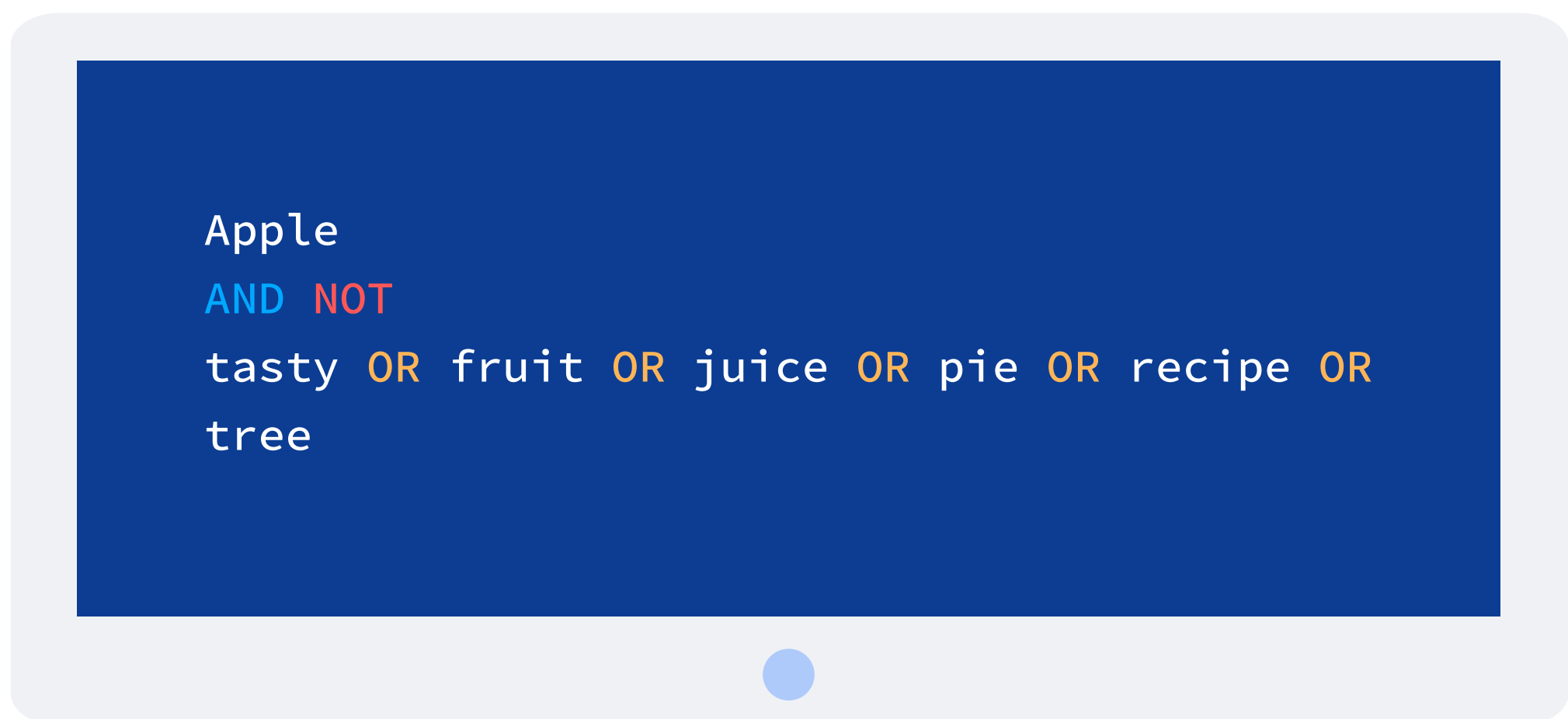
Note how the + sign is used to find the exact match of the keyword and the brackets are used to apply commands to the entire groups of words.



### 3. Find mentions of brands with common words as names

Brands often have common words as names: think of Apple, Orange, Forever 21, and even Amazon. Surely to name your brand Apple was a cool idea at some point. However, it challenges marketers looking to find mentions of the brand quite seriously. This is why there's Boolean search that allows you to search for documents that contain the word apple only in a non-fruit way.

That's how the Boolean search query will look like:



Note how the + sign is used to find the exact match of the keyword and the brackets are used to apply commands to the entire groups of words.

## All ready to get started?

Choose a [social listening tool](#) that's right for you, and check out everything Boolean search can do for yourself.