Search tips 101

The basics...

The objective of searching: to find what you need...

Know or have an idea of what you want to search (i.e. class assignment, wanting to learn more about a specific subject...Utilize your new search lessons for anything you wish to learn about!)

For a Successful Database search:

- No Questions! This is not Google.
  
  Instead we...
  
  Boolean Search
  Subject Term Search
  Keyword Search
  Truncation */Wildcards ? or !
  Imagination
  ***Interloan***

Boolean Searching
AND -OR- NOT

- Use **AND** to narrow your search: all of your search terms will show up in the retrieved records.
  Example: Psychology AND child
- Use **OR** to broaden your search by connecting two or more synonyms. You search will yield on or the other term or both.
  Example: Tree’s OR Dirt
- Use **NOT** to exclude term(s) from your search results.
  Example: Instagram NOT Twitter

Subject Term Searching

- Describe the content of each item in a database.
- Use these headings to find relevant items on the same topic.
- Searching by subject headings (a.k.a. descriptors) is the most accurate way to search article databases.
- These must come from a given databases Thesaurus and will only work in the subject field.
- Need to know the exact controlled vocabulary term
- Narrows search results but retrieves all relevant materials available
Example: Searching the subject: Child Psychology

Keyword

- When your keyword searching, you are picking words and short phrases much like a search engine search.
- Usually used when searching new concepts, testing a subject you are unsure about
- Think broad terms, no matter how specific you wish to get, you will yield more results to work with.
- More flexible than subject terms and usually the default search when you begin a database search
- Broadens search results but may retrieve irrelevant materials

Truncation */Wildcards? or!

- * is a truncation: A symbol added to the end of a word to instruct the database to include all forms of a word
  example: adolescen* retrieves adolescent, adolescents, or adolescence
- # is a wild card, used to represent any character example: wom#n retrieves woman or women

Imagination

Use what you have to get what you want from a search. Not sure? Play around with a few words, bounce some ideas off of your professor and/or Librarian! Use a combination of these search techniques until you get what you are looking for. Don’t be shy! Ask for help!

***Interloan: Ask about library interloan! Cannot find what you are looking for in a database or in our physical collection? We can get it for you!***

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