What's in a Database?

Journal Articles
Peer-Reviewed Articles
Magazine Articles
Newspaper Articles
Statistical information
Images
Reports
Reference books
...and More!

Current.

Authoritative.

Scholarly.

RESEARCH DATABASES
LIBRARY SERVICES

Davis J-124 | HMC A-217 | Trafalgar C-107

HOURS:
Fall & Winter
Monday to Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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CONTACT:
Davis (905) 459-7533 ext.5866
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library.sheridancollege.ca

Abstract – A short summary of an article

Boolean Operator – A search modifier used to define the relationship between your search term(s) in a specific way. The three major operators are AND, OR and NOT.

Citation – the author and publication information of a work

Descriptor – see Subject heading

Full-text – The complete text of an article

Item record – information recorded about a particular item in the database (includes citation information & abstract)

Subject heading – standardized terms applied to item records to describe the subject of a work

Thesaurus – A list of all the subject headings (or descriptors) used by a particular database

Vendor – companies that provide access to databases. Some popular vendors include: EBSCO, ProQuest, and Gale

QUESTIONS?

Online Research Assistance is available through the Ask a Librarian service.
1) On the Library Services webpage, find the Ask a Librarian widget
2) Type your question into the chatbox & begin chatting with a librarian.

TERMINOLOGY

Current.

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Shine Brighter
**Developing a Search Strategy**

Research is a process. Follow the steps below for the best results.

**STEP 1 - State your topic in one sentence**

*Example:* What are the causes of addiction to smoking among teenagers?

**STEP 2 - Identify 2 or 3 main concepts**

*Example:* 1) teenagers 2) addiction 3) smoking

**STEP 3 - Identify synonyms or keywords**

*Example:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPT 1</th>
<th>CONCEPT 2</th>
<th>CONCEPT 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teenagers</td>
<td>addiction</td>
<td>smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adolescents</td>
<td>substance abuse</td>
<td>tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young adults</td>
<td>dependency</td>
<td>cigarettes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIP:** Find additional terms by browsing subject headings, titles, and abstracts as you search.

**TRUNCATION:** Truncate words with an asterisk (*), number sign (#), or question mark (?). Truncation allows you to retrieve variant forms of a root word. See the help tool in your database to determine which symbol is appropriate. *Example:* addict* retrieves addict, addicts, addiction, addictions, and addictive.

**PHRASE:** To specify that terms must be found in the order given, surround with quotation marks. *Example:* “young adults”

**STEP 4 - Connect terms and concepts**

**OR** – broadens your search by specifying that *any* of the listed terms must appear in the article. Use for synonyms. *Example:* teen* OR adolescen* OR “young adults”

**AND** – narrows your search by specifying that *all* of the listed terms must appear in the article. Use for connecting different concepts. *Example:* teen* AND addict* AND smok*

**NOT** – narrows your search by removing articles with unwanted words. USE WITH CAUTION. When you use the NOT operator, you run the risk of missing potentially relevant articles. *Example:* tobacco NOT marijuana

**Entering Your Search Strategy**

Once you have developed your search strategy, you are almost ready to begin entering your terms into various databases.

Before you begin, however, consider limiting the results of your search to:

- Full-text articles only
- A date range (example: 2005-2009)
- Scholarly, peer-reviewed journals
- Or other...

Here is an example of how to enter your search terms in a commonly used search interface:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>teen* or adolescent* or “young adults”</th>
<th>Select a Field (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AND addict* or dependent* or tobacco</td>
<td>Select a Field (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND smoke* or tobacco or cigarette</td>
<td>Select a Field (optional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIELD SEARCHING:** To narrow your results, specify where the database should search for your terms. Try narrowing certain search terms to the abstract, or the title field, for example. If you know the subject terms being used by the database, use these terms and limit the search to the subject field (a.k.a. descriptor).

**TIP:** Try different combinations and keywords to improve your search results. Remember, research is a process!