Tips for Searching

*PowerPoint version includes audio (see Play icon on slide) and Notes below slides.*
About our Collections

The UoL Library subscribes many commercial sources on the Internet and provides access to Open Access sources.

**Full text collections** include *Emerald* (E-Journals), *Springer* (E-Books) and company data such as *Mintel* (market Reports).

We provide **multi source** tools to search subscribed collections from a single search (e.g. DISCOVER, Web of Science, SCOPUS).

Some full text collections must be **searched individually** and are not searchable using multi source tools (e.g. Law materials, some Evidence Based medicine sources, market data, Standards/ISOs, patents...
Google and Google Scholar provides a useful additional tool to search for scholarly materials.

When accessed from the Library for Online Programmes, Google uses your University Login to access commercial resources.

When accessed outside the UoL campus or Library site, Google products will direct you to commercial/non-licensed sources.

When viewing search results, so we recommend our multi source platforms, e.g. DISCOVER (or other subject specialist databases) as your primary search method.
Searching for Library Resources

Online students can search electronic resources at https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online or the campus Library https://liverpool.ac.uk/library (this site will display physical shelf collections).

The E-Resources page https://libguides.liv.ac.uk/online/eresources provides multi source tools such as DISCOVER to search licensed collections by keyword, phrase, title or author.

DISCOVER can be used to search across all licensed full text collections, including E-Books, R-Journal articles and conference proceedings.

You can access other multi source platforms for scholarly articles such as SCOPUS or Web of Science (see Library home > Major Databases).

You can also search individual full text collections such as Emerald, Springer or ScienceDirect, e.g. as part of your Literature Review or Systematic Review.

To search other individual collections, specialist databases and external Web resources, see the E-Resources area https://libguides.liv.ac.uk/online/eresources

If you cannot see a required collection/database please see our A-Z list of Databases.
Searching for Vs. Locating Resources

When you use the search tools on the Library Web site you should be aware that there are broadly two kinds of search activity –

- **Reviewing the available literature by searching** across E-Books, E-Journals or other resource types using keywords/phrases (or possibly a known author’s name)

- **Locating a required resource** - where you have either been asked to read a resource or found a reference to a particular resource (e.g. on the Internet) and need to locate the resource.
Searching for Resources

You may need to perform a broad search for resources on a particular topic. This can be achieved using related *keywords, phrases* or more specific details.

For example, we could search for “international British petroleum industry strategy” across a range of resource types, including E-Journal articles, E-Books, Reports & Data, Theses and Dissertations or Open Access sources.

There are various reasons why you will need to search for resources –

- You could be searching for **general background information** for your course subject area.

- You may need to search for information on a **specific topic** (such as researching a particular industry for a class discussion question).

- You will need to search for reading material and background information for your chosen **dissertation topic** (your ‘literature review’).
Locating Resources

You may be asked to read a particular E-Journal article, E-Book, report or other resource within your **reading list** (see our [tutorial on using reading lists](#)).

You may be provided with a **direct link** to the resource or you may need to locate this resource yourself using the search tools provided on the Library Web site.

You may identify a potentially useful resource during your reading or when using Library databases and may need to **locate the potentially useful resource**.

When this happens, you should note down any **publication details** for the resource, then use tools provided within the Library Web site to locate your required resource.
The Library for Online Programmes (https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/home) provides tools to check/visit a particular E-Journal article or E-Book.

In DISCOVER, type the required article, book, report etc. title (for chapters, type the book title), then select ‘Search by title’.

You can also visit an article/conference proceeding using the ‘Go to an Article’ tool shown in the E-resources area, then see the E-Journals page https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/journals
Guidance on using the Library

When searching for resources you should consider the purpose of the search and select appropriate search tools available using the Library. You should use Library search tools slightly differently depending on your current aims, e.g.:

- Searching for general background materials.
- Performing a search for a particular assignment or discussion.
- Searching for background material for your dissertation.
If you are searching for general background materials on your programme area you may wish to begin by searching for E-Books to read about your chosen subject area.

When performing a broad search on materials for your programme area you will need to search using keywords, industry terms or phrases which match the broad topics you are studying.

For example if you are studying ‘Public Health’ you could search for E-Books on this term, but you may also wish to search for keywords related to aspects of the programme or subject area, such as "Public health epidemiology", "qualitative methods public health", "public health promotion" etc.
Assignment/ discussion searching

If you are performing a search for a **particular assignment or discussion question** you should consult a range of information sources, including E-Books, E-Journal articles and Reports and Data. However, for information on a specific professional or scholarly area or for the most recent developments in the relevant field, you may need to focus on **E-Journal articles** (also potentially **reports/data relevant to your sector/discipline**), since these will likely contain a greater degree of recent commentary than Books.

You will need to use a more focused search using **keywords or phrases** matching the topic you are searching for, for example if you have been asked to research the British petroleum industry and industrial strategies you could try a range of keywords related to this topic such as “British petroleum industry strategy”.

If you are searching for background material for your dissertation you should consult a **wide range of resource types/ formats**, including Theses and Dissertations, E-Books, Reports and Data, E-Journal articles and other sources, such as Open Access and scholarly repositories. Further sections of this tutorial will introduce searching these resource types.
# Summary of Search Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task or Activity</th>
<th>Primary formats/sources</th>
<th>Secondary formats/sources</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General background materials on your programme area</td>
<td>E-Books</td>
<td>E-Journals, Open Access/ Web based sector, NGO or other authoritative sources</td>
<td>You may wish to search for keywords related to the broad aspects of the programme or subject area, such as “Public health epidemiology”, “qualitative methods public health”, “public health promotion” etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment or discussion question</td>
<td>E-Journals, Reports &amp; Data, Specialist sources (e.g. Law, Clinical trials reports).</td>
<td>E-Journals, Open Access/ Web based sector, NGO or other authoritative sources</td>
<td>You will need to use a more focused search using keywords or phrases which match the topic you are searching for, for example if you have been asked to research the British petroleum industry and industrial strategies you could try a range of keywords related to this topic such as “British petroleum industry strategy”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background material for your dissertation</td>
<td>All sources : Theses and Dissertations, E-Books, Reports and Data, E-Journal articles, WWW sources, scholarly repositories etc.</td>
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</table>
Suggestions for Search Options

When using search tools or links to external collections, you should consider the 'keywords' you will use to search for articles, E-Books etc. Using keywords which accurately describe the topic you are researching will produce better results than general keywords which describe only your broad area of study or broad area of writing.
To search for a **topic or subject area**, you should use keywords or phrases which relate to the area you are searching for, you can also usually omit connecting words such as 'and', 'in', 'the' etc.

For example, if we wish to search for "Systems design factors in the telecommunications industry", keywords could include:

- "Systems design factors telecommunications industry".

We can use this search phrase or query to search for resources in a range of search systems and collections.
Selecting keywords

When **selecting keywords** to search, avoid being too general as you may retrieve too many search results, but also, try not to be too specific as you may miss relevant information.

For example, searching for "business management" will produce results on a wide range of business and management topics, but "business management pharmaceutical sector" will produce more specific results for the sector being described in the keywords.
Further suggestions

- Limit your database or collection search **to a specific field**. Most databases will allow you to refine your search so it only searches in a specific field, such as the title, author, keyword etc.

- You can also often **limit your search to only scholarly (peer reviewed) journals**. Scholarly/professional journals are primary sources of information through which new research is made known.

- You can often **limit your search by publication type**. Most search systems have a variety of publication types - journal article, book, review, conference proceeding, working paper, company report, letter, editorial etc.

- You can also often **limit your search by publication date or language**.

- **Use similar words**. For example, if you are searching for references to 'intelligent computer systems', you could also try searching for similar words such as 'artificial intelligence' etc.
Further suggestions

• **Use similar (synonymous) words.** For example, if you are searching for references to 'intelligent computer systems', you could also try searching for similar words such as 'artificial intelligence' etc.

• **Consider about spelling variants** - for example (US spellings), color/colour, and abbreviations, for example, electronic business/ e-business/ebusiness or World Wide Web/ WWW. Also think about the terminology used in different countries, for example, primary education - UK terminology/elementary education - US terminology.

• **Try another search system.** If you have only searched one search tool it could be that you need to search other Library systems to find relevant results. It is always advisable to search more than one search tool to ensure you have a wide coverage of the literature available.
Advanced ‘operators’

You can also use **advanced ‘operators’** when searching from the homepage of individual collections/platforms, for example you could specify “Management systems NOT human resources” to obtain results on management systems, but exclude results containing ‘human resources’.

**Other operators** include ‘OR’ to specify two searchable keyword phrases and ‘AND’ to search for a number of terms (most search systems automatically add ‘AND’ between words used in your search).

The following table illustrates typical search operators and techniques, you should note that some search systems have specific uses for operators or may have their own local operator codes. You can see how these work in more detail by reading the Help resources within these individual systems:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>How it works</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AND</strong></td>
<td>Add ‘and’ between words to ensure multiple words are included in the search, you should note however that most search systems automatically add ‘and’ between your keywords.</td>
<td>management AND systems AND design</td>
<td>Only articles where all these words are present will be searched, although not necessarily in this order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOT</strong></td>
<td>Add ‘not’ to exclude words from your search.</td>
<td>management not planning development</td>
<td>Only articles which contain ‘management’ will be retrieved, but those containing the term ‘planning development’ will be excluded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
<td>Add ‘or’ to search for multiple keyword phrases.</td>
<td>Management systems or management design</td>
<td>Only articles which contain the phrase management systems or management design will be retrieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>The ‘wildcard’ can often be used to ‘guess’ missing text.</td>
<td>system* design</td>
<td>Any articles which contain versions of the word system and design will be retrieved, e.g. system design, systems design, systemized design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“”</td>
<td>Quotation marks can be used to force a literal phrase or expression.</td>
<td>“systems design methodology”</td>
<td>Only articles which contain this literal phrase will be retrieved, excluding articles which may contain all three words but not the exact arrangement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opening Full Text links

When you follow a full text link from databases or collections you may be immediately directed to the full text abstract or PDF, or you may be directed to an Is it @ Liverpool intermediate screen containing details about the resource:

If the screen shows 'Full text not available' this means it is unlikely we have access to the resource via our subscription systems, however if a link is shown for the resource, you should follow this link to visit the full text version of the document.

NOTE: we do not hold subscriptions for all E-Journals available on the Internet, nor will we always have access to all years of coverage, so it is possible you may encounter ‘Full text not available’ when viewing search result (see note below on unavailable resources).
Managing Browser Windows

Whilst moving away from individual Web sites, search results or search systems you may find these links open in a **new Web browser window** or **Tab** (within your Web browser), however some links will open the destination page or resource within the current Web browser window (e.g. where search results were located).

You should consider opening links in a **new Web browser window** or **Tab** to ensure your original Web page, search results or search system remains open in the background. For details on opening pages in a new Web browser window and other aspects of managing your computer desktop, see our help page on **Using the Web and Accessing Documents**.
Most search systems/collections such as DISCOVER provide an advanced search option to limit your search to ‘Peer Review’ journals only.

These are journals which undertake a rigorous academic review process to ensure the quality of articles published. You can also often refine existing search results, e.g. in DISCOVER you will see a 'peer review' tick box in the left menu of your results page.

The SCOPUS system also provides only peer reviewed content when searching for journal articles.
Unavailable Resources

Please note, some of our search tools provide will non-subscribed content, however you can use the tools on our search pages to check if a particular E-Journal, article or E-Book are available.

Also see our guide on Finding Unavailable Resources, Campus Libraries and External Services.

If you are resident in the UK and have registered for Library borrowing you may be able to obtain a non-digital resource using campus Library services, see https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/libraries

You can also see options for using Library services in your region https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/worldcat
Support and Advice

• For training video, guides and tutorials on using the Library please see the Training page shown in the left menu of the Library for Online Programmes http://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/training

• For general enquiries using Library resources or login help please see our 24/7 support services at http://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/support

• If you have any further questions, to schedule a consultation or to report ongoing problems please contact the Librarian at the first opportunity http://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/support