

Library Life Savers

The Library can save your life

Making Databases Work for You

Choose the right database.

Databases specialize, so half the work is finding the right one for your topic. The library's **Research Guides by Subject** on our Web site can help with this. We've brought together the most frequently used databases in each subject in one place, so you don't have to guess. Bookmark your subject's research guide, and you've got a great homebase for researching.

Use phrase searching whenever you can.

If your search concept is a phrase—global climate change, for example—you don't want to find "global" in the last paragraph of an article, "climate" in the first, and "change" in the fifth. Many databases use quotation marks to indicate that something should be searched as a phrase ("global climate change") with the words appearing in that order right next to each other. Other databases only require that the words be typed together in one search box. Either way, phrase searching saves a heck of a lot of time by eliminating irrelevant results.

When appropriate, use truncation.

Databases often allow truncation symbols (such as an asterisk or question mark) at the end of words to replace one or more characters. This means you can search for all variations of a word without typing each one individually. For example, **recycl*** will return results with recycling, recycled, recyclable, recyclables, etc. Most databases use the asterisk (*) as a truncation symbol, but some use other symbols such as a question mark. Hop into the database's Help guide if you're not sure which to use.

Have the research sent to you.

Most databases offer alerts for staying current in your research. Sign up for a **journal alert**: the database will email you the table of contents for the journals you've selected when new issues are added to the database. Or set up a **search alert**: you can save a search for a subject, keywords, or author, and the database will perform that search every month (or whatever timeframe you choose) and email the results to you. Nothin' better than special delivery to your virtual doorstep!

Contact your personal librarian.

You can do it. We can help. If you're in AP, ED, or O&M, get in touch with Cary (Carolyn) Jardine. For ES and PsyD, your librarian is Jean Amaral.