

Online Database Searching

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Online Database Searching

- This session introduces library users to the diverse online resources that are available in the library, giving each user hands on experience on how to search e-Resources. It is through this session that students writing their theses and dissertations are introduced to the various databases on the OPAC. These databases may be statistical databases such as [OECD iLibrary](#) along the usual textual databases such as [Emerald](#), [Cambridge](#), [Wiley](#) and [Oxford](#).
- A database is a collection of information organized to provide efficient retrieval
- FORMAT OF DATABASES
- The collected information could be in any number of formats
 - electronic,
 - Statistical
 - printed,
 - audio
 - graphic,
 - combinations
- There are physical (paper/print) and electronic databases.

Types of database

Bibliographic databases

- provide a descriptive record of an item, but the item itself is not provided in the database.
- Information about the item is provided, including such things as author, title, subject, publisher, etc. □ Sometimes a short summary or abstract of the item is also provided. Examples: MEDLINE, AGRICOLA

Full-text database

- Provides the full-text of a publication. It may collect only – image information (EBSCOhost image collection), – audio information (MP3 or wav files), or – a combination of any of the above types.
- Meta-databases
- Databases that allow one to search for content that is indexed by other databases

Library database

- Library databases contain information from published works. Examples: – Magazine and newspaper articles, – encyclopedias and – other reference books.
- Library databases are searchable by
 - Keywords,
 - Subject,
 - Author,
 - Magazine Title,
 - Date, etc.
- Library databases provide citation information.
 - Author
 - Title of Article
 - Publication (Title of Magazine, Newspaper, or Reference Book)
 - Publisher
 - Date of Publication

Library databases often contain full-text articles. You can print or email an entire article.

Database Searching

- Database Searching is using a computer system to find required piece of information.
- Information may be
 - Full-text,
 - Bibliographic and/or
 - Meta-data (i.e. refereeing to other databases)
- Search is of two types:
 1. Keyword / Basic Search
 2. Advance Search

Advanced Search

Is a more refined search.

- Multiple search terms in multiple fields can be searched for simultaneously.
- Used when the collection of interested articles is large and needs to be narrowed.
- Useful when information from more than one field would help in locating items of interest

Search Strategies

Using Keywords – Free-Text/Natural Language Searching

- A keyword is a word or phrase, significant to your search topic, which will enable you to retrieve references.
- A keyword search uses 'free text' to identify all records containing the word or words that you enter in your search field.
- Results may come from within any part of the record e.g. title; abstract; subject heading within library catalogues, databases and websites.
- However, websites rely almost exclusively on 'free text' searching while databases will be more likely to be indexed using controlled vocabulary.

Search Strategies

Using Thesauri - Controlled Vocabulary - Searching

- A controlled vocabulary thesaurus is a set of pre-defined terms assigned to describe the content of an article.
- A controlled vocabulary search will map the 'free text' word or phrase to the controlled vocabulary heading/term.

Search Strategies

Boolean Logic

- The principles of Boolean Logic enable you to relate concepts to one another in sets. Consisting of the 3 logical operators or connectors, AND, OR, NOT, Boolean operators allow you to more efficiently link 2 or more terms, thereby retrieving more precise results.
- AND narrows a search; OR broadens it, while NOT excludes references, containing specified search terms, from your results. These operators will always need to be entered in upper case.

Search Strategies

Truncation

- The principles of Boolean Logic enable you to relate concepts to one another in sets. Consisting of the 3 logical operators or connectors, AND, OR, NOT, Boolean operators allow you to more efficiently link 2 or more terms, thereby retrieving more precise results.
- AND narrows a search; OR broadens it, while NOT excludes references, containing specified search terms, from your results. These operators will always need to be entered in upper case.

Search Strategies

Wildcards

- Related to truncation are Wildcards which help you search for internal variations of spelling within your search term.
- An example in Web of Science is wom?n which will retrieve articles that mention women and woman.
- Wildcards are also useful in dealing with American spelling variations. For example computeri?ation finds computerization and computerization

Search Strategies

Proximity

- Proximity searching is a way of narrowing your search using different operators. It allows you to search for documents where your search terms must be either in the same sentence or paragraph.
- The operator **SAME** will only locate articles where your terms are in the same sentence of an article e.g. breast **SAME** cancer
- While the operator **PARAGRAPH** will locate those within the same paragraph e.g. breast
- **PARAGRAPH** cancer

Search Strategies

Phrase Searching

- Phrase Searching allows you to use a string of words instead of a single one.
- Many databases allow you to search for an exact phrase such as **Climate Change** or **Genetically Modified Organisms**. Results found will highlight the phrase exactly as typed.
- However, some databases will require the use of Inverted Commas while others will require the use of brackets. You are advised to check the “HELP” section of each database. This is particularly advisable when using the internet.

Thank you



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