

The IMEP search has support for regular expressions. Regular expressions are an enormously powerful and sophisticated tool for searching. Here we give some basic examples of regular expression searching. All of these examples use the Incipits index and we will only give an example set of the results for brevity.

If you search for a sequence of letters it will find it wherever it appears in an entry – so a search for “medic” will find e.g.:

3 þyngis medicinale alteratiues euactiatiues confortatiues
A book of medicines
A general rewill to yeve medicyn

The ^ character indicates the start of an entry – so if you search for “^Par” you will find e.g.:

Parasti in dulcedine tua pauperi deus psalmo sexagesimo septimo the most
Parce domine parce populo tuo quem redemisti precioso sanguine
Parish chirches ther be in yngland to the summe of xlv ml and xj

The \$ character indicates the end of an entry – so if you search for “ine\$” you will find e.g.:

Domum tuam decet sanctitudo domine
For a burnynge or scaldinge p[...] rb take water betanye grounde fine
Her schal felue þe canone of he tablis afor wrettine

The “.” character indicates any single character, so a search for “w.men” will find e.g.

A souereyne medycyne for women ys syknes ofte tyme provyd take
Cristen men and wymen ye schall knawe well þat þis day is callud
Crysten men and wemen ye þat comen þis day to þe chysch yn

You can use this more than once in a search, so a search for “med.c.ne” will find e.g.

A book of medicines
A gode medycyne for þe crampe take þe rote of wyld
A gode medycyne for þe stone

You can search specifically for alternative spellings by putting the relevant letters in square brackets, so a search for “hea[vu]en” will find e.g.:

In the moneth of ianuari the angri heavens doe foretell
Nowe take good heed that when our lord god had made heauen
The zodiake is a circle dividing the heaven in two

You can use round brackets and the “|” character to search for alternative spellings involving more than one character, so a search for “(þ|th)e” will find e.g.:

1 aries gouerneth the hede and the face of man 2 taurus the
A blacke crowe of a true line that shall rise in the blood
A blessing with persoones of þe trynyte

This is only a small part of the full potential of regular expressions for complex and sophisticated searching. More information can be found here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regular_expression and there are plenty of tutorials available on the internet.