

SEARCHING DATABASES

Searching the Library's databases is an essential skill for successful research. Research databases are searchable collections of electronic resources, organized by title, subject area, resource type, date, language and geographic focus. Selecting the best research database for your topic is an important step.

WHAT THEY ARE

The main advantages of conducting searches in subject databases:

- You can search for articles or books from a variety of sources;
- The Full Text versions of most books and articles you find are available; and
- Often the resources you find have been evaluated for authority and accuracy (peer reviewed); this varies across journals and it is always best to check the individual journal to be sure of their editorial process.

The European University Institute Library subscribes to hundreds of databases. Browse the [list of databases by alphabetical order \[A-Z list\]](#):

- [Databases](#) - subject-specific databases allowing access to materials in your chosen subject area and date range.
- [Research Data Portal](#) - the EUI Library Data Portal supplies access to Library-licensed macroeconomic, micro-socioeconomic and Europe-related databases.

Each discipline area has its most useful research databases. Searching databases differs from using a search engine such as Google. Learning how to use the advanced search techniques for databases is a skill which takes time to learn but will yield more relevant information.

This guide helps you find databases on the Library website, search for and retrieve information, and manage the results of your searches to support your research. To search effectively, it is necessary to turn your research question into keywords.

Once you have developed your research question and have created a list of keywords, you can search subject-specific databases to find research to support your question.

STEPS

LOCATING DATABASES

From the [Library's main page](#), scroll down to the link for Collections. Once you arrive on the [Collections page](#), select the [link for Databases](#).

- If you are choosing to access one of the databases mentioned above, use the A-Z listings to find the database you will be searching.
- If you are unsure which database you would like to use you may connect to the appropriate Specialised Guide in the list .

You may also go the [Library catalogue search box](#) and do a simple search by title. When you find the database catalogue record, select Available Online > View Online > Title of the Database. The link will take you to the database where you can perform a simple search or an advanced search.

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In a simple search, you enter your terms in the main search box of the database.

In an advanced search, you conduct a search by selecting multiple fields to target the information you need by narrowing your search:

- Each database is formatted and laid out differently, but most can be filtered and/or results can be sorted by:
 - Publication date or date range
 - Author
 - Publication title and/or type
 - Subject area or topic
 - Geographical area
 - Language

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BOOLEAN OPERATORS

- Many databases support the use of Boolean operators, AND, OR, NOT. In some cases, they are prepopulated in the drop down menus of the advanced search pages. In other cases, you must manually enter the operators between search terms.
 - AND - searches for both the terms joined by AND; both terms must appear in the resources returned by the search. This narrows your search. For example, artificial AND intelligence will return only results with artificial and intelligence.
 - OR – searches for either term joined by OR; either term must appear in the results returned by the search. This broadens your search. For example, AI OR artificial intelligence will return results with AI, artificial, or intelligence.
 - NOT – searches for results that do not include the term following NOT. This narrows your search. For example, AI NOT insemination will return results that include AI but do not include insemination.
- You can also type in a phrase in quotation marks "-" to search for an exact phrase – this will supply a narrower scope of results. For example, "European Green Deal"
- You can add an asterisk (*) or question mark (?) to search for multiple forms of the same word. For example, comput* finds the words compute, computer, computers, computing, computation. Wom?n will return results with woman, women, womyn.
- To find Open Access (OA) resources, you may add plugins to your browser, such as [Unpaywall.org](https://unpaywall.org) and [Open Access Button](#) to find OA resources outside the Library's collections. Additional [Open Access Tools & Services](#) are also listed on our webpage.

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YOUR RESULTS

Once you have filtered your search results to the appropriate level, you can look at the articles in greater detail by selecting the titles to read the summary or abstract. To limit your search to journals that use peer review, check the Peer Reviewed Journals box in left column under Refine Results.

When you find articles that you would like to use in your research, you can

- copy the permalinks to your Research Tracker
- email them to yourself
- print them
- download them to a folder on your device, and/or
- export them to your instance of Zotero using the Cite option.

Though many databases offer a save function, this is the least preferable way to manage your research as it may only be temporary, and you may lose all your hard work.

TIPS



Library searching is a discovery process! Do not be afraid to experiment, explore and [Ask Your Liaison Librarian](#) for help if you need it. If your search returns few or no results, try using synonyms in various combinations.

KEEPING NOTES

Create a folder or use a notebook or journal to support your progress. It may include a critical thinking record to support your development as a critical thinker on your research question, a list of sources consulted, keywords used, concepts, historical references.

OTHER RESOURCES & DEFINITIONS

- Bernard, D., Bobish, G., Hecker, J., Holden, I., Hosier, A., Jacobson, T., Loney, T., & Bullis, D. (2014). [Gather: Finding what you need. In The information literacy user's guide: An open, online textbook.](#)
- [Guide to Factiva by ProQuest](#)
- [OECD iLibrary, EUI Library guide](#)
- [Open Access Research in Cadmus](#)
- [Open Access Tools at EUI](#)
- [Research Tracker template](#)
- Salmons, J. (2022). [Gather your data online. Sage Campus. To begin, you must create an account in Sage Campus using your EUI login details](#)
- [Statista, EUI Library guide](#)

DEFINITIONS

Data: information collected to be examined, considered and used to help decision-making and research, or information in an electronic form that can be stored and used by a computer.

Database: an organised collection of large amount of information in a computer system that can be accessed electronically; in the library, databases store research resources.

Portal: a website that provides access or links to other sites with a particular subject; in a library, it supplies access to research resources such as data.



NEXT STEPS Using Google Scholar or Using Web of Science