



Association of
Internet Research
Specialists

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INTERNET RESEARCH TRAINING GUIDE

For Professional Web Search & Research

CIRS™ | Certified Internet
Research Specialist

Recommended Learning Program

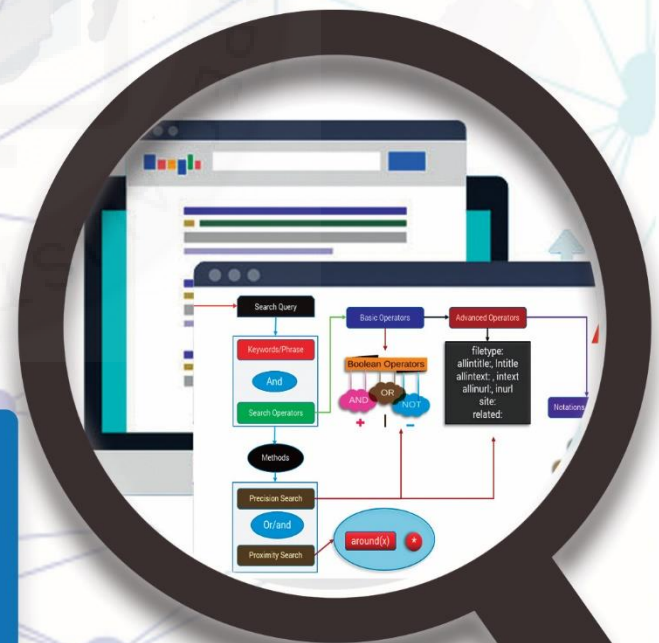
Covers 4 CIRS Exam Modules

1. Web Pages, Search Engines Index & Query Foundations
2. Web Search Techniques & Online Research Methods
3. Research in Business & Business of Research
4. Internet Law & Internet Ethics

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[1]

Preface

Background

This book covers the recommended curriculum of the *Certified Internet Research Specialist (CIRS™)* training program offered by the *Association of Internet Research Specialists (AOFIRS)*. The AOFIRS also recommends this book as a self-study guide for professional online researchers and those that use the Internet for information collection.

Every time we write improved editions to the training guide, we must consider the search engine industry from a technology perspective. But due to the dynamic nature of the Internet and fast-evolving supportive technologies, several changes would occur. Even amid such rapid changes, while keeping fundamental online research standards and core technology knowledge concepts intact, this book incorporates the latest Internet search methods and techniques.

Readers will find the topics different from conventional reading material on web search and online research for a hands-on approach. The covered topics are in sync with the CIRS™ learning objective and address an immediate need to train modern-day researchers in web search challenges.

For instance, readers notice a generous use of illustrations, diagrams, and charts that help them grasp concepts and learn technical aspects without a technology background. The learning process includes familiarizing with more than 450 fully functional search query strings. In short, a practical approach to topics covered makes it a sort of a "*Technical Manual*" on web search. The book further adds learning modules considered *essential subject matter* by the modern Internet research industry.

Who is a Certified Internet Research Specialist (CIRS™)?

A Certified Internet Research Specialist, also known as CIRS™ Certification, is a designation bestowed by the Association of Internet Research Specialists (AOFIRS) to individuals using the Internet as a primary tool for research.

The objective of CIRS™ Certified Professional according to the CIRS™ Profession Guidelines and based on AOFIRS Charter of Association. The role of CIRS is to Independently perform expert-level search and research on World Wide Web (WWW) and use specialized skills in collecting information both legally and following acceptable research methods and methodology of traditional research industry. In fulfilling their role, a CIRS™ adheres to the Professional Code of Conduct set by the AOFIRS to maintain, regulate, and uphold higher professional and ethical standards attached to the credentialed individuals.

What are the Main Skills of CIRS?

A CIRS™ is an expert on finding and using Internet-accessible information and content pages from the search engine's massive index. To perform an effective and efficient search for information on the WWW (World Wide Web), a qualified CIRS™ uses knowledge and skills learned during their training and coursework towards Certification.

Structure of the CIRS™ Training Guide 5.0

To meet today's digital challenges, mainly where the Internet is a primary tool for information procurement, the AOFIRS considers four Essential Learning Areas (ELA) in bestowing CIRS™ credentials.

1. **Webpages, Search Engines Indexing and Query Foundations** – This module answers common questions of what constitutes a Web site? How do Web Applications work on the Internet? And how do a Web Browser and Search Engines work together to deliver Web pages?
2. **Web Search Techniques and Online Research Methods** – This learning module teaches some conventional research methods and standards applied in the Research Industry. Students learn techniques to perform Web searches with advanced search queries and get introduced to essential online research tools to conduct specialized research on the Internet.
3. **Research in Business and Business of Research**– Students learn of the information needs of businesses and get familiarized with various research reports used by the management, shareholders, and lenders. This module discusses the essentials for establishing and running a successful business for those looking to run their independent research practice. It covers market opportunities and client engagement documentation.
4. **Internet Law and Internet Ethics** - This learning module covers areas of Internet laws that provide legal protections to researchers that use Internet information resources in their work. Students learn About Internet Jurisdiction, Intellectual Property Laws, Cybercrimes, Defamation, Privacy, and E-commerce-related laws. This curriculum discusses the topic of ethical issues attached to human subjects related to online data procurement.

CIRS™ Qualifying Examinations

Becoming an Internet Research Specialist requires specialized training and skill in performing effective and efficient Web searches with an acceptable level of accuracy. A *Certified Internet Research Specialist*, CIRS™ is considered a Gold Standard Training Program offered by the Association of Internet Research Specialists (AOFIRS) for the high-in-demand Internet-driven knowledge industry.

A *Certified Internet Research Specialist*, CIRS™ exam is given online as four separate exam modules. Students attempt exam modules separately for each module, at their own pace and time of choosing. The table below shows the number of questions asked for individual exams and the time to finish.

Module	Title	Q & A	Duration
1	Webpages, Search Engines Indexing & Query Foundations	20	45
2	Web Search Techniques & Online Research Methods	55	110
3	Research in Business & Business of Research	10	20
4	Internet Law & Internet Ethics	15	30

- These are Online Exams available to students 24x7 from anywhere the Internet is available.
- Exam results are available immediately after the student finishes all answers to exam questions.
- Students need to score 75% points to pass each exam module. Each question carries one point. All answered questions must be correct in full and not partially correct to score a whole point.
- There are no limitations to the number of attempts on each exam taken online.

Preparing for CIRS™ Qualifying Examinations

Preparing for the CIRS™ requires a commitment of time and a focused study plan for this challenging exam. Based on our instructor's experience teaching the course and feedback from students taking self-study preparation plans, an average student needs more than 35-40 hours to prepare for the CIRS™ exam. Even this amount of preparation is no guarantee that a student will pass on the first try.

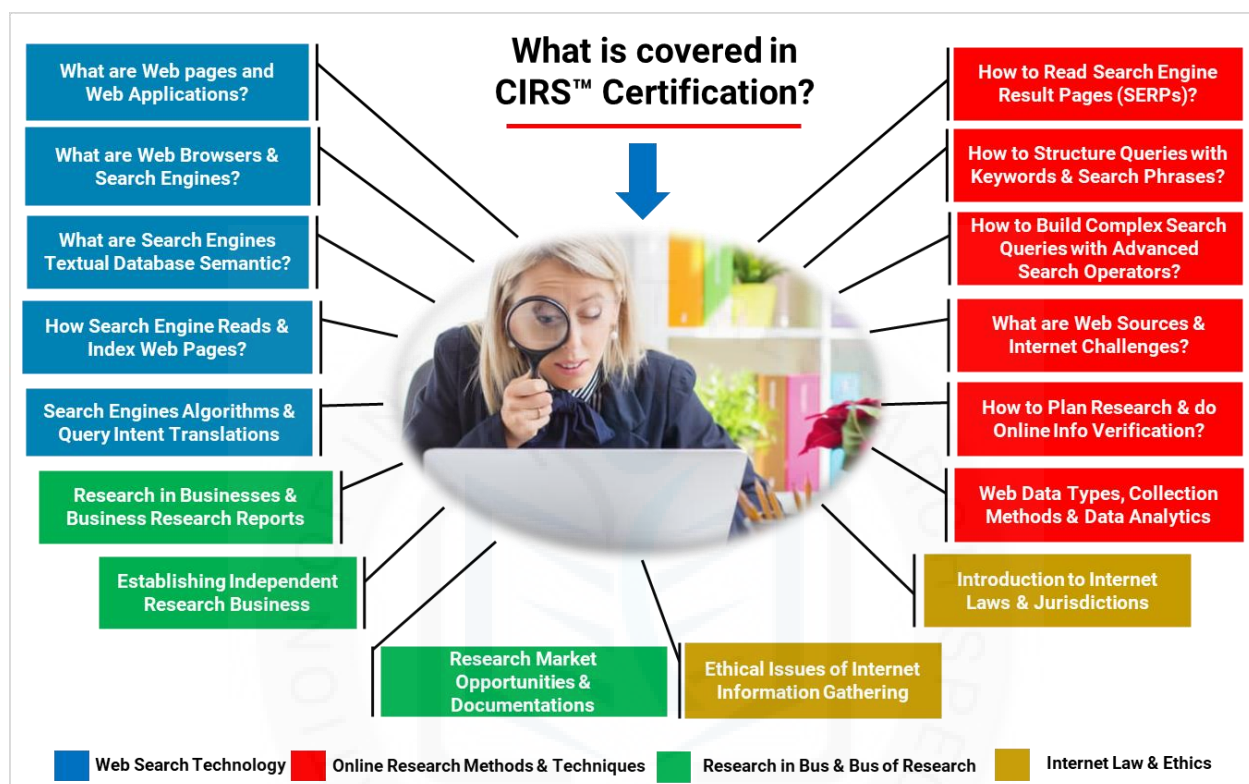
AOFIRS offers two approaches to preparing for CIRS Certification.

1. A CIRS Self-study plan for students preparing with the AOFIRS approved self-learning training material. (CIRS Training Guide 5th Edition).
2. An online training class that the AOFIRS conducts with trained instructors.

AOFIRS publishes its official CIRS™ training material, including e-books, reference guides, notes, PowerPoint presentations, recorded lectures, practice exam questions, and answers.

What are the Topics Covered in CIRS™ Course?

AOFIRS offers the most comprehensive and well-rounded curriculum today that prepares modern researchers to meet new Internet information use and procurement challenges. An outline of topics in concise format show in the illustrated diagram below.



Who can use CIRS Certification?

The CIRS Certification is used by anyone looking to search the Internet for Free Information sources and find valuable online databases that provide reliable and relevant information. The CIRS certified professional include Professional Services Provider (such as, Independent Contractors, Freelance Researcher, Web Researchers, Lawyers, PI's, Financial, Analysts, Writers Etc.), Corporate Executives, Entrepreneurs, and Govt and Non-profit Associations.

Who is an Internet Research Specialist?

What Is Research Work?

From a young age, everyone performs research in one way or another, whether it is news, books, or browsing the Internet. Internet users encounter opinions, ideas, or perceptions - the curiosity behind the drive to research. However, where research is for actionable decisions, its nature changes - it all depends on its application and purpose. For instance, skilled research offered as a service has a definite objective, and it is focused and organized. Professional research helps derive inferences and conclusions from solving problems.

The dilemma with defining the word research is that it's a broad term with multiple applications. The term is used in many disciplines (scholars, authors, scientists, researchers, and laypeople) and has a unique definition for each industry.

Merriam Webster defines research as *careful and diligent search; studious inquiry or examination, especially investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, and revise theories and laws; the collecting of information about a particular subject.*

What is Internet Research?

Internet Research is a practice of finding and using Internet information, especially free knowledge available on the World Wide Web. The Internet Researcher uses specialized skills to find the most relevant and reliable web information pertinent to their research work.

Modern-day Internet research involves more than conventional online research methods and data collection techniques, qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Typically, the old school Internet research methods are online surveys, virtual focus groups, online interviews, etc. However, with more creative social media platforms and advancements in interactive multimedia technology, new opportunities for data collection are emerging.

Purpose of Professional Research

The Purpose of any Professional Research Is To:

1. Increase existing knowledge and generate new knowledge.
2. Find new information and revise existing data in light of newfound facts.
3. To construct or create new procedures, processes, methods, or systems.
4. Develop investigations and experimentation.

5. Derive inferences and make deductions based on new and existing knowledge and data.
6. Create solutions.
7. Collect data and convert it into meaningful analysis and reports.
8. Explore and analyze general issues surrounding a problem.
9. Explain new phenomenon.

Skill Requirements of Modern-Day Internet Researchers

The Internet has created an opportunity and responsibility for researchers to explore and develop their online research skills. With the complexities involved in how the Internet connects people, information, and technology in innovative ways, a modern researcher must have a basic knowledge of Internet technology and how to use it to collect reliable and relevant information.

Internet Researcher Skills

Due to the accelerated growth of technology, coupled with massive information digitization and the ease of the Internet's free information access from anywhere, researchers now turn to the Internet first. There is a marked change in knowledge research with the Internet, and it has become one extensive decision support ecosystem for many. The only problem is finding information is rarely straightforward. Web content now comes in many formats, making it difficult to use simple keywords for search. Acquiring online research skills can be anything from selecting the most effective search terms (keywords/phrases) to building powerful precision search queries to planning online research. Some online research skills include:

Technical Skills or Hard Skills

Data collection, data analysis, and analytics

- *Information and data analysis:* Identify the underlying data and facts of information by breaking down news in components, i.e., transforming raw data into structured data.
- *Project management:* Deliver and manage projects, plan and organize resources to achieve specific goals and objectives successfully.
- *Data mining:* Analyze data to determine its relationships to predict future consumer behavior.
- *Data management:* Plan, develop, implement, and administer the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of data.
- *Business intelligence:* Use skills, technologies, applications, and practices to better understand its commercial context.
- *Web analytics:* Web data analytics and analysis of keywords, trends, traffic sources, etc.
- *Market research:* Data collection of competitors, branding, product launch, and pricing.
- *Statistical analysis:* Use this mathematical science to collect, analyze, interpret, and present data.

Soft Skills

- Command of language and communication skills, both verbal and written.
- Possess essential and beneficial persuasion, negotiation, and presentation skills.
- Solve complex analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Collaboration and coordination skills to work with teams.
- Have public relations and interpersonal skills to coordinate with clients.
- Have in-depth knowledge of research methods and methodology.

The field of Internet-based research is relatively new and continues to evolve rapidly. This guide gives a solid foundation in Internet research methods, techniques, and tools to help a professional Internet Research Specialist succeed in the digital age.



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A practical guide for mastering the practice of Internet Research

Covers All Four (4) Exam Modules Recommended for
“Certified Internet Research Specialists” | CIRS™

Online research has become an essential skill for everyone looking for quick actionable information. What typically took place in libraries, by phone calls or visits to experts in the field is being changed because of the Internet. Ironically, while the Internet Research work has been going on for many years, the “Internet Research Specialist” is considered a fairly new occupation that has yet to make its way into formal libraries of new job description today. Because of its newness, there was no structured curriculum for their education and training. Our flagship certification called CIRS [Certified Internet Research Specialists] is by far the only professional credentials that meets this challenge. The CIRS certification objective is to educate and train online researchers that now form a significantly large group within different market verticals. Thus far our courses and syllabus have proven to have the most comprehensive curriculum that fulfils the current industry requirements. In the time since the publication of the CIRS Training Fourth Edition, AOFIRS has received many valuable recommendations from the global online research community and students for improvements and clarifications. As appropriate we have incorporated valuable suggestions in 5th edition with several new diagrams, illustrations accompanied with hundreds of tailored search queries.

AOFIRS works primarily for the benefits of its members, students and the community of online research professionals. We believe that online research is a learned skill that needs an industry centric education curriculum and globally recognized credentializing.

AOFIRS is a non-profit, professional body registered in the province of Ontario, Canada. The association is formed under the “Charter of Associations” authorized under the Laws of Canada.

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