

Database Researching

- A. Definition: Databases are organized collections of digital information. A database is like a library of articles or books. Databases contain digital content of ebooks, eperiodicals or ejournal articles. Some contain full-text documents, others contain only abstracts or summaries of the document with a bibliographic citation.
- B. Database Searching Theory: Subscription Databases
1. Be aware that online databases do not contain all the resources of the world for several reasons: the expense of converting print sources to digital format, lack of permission from copyright holders, etc. Remember many excellent sources of information are only found in printed form in physical library collections.
 2. Some of the most important sources for reliable research information are found on subscription databases. Libraries differ in what databases they subscribe to based on the needs of their targeted patrons. A key part of the treasure hunt of research lies in finding databases which address your research topics.
 3. Libraries subscribe to many databases, some suitable for students, some of popular interest, and some for scholars. Some databases provide documents on multidisciplinary subjects, and some are limited to particular subject areas or disciplines.
 4. Search databases for periodical and journal articles. These are usually about current subjects that may not yet be published in books. The most recently published articles will be at the top of the list of results or hits.
- C. Database Searching Techniques
1. Normally one can access databases with a library card or user ID and password. If one doesn't have a card to a particular library, usually it is possible to use the databases on site in the library. Ask a reference librarian in that library for assistance.
 2. Search by controlled-vocabulary subject headings as well as keyword. When you get relevant articles, observe the subject headings assigned to the article to give you more ideas to search under.
 3. Use Library of Congress subject headings you've found in library catalogs to search for database articles on your topic as well.
- D. OGS Databases: The OGS library web page is the gateway to online resources accessible from anywhere one has Internet access.