Smarter Searching — Factiva

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Search Tips

Here’s a suggested search for anything about *private label* diapers or baby care/baby products, published in the last 2 years:

(diaper$ OR baby products OR baby care) same private label

It looks like this – note where you adjust the Date range to be searched:

What is going on here?

$ = Factiva’s truncation, or wildcard, symbol. Means it will return any word beginning d-i-a-p-e-r … thus diaper$ retrieves: diaper, diapers, diapering… Factiva is the only database that uses the dollar sign ($) for this purpose. (But sort of appropriate, for the Dow Jones company… ;) Other databases use the asterisk (*).

OR = Boolean operator, meaning either/or – not like regular English usage, where “or” means one or the other. This statement will retrieve any and all articles that include variations on diaper or baby products or baby care – as long as the phrase ‘private label’ ALSO occurs in the same paragraph.

( ) = parentheses: use these to group sets of OR’d terms, or anytime you want to fully control how your search is interpreted by the system. For example:
(diapers OR baby wipes) AND (Kimberly Clark OR P&G)

SAME = proximity operator, requires that the terms (or sets of terms) both appear in the same paragraph. Any of the “baby” terms must appear in the same paragraph with the phrase: private label.
Note that you do NOT have to enclose phrases in double quotes in Factiva. In fact, **Factiva automatically treats words entered in a series as a phrase** - which could cause problems if you didn’t know that. If you just slam in a series of words as you might in Google, you could well get no results. For example, if you enter:

sales of private label baby diapers

Into Factiva, you’ll get zero – it is searching for that EXACT phrase (and not finding it). But if you enter:

sales NEAR5 private label NEAR3 diaper$

(Date still set to Last 2 years)

You get 7 hits (and they look pretty good!)

New in this search:

**NEAR#** = another proximity operator, requires that the words (or phrases) on either side of the operator appear within “#” words of each other. Thus: near5 means within 5 words of each other, near3 is within 3 words... you can replace “#” with any number you want, and you might want to try some different numbers – a smaller ‘near’ number means the words must appear closer together, a larger number lets them be further apart. It’s hard to know until you try it and eyeball the results.

You can mix SAME and NEAR# (but only one of each in a search). You do not need to enter any of the operators (Boolean or proximity) in caps, I only do it to make them stand out for tutorial purposes.

Why so much fuss and fiddly “operators” and all? Well, when you search Factiva, you are searching all full text. If you simply say something like: diapers AND sales – you are going to get a huge number of results, and a huge number of those are going to be useless to you; they were only retrieved because ‘diapers’ appeared *somewhere* in the article, and ‘sales’ appeared... *somewhere* else. The article could easily NOT be talking about sales of diapers at all. This is a big pitfall in full text searching. So to really get what you want in Factiva (and there’s plenty of good stuff, it’s worth it) – you need to work a little harder, a little smarter.

Speaking of what you get...

**Results in Factiva**

The results screen in Factiva is FULL of fabulous options; useful ways to quickly get a sense of what’s in your results, to limit to certain subsets of results, to access special kinds of results (Web News or Blogs), output them... see screen shot on the next page:
Blue lines are indicating where your search is echoed back to you, the button for returning to the search screen (and keeping your current search intact so you don’t need to retype it all), the access to the special content types – Web News and Blogs.

Yellow highlights indicate most frequently used output options, and the beginning of the fabulous “filter” options in the left side panel – by Company… (and each blue bar has a number, indicating the number of articles for that Company, Executive, etc…) Scrolling the left panel down, you’ll see:

Allowing you to restrict your results to the United States with one click… then to limit to Market Research with a click…
In this screenshot, two Filters have been applied – but if you decided you didn’t like one or the other of those, you simply click the box with an “x” next to the filter you want to remove (hard to see in the screenshot, but they’re there) – and try something else. It’s pretty spiffy.

OK? Get the idea(s)? Go search Factiva with confidence and get good results! (or contact me if you need help! 😊)

~Suzanne
From the Factiva Customer Support website:

The following search operators, including Boolean operators, can be used in building Free-text searches in Factiva.com Search Builder and Alerts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATORS IN FACTIVA.COM SEARCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj[N]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parentheses ( ) or Square Brackets [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| near[N]  | Words or phrases connected with this operator must be present in the document, within N number of words, *in any order*. N represents any number from 1 to 500. | classical music near5 beethoven | This search will retrieve documents that mention *classical music* within 5 words of the keyterm *Beethoven*.  
**Note:** The N is optional; if omitted, the number 1 is assumed. |
| /nN/     | Words or phrases connected with this operator must be present in the document, within N number of words, in any order. N represents any number from 1 to 500. | Ritz Carlton /n25/ hotel | This search will retrieve documents that mention *Ritz Carlton* within 25 words of the term *hotel*.  
**Note:** The value for N is required. |
| /fN/     | Words or phrases preceded by this operator will retrieve documents that have those terms in the first N words of the document. N represents any number from 1 to 500. | factiva/f100/ | This search will retrieve documents that mention factiva in the first 100 words of the document.  
**Note:** The value for N is required. |
| atleastN | The atleastN operator is used to determine the number of times a word or phrase *must appear* in an article. N represents any number from 1 to 50. | atleast5 Microsoft | This search will retrieve articles that mention Microsoft 5 times or more.  
**Notes:** The value for N is required. The atleast operator must be used against Search for free-text terms in: *Full Article*, not against specific fields. |