

welcome to your Saskatchewan e-library services and resources



Selecting a Database

Database: A collection of information that has been systematically organized for easy access and analysis.

1. Magazine databases

- Log on to Southeast Regional Library
- Select e-library services, magazine and reference databases
- Explain the use and purpose of full text electronic journals
- Conduct searches using all fields:
 - ISSN ex.
 - Title
 - Keyword
 - Subject

NOTE: this will only produce results in a *list of databases* that contain info. on the topic being searched. It will not return results such as articles, etc. Be sure to review the individual search strategies with each database.

2. List of databases by subject

- These list the subjects that are covered by databases available to Southeast Regional Library patrons. Each subject offers a brief description of its content.
- Very useful for subject searches in broad areas.
- Find here the **Encyclopedia Britannica** (under encyclopedia).

3. List of databases by title

- Alphabetical list of all databases available to Southeast Regional Library patrons.
- Explain *In* library and *Out* of library service.
- Each database title has a brief explanation of content.

Databases for Health Information

1. Health Reference Center Academic – Thomson Gale
Search magazines, reference books and pamphlets for information related to your health.

Pros:

- Results include many technical in-depth research articles and papers
- Excellent for in-depth research
- Returns many results

Cons:

- Results include many technical in-depth research articles and papers
- Can return too many results to browse

Example: Try an advanced search: Hernia AND treatment AND surgery

2. **CBCA Complete - ProQuest**

Fulltext Education Covers monographs and journal articles from over 150 Canadian education journals, many in full text.

Pros:

- returns results from both magazines and newspapers (ex. Globe and Mail),
- can limit search by database type in all searches,
- can mark and create list of articles of interest
- full text, e-mail, citations, abstracts, printing and graphics available
- results sorted in scholarly journals, magazines, trade publications and newspapers
- Search by topic guide: enter a topic (ex. medicine) and results will be sorted according to the topic and relevance.

Cons:

Example: Laparoscopy AND Canadian Journal of Surgery

3. **Canadian Periodical Index (CPI.Q) – Thompson Gale**

Search a comprehensive list of Canadian and international journals, magazines and newspapers for information important to Canadians.

Pros:

- searches a wide range of periodicals with Canadian content
- Journal search links user to complete issues of a specified magazine

Cons:

- Best results are attained from a narrow search, too many results are returned from a broad search or none at all
- Example: Try a journal search: Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine, results will display all issues available online.

4. **Expanded Academic ASAP Index – Thomson Gale**

Scholarly journals, magazines and newspapers - with full text and images.

Pros:

- Familiar InfoTrac format
- Results are from reliable and popular journals ex) Maclean's
- Fast results
- Some results can be highly technical in-depth research reports

Cons:

- Some results can be highly technical in-depth research reports
- Not all results may be relevant – especially in keyword searching

Example: Try a keyword search: Cardiograms

5. **Cochrane Library**

A collection of evidence-based medicine databases, including the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

Pros:

- Results are highly technical, in-depth research articles
- Allows for wildcard searches ex) chemo*
- Provides many fields for a detailed advanced

Cons:

- Results are highly technical, in-depth research articles
- Many results will have restricted access without a license to all resources

Example: radiotherapy OR chemotherapy AND cancer

6. **Discovering Collection**

A comprehensive database of in-depth reference content for the core curriculum areas of Literature, History, Biographies, Science and Social Studies.

Pros:

- Provides primary document and multimedia links from a reference selection.
- Excellent reference and "overview" style information – a good place to start a search.

- Displays and organizes results by content level: basic, intermediate, advanced

Cons:

- Limited to searches within the selected topics of Literature, History, Biographies, Science and Social Studies
- Provides many results from broad searching style, many can be irrelevant

Example: Atherosclerosis

7. **Encyclopedia Britannica**

The online version of the encyclopedia.

Pros:

- Easy to search keyword option
- Results return full encyclopedic entries complete with links to related topics and even maps and images.
- Offers general interest features such as "this day in history," "biography of the day," etc.
- Other search options include searching by Index and A-Z Browse (alphabetical), subject, timeline and even notable occurrences in "Year in Review."
- Results are organized into Encyclopedia Britannica and Britannica Student Encyclopedia, websites and multi-media groupings.
- Links to entries regarding key related topics in any article are provide in the articles.

Cons:

- Subject browsing can be time consuming as the user is required to select options for narrowing the topic.
- Timeline search is a unique and interesting feature but the topics may be too broad for retrieving detailed information.

Example: electrocardiogram

8. **Health and Wellness Resource Centre**

Search magazines, reference books, and newspapers for information related to your health.

Pros:

- Fast results
- Contains search strategies as a medical encyclopedia, drug finder, health organizations, medical dictionary, health news and health assessments (links to assessing your own health)
- Results returned in magazines/journals and general reference sources

Cons:

- Encyclopedia searches are limited to a few select topics.
Example: West Nile Virus

9. **InfoTrac Onefile – Thomson Gale**

A one-stop source for news and periodical articles on a wide range of topics.

Pros:

- Ideal starting place for broad searches on any topic
- Fast result returns
- Variety of articles and newspapers are searched
- Includes both in-depth and over-arching concept articles
- Includes images and photographs with the article text

Cons:

Example: Try a relevance search (ranks results by amount of relevant content contained in the article to the search query):
Congestive heart failure

10. **Student Edition**

Students can search magazines, newspapers and reference books when researching a topic for school.

Pros:

- Similar friendly interface as with *Junior Edition* database
- Variety of results available: encyclopedia entries, articles, newspapers, reference books, etc.
- Excellent for gaining a quick overview of a topic

Cons:

- Fewer in-depth research articles

Example: Alzheimer's Disease in Reference book and Encyclopedia entries

Internet Search Engines

There are many different types of search engines available, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Note: An *Internet Browser* is the software that allows a user access to the Internet ex) Netscape, Microsoft Internet Explorer. *Search engines* are designed to retrieve information from the Internet. Some search engines are:

1. Open Directory Project: a database of information that lists websites in categories such as arts, reference, sports, etc.
 - o Pros: define a search easily by clicking on one of the predetermined categories ex) Reference – Libraries – Public
 - o Cons: Websites must be accepted into the database “lists” in order to be found, time intensive as a user must “click” their way up and down the organization plan of the site.
 - o www.dmoz.com
2. Looksmart: Sorts the Internet’s content and arranges websites into directory, relevant and reviewed categories.
 - o Pros: Good for multi-word searches and travel related information. Allows for searches of articles or related websites. Can sort results by a variety of options (date, relevance, publication name, length), searches for articles related to a topic, not websites..
 - o Cons: Searches for articles related to a topic, not websites.
 - o www.looksmart.com
3. Yahoo: Sorts websites by categories, one of the most popular and useful search tools available.
 - o Pros: Excellent for generalized searches, especially anything organized into categories such as companies or general information. Search via format ex) images only
 - o Cons: Returns many results, sometimes not relevant to the search.
 - o www.yahoo.com

Meta-search engines

These are search engines that search other search engines. Upon submitting a query, meta-search engines will search the results of other search engines to return the best results or a compilation of results.

1. Dogpile:

- Pros: will compile results from the most popular search engines such as MSN, Yahoo and Google. Can search via format (video, images, audio, etc.)
 - Cons: will return only the top 10 search results from each search engine, produces a browseable list of results, however, the list may not be long.
 - www.dogpile.com
2. Mamma:
- Pros: very fast, good for general information and shopping (auctions, online shopping, etc.), usually very current, search by format (images, news, websites)
 - Cons: will return a browseable number of results, however, as such it may not return many results.
 - www.mamma.com

Indexes

Indexes search websites and then rank the results of a particular search via relevance. Relevance is determined by the number of times a particular word, keyword, address, title, description or phrase is found in a given website.

1. Google: The most popular search tool on the Internet, it ranks its results by the number of links a particular website already has in order to determine relevancy.
 - Pros: accurate, very fast, good for specific searches, "I feel lucky" option, offers a Canadian version
 - Cons: returns too many results to review all of them
 - www.google.ca or www.google.com
2. Hotbot: Allows for highly specific and personalized search strategies and limits (date, content, formats).
 - Pros: fast returns, good for broad specific searches, has a filter option
 - Cons: has a filter option, linked to Google therefore may duplicate results from elsewhere
 - www.hotbot.com
3. Northern Light: Good for specific searches and arranges results by relevancy.
 - Pros: offers different perspective and searches than Google, search via different topics such as business, news, general searches.
 - Cons: requires registration and subscription
 - www.northernlight.com

4. Ask Jeeves: Search tool that allows the user to ask any question as a search strategy. Uses a database of questions and possible answers
 - Pros: good for broad searches or if you have a question
 - Cons: may return many irrelevant and generalized results
 - www.ask.com
5. Alta Vista: Results are determined by the discovery of keywords on webpages
 - Pros: Good for searching for images and sounds as these are listed in separate categories from text articles, very fast returns. Can search via format (sound, images, video, etc.)
 - Cons: results are sometimes not relevant as the search is governed only by the number of times a query keyword appears on a webpage.
 - www.altavista.com

Libraries Online

1. Ask Us

- Still can't find what you're looking for? Ask a librarian – but here you can have access to librarians across Saskatchewan Libraries: Ask Us! is an online question and answer service where you can ask any question via e-mail, and a librarian will find the answer for you.
- Find this service at: <http://www.lib.sk.ca/askus/>

2. E-Library

- This website offers information on all e-library services offered from public, special and academic libraries across Saskatchewan
- Find this information at: <http://www.mylibrary.sk.ca/>

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