ONLINE RESEARCH PROJECT

The purpose of this exercise is to introduce you to online research techniques. Your job is to search library databases in order to create a working bibliography on the subject of your essay.

You will be marked primarily on the effectiveness of complex search terms and on correct MLA citation.

A working bibliography is a list of books and articles that you might use for your research paper. You don’t have to use all the sources you list here because as you research and write your paper, some will turn out not to be relevant to your argument.

Use one page for each of your three database searches (MLA, OCLC, and JSTOR). Each page should have the following format:

1. at the top, provide the name of the database, e.g.
   JSTOR
2. provide your successful search term, e.g.
   "William Blake" AND ("illuminated printing" OR "infernal method") +ty:fla
3. indicate the number of results for your successful search term (aim for 10–50 for each database)
4. from the results of the database search, compile a short bibliography of promising references (aim for 4–10 for each database): use MLA citation format

Use the following three databases:

1. a traditional bibliographical source converted to database
   MLA: the bibliography of the Modern Language Association. It indexes mainly titles, abstracts, and other bibliographical information. It may contain links to full-text articles (not searchable through the MLA interface). This search tool focuses on international literature, linguistics and folklore. http://library.usask.ca/scripts/access?MLA
   *NOTE: Make sure you turn off SmartText Searching or your results will be skewed.

2. a metasearch tool: simultaneously search multiple sources
   OCLC: indexes and consolidates information from many databases (library holdings, journal title pages, bibliographical databases, etc.). It indexes mainly titles, abstracts, etc. It may contain links to full-text articles (not searchable through OCLC). OCLC finds material in academic libraries worldwide. Subject matter is diverse and comprehensive. http://library.usask.ca/scripts/access?OCLC

3. a database containing archives of full-text articles
   JSTOR: this search engine allows you to search bibliographical information such as titles, abstracts, etc., but also the full text of journal articles on a wide range of subjects. Your search terms should accordingly take into account words and phrases that might be important but would not necessarily appear in titles and abstracts. http://www.jstor.org.cyber.usask.ca
**Boolean Operators**

White areas indicate terms excluded from result sets, and shaded gray areas indicate the final results of a query.

| **AND operator:** | copyright and internet  
|                   | finds only the items that contain both terms. |
| **OR operator:**  | copyright or internet  
|                   | finds items that contain either term or both terms. |
| **NOT operator:** | copyright not internet  
|                   | finds items that contain the term copyright and excludes from the set any items that contain the term internet. |

**Search order:**

copyright AND internet OR Napster finds items containing both copyright and internet, then finds items containing Napster whether or not they contain copyright or internet.

*By default the database or search engine will process search terms from left to right, but it processes all the AND and NOT operators before processing the OR operators. The term above is the same as the nested terms: (copyright AND internet) OR Napster and Napster OR (copyright AND internet)*

**Parentheses (Nesting):**

Copyright AND (internet OR Napster) finds items containing internet or Napster or both terms, and then finds within those results all the items that contain copyright.

*Any terms enclosed in parentheses will be processed first.*
SEARCH TIPS

MLA

Boolean operators: search operators AND, OR, and NOT are supported
  • Processes AND before OR unless ( ) are used
  • Processes the innermost parenthetical expression first, then the next, and so on for
    nested parentheses

Wildcard: ? to replace a single character (can’t be the first character)
  e.g. wom?n finds woman and women

Plurals: if a singular term is entered, the search engine automatically includes the default plural
  e.g. egg finds egg and eggs

Truncation: *
  e.g. comput* finds computer, computers, computation, computing

Proximity: N or W
  e.g. tax N5 reform finds these words within 5 of one another, regardless of order in
  which they appear
  e.g. tax W5 reform finds these words within 5 of one another, in the order in which
  they appear (it will find “tax reform” but not “reform of tax”)

Exact Phrases: typically, when a phrase is enclosed by double quotations marks, the exact
  phrase is searched (note that this is not true of phrases containing stop words—common words
  such as been, however, so, etc.—which will never be searched for, even if the phrase is enclosed
  in double quotation marks)

Field codes: uses two-character abbreviations such as SU for Subject, AU for Author or TI for
  Article Title
  e.g. SU Sports Injuries and Hockey finds articles that include the subject sports
  injuries and the term hockey

For more information on searching see MLA > Help > Searching

OCLC

Boolean operators: AND, OR, and NOT are supported
  • Processes AND, OR, or NOT in left-to-right order unless ( ) are used

Wildcard: # to replace a single character
  e.g. wom#n finds woman and women
Wildcard: \? to replace 0 or more characters:
  e.g. col?or finds color, colour, colonizer, colorimeter
  e.g. colo?1r finds just color and colour

Truncation: *
  e.g. comput* finds computer, computers, computation, computing

Plurals: +
  e.g. mammal+

Proximity: W or N
  e.g. aluminum w wiring finds these two words with no words between
  e.g. aluminum w2 wiring finds no more than two words between these two words (in
  the order entered)
  e.g. overview N 1998 finds these words with no words between and in any order
  e.g. chicken N3 egg finds these words in any order, and no more than 3 words
  between

For more information on searching see OCLC > Help > Contents of Help > Searching

JSTOR

Boolean operators: AND, OR, and NOT are supported (or use +, ||, and –)
  • Processes AND before OR unless ( ) are used

Wildcard: \? to replace a single character
Wildcard: * to replace more than one character

Plurals: &
  e.g. cat& will find cat and cats
  e.g. sky& will find sky and skies
  e.g. knife& will find knife & knives

Proximity: ~
  e.g. "debt forgiveness" ~10

Exact Phrases: double quotation marks (") before and after the phrase
  e.g. "stock options"
  e.g. "fermat's last theorem"

Field codes: supported
for a list of field codes see JSTOR > Help > Searching JSTOR
  e.g. to eliminate types of articles: "dime novel" -ty:brv will find articles on dime
  novels in all fields but will eliminate those that are classified as book reviews