

Search Strategies

Database & Internet Searching Methods

Search Strategy is a methodical approach to finding information in databases or on the Internet. The search method may involve the selection of suitable databases, appropriate keywords, narrowing, broadening or combining the search terms, etc.

Keyword searching:

Searches terms appearing in the full-text or the other fields depending on the database.
santiago / Santiago

Subject searching:

Searches subject headings in indexes.
ikebana arrangement

Name and Title searching:

Searches for the specific name or title.
mies van der rohe, ludwig
unnatural wonders:

Natural language or phrase searching:

Searches sentences or phrases containing two or more words:
find articles on Dadaism
sustainable green architecture

Quotation Marks:

“” Searches the exact words in that order.
“father of dada”

Boolean Commands

AND, OR, NOT Boolean commands bring together or eliminate one or two different fields of queries.
earth AND mars
tea NOT coffee
sun OR moon eclipse

Wildcard Characters

* or ? symbols inserted in the word query when searching for variations and or plurals of words or when unsure of the word's spelling.

Print*: print collectors
print making
print workshops

Electronic Databases – Resources

Any type of electronic information stored in a database, online, or on CD-ROMs:

[Art Full Text](#)

[Image databases](#)

[Library catalogs](#)

Subject Directories

A list of web sites on specific subjects created by subject specialists:

[Best of the Web](#)

Librarians' Index to the Internet www.lii.org
OpenDirectory Project <http://dmoz.org>

Search Engines

Web sites using robotic software to collect and to index information from the Internet, and making it searchable through different search methods. Currently close to 20 billion web pages are indexed.

www.alltheweb.com

www.altavista.com

www.google.com

Meta Search Engines

A search engine capable of simultaneous searching and gathering of search results provided by a multitude of Search Engines, and displaying results either by Relevance, Search Engine or Clustered Results.

www.dogpile.com

www.metacrawler.com

www.vivisimo.com

Power Searching

Various ways of controlling, limiting & refining search queries through the use of menu systems offered in the Advanced or Expanded Search mode of online Catalogs, Databases, Search & Meta Search Engines. Power Search commands are not always the same and vary depending on the Search Engine in use.

www.searchenginewatch.com/facts/

The Advanced Search limiters may include any of the following:

Audience
Barcode / Call / Standard Numbers
Content
Cross-Platform
Date
Document Type
Format
Language
Location
Publication Type
Results Sorting Option

Database - Web Page Evaluation

Altered, forged or original information?
Authority, credentials on the subject?
Cluttered graphic design / User-friendly interface?
Objective or bias?
Rated well in a directory?
Recent or dated information?
Well documented sources?
What web sites does it link to - who links to it?
What type of domain: com, edu, gov, net, org?

Internet Detective a free tutorial for website evaluation
<http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/detective/>



Information Literacy & Bibliographies

Information Literacy refers to the necessary skills and the effective search process required for identifying, locating and evaluating all types of information on any subject using different tools and materials.

A **Bibliography** is an organized list and its purpose is to identify and to locate information on any subject.

WorldCat—OCLC is an online universal bibliographic catalog for searching different types of materials located in libraries all over the world. It is an excellent source for searching and creating bibliographies.

Bibliographic Citation Styles

Citation is the bibliographic information identifying the author, the book or journal title, the article, the edition, the volume, the date, the publisher and the page numbers.

The following are the current citation styles:

AMA: American Medical Association

APA: American Psychological Association

Chicago Manual of Style

MLA: Modern Language Association

Turabian Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations

Some journal databases provide citation style options. For example, see **EBSCO HOST Research Databases** Citation format options under Print, Email, Save accessible in Folder Contents.

For additional information and examples of the bibliographic citation styles please visit these web sites:

Long Island University

<http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citation.htm>

The Writers' Workshop

http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/writer_resources/citation_styles/citation_styles.htm

Books on the various citation styles may be found on the following floors at Mid-Manhattan Library:

2nd floor: American Medical Association manual of style

5th floor: Publication manual of the American Psychological Association

2nd & 3rd: The Chicago manual of style

2nd & 3rd: MLA handbook for writers of research papers

3rd floor: The MLA style manual

2nd & 3rd: Student's guide for writing college papers
(Turabian Manual)

Search topic, places to look, questions to ask...

If you are not satisfied with your Internet search results, for example using Google, please do not assume the information cannot be located elsewhere.

Other sources for finding information are books, journals and magazines. If you are finding too little or too much information on your topic then you need to broaden or narrow your search terms:

“What hazards or side effects do art materials have on artists?”

In this example, the main topics or keywords are hazards, art materials, and artists. After you have selected your topic then you decide where to look and what to ask.

The search process begins with consulting **dictionaries** and **encyclopedias**. Most libraries have a collection of these items available online. Many NYPL Electronic Databases and the library catalogs can be accessed from outside with your valid **library card** at www.nypl.org.

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

These sources are good starting points and they usually provide recent bibliographies that will further help you with your search topic.

LEO Branch Libraries Catalog for All types of circulating and reference materials: audios, books, CDs, DVDs, eBooks, and downloading audio and video

CATNYP Online Catalog

Research Libraries Catalog for different types of research materials to be used only at the libraries.

If neither of these two catalogs list what you are looking for, then check **WorldCat—OCLC**. Most of the time you will find it in this catalog along with a list of the libraries housing the item. If the library is located in New York City, then ask a librarian to issue a **Metro Card** so you can possibly access the item at that library. If the library is outside of New York City, then you have the option of filing an **Interlibrary** loan for the item to be delivered to a New York Public Library Branch.

Continue your search process with looking up the topic in NYPL's **Magazines, Journals & Databases Online**.

If you are not certain whether to search popular magazines, scholarly journals, newspapers, or specific publications, then start with **Periodicals Contents Index**. Popular press is entertaining and provides an overview without footnotes or bibliographies. Scholarly journals are written by and for a professional audience, are peer reviewed and provide footnotes and bibliographies. Newspapers provide daily coverage of the current news. In some cases you may only find the information indexed in a journal database, so you should continue to explore all the search options and sources listed in this guide.

We encourage you to please stop by any of the reference desks and ask the librarians for assistance.

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