

Advanced online searching and research features

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[Searching Online Resources](#)

[Literature Searching for Beginners](#)

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Online Searching - Advanced Techniques

And, or, not and other useful operators

1

- **AND.** When using *more than one* keyword or phrase, you need to combine the terms with the word “**and**”. This will retrieve articles about, or containing, **all** of your terms, but not any articles that only contain one of the terms. This will *narrow* your search and cut the number of hits. For example,
“aggression and management”

Previous searches can also be combined using “*and*”, by going into your **Search History** on the database.

- **NOT** allows you to exclude articles containing particular terms. It should be used with care since you may exclude material of interest. An example,
“dementia not alzheimer’s”

- **OR.** To **broaden** a search use “**or**”. This will find articles about, or containing, **any** of your terms. For example,
“midwifery or obstetrics”, will give us *every midwifery article and every obstetrics article*, whether the articles contain both, or only one, of the terms.
- **BOTH** “*and*” and “*or*”. If you use “**and**” and “**or**” in the same search, you **must put brackets** round the “*or*” clause. For example,
*“aggression and management and (**midwifery or obstetrics**)”*

If you do not do this, the database will perform the following, quite different, search:

“(aggression and management and midwifery) or obstetrics”

Online Searching - Advanced Techniques 2

- **Nesting.** When combining Boolean operators, use brackets to separate each clause, or your search will not make sense.
For example,
 - (i) *(pressure ulcer or pressure sore) and diabetes*
 - (ii) *{(dementia) not (alzheimer's or multi-infarct)} and therapy.*
- **Proximity.** Some databases allow searching for words in the same sentence – or within a certain number of words. Different databases use different syntax or symbols for this, for example on EBSCO, “N3” means “*NEAR, within 3 words*”. Check the **Help** function of your database to find out the syntax. This kind of searching is particularly useful in full-text databases. An example of such a search, *education N5 reform* would find the words “education” and “reform” within 5 words of one another. This find more specific results than searching for *education and reform*.

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- **Truncation.** Truncation is a very useful tool. It is used to find words which begin with the same root, or have plural endings. The characters “*” and “\$” are commonly used, but check the **Help** function of your database.

For example,

- (i) *market** would find *market* or *marketing* or *markets*
- (ii) *psychiatr** would find *psychiatry* or *psychiatric* or *psychiatrist* or *psychiatrists*

Think before you use truncation. *Child** will find *child* and *children*, but it will also find *childbirth*.

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- **Wildcard** works in a similar way to truncation, but the symbol replaces a letter, or letters, in the *middle of a word*. Consult the database **Help** for symbols and rules because *databases may work differently*. In Ebsco databases, for example, **the # symbol** is used as the wildcard symbol.

Wildcard is very useful for picking up variant spellings. For example,

behavio#r will find *behaviour* or *behavior*.

organi#ation will find *organisation* or *organization*.

Labo#r will find *labor* or *labour*.

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- **Subject searching (i)**
- Most databases allow **free text searching**. This consists of entering your keywords into the search field.
- Many databases enable **subject searching** by means of **Subject Headings**, **Index** searching, **Label** searching or **Thesaurus** searching. These may also be called *controlled terms* or *controlled vocabulary*.
- Using subject searching allows you to search for articles **about** your topic, rather than articles which simply **contain** your term, as is the case in a free text search. Subject searching usually increases the relevance of the hits.

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Subject searching (ii)

- Some databases prompt you to ask them to map your suggested keyword onto the most appropriate subject term, or offer you a list of subject headings to choose from. These databases would tell you to use “neoplasm” rather than “cancer”, or suggest using “carcinoma” or “tumor”. You then choose the subject heading you prefer.
- Using **Explode** in thesaurus searching widens the search to include more specific associated terms, increasing sensitivity. More hits will be returned.
- Using **Focus** in thesaurus searching finds articles where your term is a major concept, increasing specificity. Fewer hits will be returned.
- Some databases offer **subheadings** which you can attach to your subject, narrowing it further. Be wary of using these – you may exclude items of interest.

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Subject searching (iii)

- **Snowballing.** Once you have identified even one useful reference you can use this to help you find others. Look at the subject headings/thesaurus or index terms for this article and then use these to search with. Items with the same subject headings will be about the same sorts of thing.

Look also at the references of the useful article and use these to identify good keywords or subjects too. Some databases also offer “*Find More Like This*” help.

- Subject searches can also be combined with free text.

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Field searching (i)

- The default search on most databases is usually of the citation fields. These are *Author*, *Title*, *Journal Title*, *Keyword* or *Subject*, and sometimes *Abstract*.

Most databases, however, allow you to search in the particular fields of the articles, for example in the title, so that you can find articles where your term appears in these particular fields.

The field names may be abbreviated: **Au** is author, **Ti** title, **Jn** or **So** stands for journal title or source, **Ab** is abstract and **Ke** keyword.

- Often the place to do field searching is in the **Advanced Search** option, where a pull-down menu of fields is usually available.

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Field searching (ii)

- **Author search.** Field searching is a useful technique when searching for articles by a particular author or organisation.
- **Title search.** If a term appears in the title of an article or other piece of text, then the article is likely to be about that term in some respect. Title searching is very useful where subject searching is not available, or to cut down a very large number of hits.

Title searching can also be used when looking for a very particular term, or a name, in the title of the article.

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Title searching (*continued*)

- Title searching is also useful when your search involves very general terminology. Searching for articles discussing the professional status of nursing, for instance. Often searches like this return a great many hits, with no obvious way of cutting the numbers down by refining the search. Searching for *nursing and profession* in the title field only is far more specific than a general search of *nursing and profession* in all fields, and will return far fewer articles.
- Other examples of terms like this might be, “*management*”, “*evaluation*”, “*organisation*” and any other term that may have a wide general application.

Online Searching - Citation Searching 1

- Cited reference searching enables you to find articles that have ***cited*** a previously published work or author. Through a cited reference search, you can trace how an idea or innovation has been confirmed, applied, improved, extended, or corrected.

- It is a useful means of doing the following:
 - Tracking articles which may be related to the subject of interest.
 - Tracing more recent articles and research.
 - Finding references which cite an author or other article you are interested in.
 - Finding other articles which cite an article you have found.
 - Finding the articles cited by the article you have found.
 - Finding related articles which share references with your chosen article.

Online Searching - Citation Searching

2

- The original citation databases are published by the ISI and are now on the Web of Science platform. These include the Science Citation Index and the Social Sciences Citation Index.
- Other databases now offer differing degrees of citation searching. These include the following:

Medline (on Web of Science)

Arts and Humanities Index (Web of Knowledge)

Cinahl

PsychInfo

Science Direct

ACM Portal

Google Scholar

Online Searching: limitations, pitfalls and considerations

1

- Be aware of the **range of terminology** that may be used in your subject and try different terms and combinations of terms.
- Be aware that terminology is constantly changing and **evolving** as subjects and ideas develop, for example, “*mental retardation*” became “*learning disabilities*”, and then “*learning difficulties*”, on the PsycInfo database.
- **Look at what the database offers you.** The big sophisticated databases will try to help you by, for example, suggesting subject headings you may want to use to narrow or widen your search. Make use of the features on offer.

Online Searching: limitations, pitfalls and considerations

2

- There may be sometimes be delays between the publication of an article and its appearance in the databases; some of them quite lengthy. For instance, Medline is notoriously slow at indexing non-US specialty journals.
- Use **Current Content** services such as Zetoc, or databases like pre-Cinahl, to stay right up to date with new content.
- Some databases have an embargo on when articles can actually be published online, following print publication. An online article may sometimes not appear until anything from one month to one year has passed. This information will appear when you use the SFX linker. Check the dates the online journal covers.

Online Searching: limitations, pitfalls and considerations

3

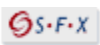
- Be aware that most of the large databases have a strong US bias, and work out strategies for identifying UK material. Some databases enable you to limit your searches to materials published in UK countries, or in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. See the [Searching Online Resources](#) slides for guidance on how to do this, or look at the **Help** function on your selected database.
- Be aware of US vs UK terminologies and spellings. This can also work to your advantage when trying to eliminate US material. Searching using terms such as “*health visitor*” or “*procurator fiscal*” will find almost only UK materials. Similarly, looking for “*behaviour*” rather than “*behavior*”, “*labour*” rather than “*labor*”, or “*aetiology*” rather than “*etiology*” will find UK materials and exclude US articles.

Online Searching: limitations, pitfalls and considerations

4

- Author first names and initials are often indexed inconsistently in databases. Try searching the author's last name followed by the truncation symbol (usually “*”) to retrieve all variants, for example, *Smith**. Or combine this with a keyword search of the author's field of study, for example *smith* and forensic toxicology*.
- Different databases list journal titles in different ways. Sometimes the full title must be searched, sometimes an abbreviated title. Abbreviations can also vary. Check the database **Help** function.
- Journal titles can change. Searching a journal under its current title may miss earlier references published under a different title.
- Be aware that not all important research is published in English.

Databases and SFX 1

- Full text databases are useful for ease of access to the full text of articles but they are often limited in size and functionality. Bibliographic databases, on the other hand, are larger and often have more powerful features. Bibliographic databases give the details of the article (author, title, journal title, etc.) and sometimes an abstract. This is changing: some bibliographic databases now include numbers of full-text titles (e.g. CINAHL Plus with Full Text). ***For research purposes, the big bibliographic databases are essential.***
- The [SFX](#) feature gives databases which are not primarily full-text the functionality of full-text databases. They enable you to link from the references in the database to the full text of the article. Just click on the SFX logo  in your search results and you will be taken to the article, if the library has a subscription.

Databases and SFX



2

Important databases for research include,

- Zetoc for current contents.
- Web of Knowledge: Science and Social Science Citation Indexes, Arts & Humanities Index, Medline, Conference proceedings.
- Ebsco: Cinahl, PsychInfo, SportDiscus, IBSS and others.
- Maternity and Infant Care for midwifery.
- The Cochrane library.
- Eric (Education Resources Information Center).
- Westlaw.
- Emerald and Mintel.
- ACM Portal and Science Direct.

Search all databases appropriate to your topic. Different databases have different subject coverage.

Finding Theses 1

- [The Index to Theses](#) is available *on campus only* from the Library website, or from My UWS Library on Blackboard. This indexes theses accepted for higher degrees in the UK and Republic of Ireland.
- The British Library's **Ethos** [<http://ethos.bl.uk>] service is the principal point of access to doctoral theses in the UK. Ethos harvests theses from the electronic Repositories of UK H.E. Institutions and digitises the paper thesis collection of the British Library.

To obtain a thesis from Ethos you must register as a user (free) and log in. Once you have located your thesis you will be given options regarding the format you would like. To download an electronic version is free of charge.

Finding Theses 2

- If you are looking for a thesis or dissertation that is not available from Ethos, it may be possible to borrow it from the Library of the awarding institution via an Inter Library Loan. To do this, it is a good idea to first check the catalogue of the awarding institution's library to see if the item is in fact in stock. Then contact the Inter Library Loans department of your UWS campus library. UWS library staff will help you find the awarding University's catalogue if you are having difficulty with this.
- The [COPAC](http://copac.ac.uk/) [http://copac.ac.uk/] service offers access to the online catalogues of many academic, specialist and national libraries in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Current Awareness:

Saving searches

- Most larger databases allow you to **save your searches** to run at a later date. Once you have developed a successful search strategy you can run your searches on a regular basis to keep up to date with research.
- Databases normally require individual registration for these services. Once you are logged onto the database you want to use, usually with your Athens username, you then need to register with a username and password that is for use with that particular database only. You can then use the features offered.
- To save a search, once you have logged into your personal area of the database go into the search history for your current session and save the search you want. This is also how you would retrieve previously saved searches.

Current Awareness: email Alerts and RSS

- Once you have established search strategies you are happy with you can automate this process by setting up **Alerts** for your searches. In this way, you save your search (see previous slide) and specify when and how often you would like it to be run. The searches will then run automatically at your specified frequency (whether you are logged in or not) and an email will be sent to you, reporting any new articles since the search was last run.
- Alerts can also be created for the **Table of Contents (TOC)** of new journal issues.
- If you have **RSS** software you can also set up RSS feeds. See [Wikipedia](#) for more on [RSS](#), or go to the BBC help on [news feeds](#).

Current Awareness: Databases offering Alert Services

- **Zetoc** indexes table of content details for over 20,000 electronic journals and 16,000 conference proceedings. Zetoc offers Search History, Alerts and RSS feeds. See the [Zetoc Workbook](#) for more information. Note that Zetoc does not allow the use of Boolean operators (*And, Or, Not*, etc) in searches.
- **Other databases** with extensive current awareness features include: Ebsco (*Cinahl/pre-Cinahl, PsycInfo, SocIndex* and others), *Maternity and Infant Care*, Web of Science (*Medline, Science and Social Science Citation Indexes*), *ACM Portal, Emerald* and *Eric*. All of these offer a range of search history, update searching, alerts, table of contents alerts and RSS feeds. Eric offers search history only.
- **Journal services** with current awareness features include: Ingenta, Sage, ScienceDirect, Springerlink and Synergy.

Managing Results – EndNote

- Use Reference Management software to store and organise your references and create bibliographies.
- References can be entered manually or imported from online databases as you search. Bibliographies can be generated automatically.
- The University supports EndNote software. It is available on the network on campus, and at a reduced cost for use off campus. To buy at a discount, select Adept Scientific from your list of Athens resources by logging on to My Athens at www.athens.ac.uk.
- EndNote Web is the Internet based version and can be used with your EndNote desktop package. More information is available at <http://www.uws.ac.uk/schoolsdepts/library/EndNote.asp>

Publishing

- Journals provide **Instructions for Authors** in their printed issues and on their websites. These explain what format papers should be submitted in and which referencing system to use.
- Impact factors are available for journal titles. These are a measure of the quality of the journal. The [ISI Journal Citation Reports](#) (click for more detail) are available via Web of Science databases. These cover the journals on the Science Citation Index and Social Sciences Citation Index.
- Very few nursing journals are included in these journal rankings. This is an ongoing issue for research and development in the information community.
- ISBN's can also be obtained through the library for publishing under the University's auspices. Or go to the [ISBN Agency](#) website.

Advanced Google and Google Scholar 1

- Google is good for finding organisations, reports and web publications. Google is also useful for finding patient information but ensure the site is accredited.
- Use the library databases rather than Google for topic searching. Or use an accredited search engine to search the internet such as [Intute](#) or [HON](#).
- Google Scholar may be useful but you will not have access to subscription-only publications found there unless the library subscribes to them.
- No doubt that Google is immensely useful and powerful. Make use of its wide range of advanced search features by checking the [Advanced Scholar Search Tips](#) on Scholar and the [Advanced Search tips](#) on Google.

Advanced Google and Google Scholar 2

- Google allows the use of Boolean operator OR (in capitals). AND is included automatically.
- Click on the **More** link on the Google home page to see all the services Google offers. These include an email Alert service and the Google directory.
- The Google directory allows you pick a subject to browse the web by. Thus you can limit your search to Google Health or Google Business for example.

Advanced Google and Google Scholar 3

- You can also limit your Google search by **site** just by adding the term “**site:uk**” after your search. For instance, to limit a Google health search for diabetes to **UK** sites, search for *diabetes site:uk*. Or to limit your search to NHS sites, *diabetes site:nhs.uk*
- You can manipulate this feature to help you find, for example, official UK information from a range of locations by adding the following to your term, **AND (site:nhs.uk OR site:ac.uk OR site:gov.uk)**. This will find anything on an NHS website, a UK University website or a UK government website. For example, *breastfeeding AND (site:nhs.uk OR site:ac.uk OR site:gov.uk)*.

Addresses for all links in these slides

1

Searching online resources

<http://www.uws.ac.uk/schoolsdepts/library/guides/documents/SearchingOnlineResourcesPDF.pdf>

Literature Searching

<http://www.uws.ac.uk/schoolsdepts/library/guides/documents/LitSearchBeginnersPDF.pdf>

SFX faqs <http://www.uws.ac.uk/schoolsdepts/library/guides/SFXFAQ.asp>

Library databases <http://www.uws.ac.uk/schoolsdepts/library/resources/index.asp>

Index to Theses <http://www.theses.com/>

Ethos <http://ethos.bl.uk>

COPAC <http://copac.ac.uk/>

Wikipedia <http://www.wikipedia.org/>

RSS Wiki http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_%28file_format%29

BBC RSS <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/3223484.stm>

Addresses for all links in these slides 2

Zetoc Workbook <http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/workbook.html>

My Athens <http://www.athens.ac.uk>

ISI Journal Citation

<http://scientific.thomson.com/free/essays/journalcitationreports/>

ISBN Agency <http://www.isbn-international.org/faqs>

Intute <http://intute.ac.uk/healthandlifesciences/about.html>

HON (Health on the Net) <http://www.hon.ch>

Google Scholar Tips <http://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/refinesearch.html>

Google Search Tips <http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en/help/refinesearch.html>