

welcome to your Saskatchewan e-library services and resources



## Link to Health Info... Workshop

### Introduction and welcome

**Review:** Assess the participants' previous experience with databases, especially those offered by Southeast Regional Library.

**What:** What participants will learn in the workshop is how to select and search the health information databases available through Southeast Regional Library.

**Where:** Participants will use the information learned in this workshop whenever they would like to search a database for hard to find or remotely accessed health information.

**Why:** Participants need to know this information so that they can successfully navigate and operate databases.

### 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.

## Health Databases

### 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.

### **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

#### **4. 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

#### **5. 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

#### **6. 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

## 7. **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

## 8. **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 (see USA Today article for a photograph)

## 9. 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.
  - Pros: define a search easily by clicking on one of the predetermined categories ex) Reference – Libraries – Public
  - 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.
  - <http://www.dmoz.com>
2. Looksmart: Sorts the Internet's content and arranges websites into directory, relevant and reviewed categories.
  - 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..
  - Cons: Searches for articles related to a topic, not websites.
  - <http://www.looksmart.com>
3. Yahoo: Sorts websites by categories, one of the most popular and useful search tools available.

- Pros: Excellent for generalized searches, especially anything organized into categories such as companies or general information. Search via format ex) images only
- Cons: Returns many results, sometimes not relevant to the search.
- <http://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.
- <http://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.
- <http://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
- <http://www.google.ca> or [www.google.com](http://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
  - <http://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
  - <http://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
  - <http://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.
  - <http://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/>

## Basic Search Techniques

### 1. Broad to narrow

- Good for beginning a search when it is unknown what type of material is available, or unsure where to begin on a topic
- begin searching with one broad topic ex) Railways, tourism, Canada
- use subjects, titles, authors, etc. from returned results to narrow your search
- **Pros:** will result in many returns on a single theme
- **Cons:** may return too many results to search

### 2. Narrow to broad

- Good for searching unique topics or when a specific item, author, etc. is desired
- start with several very specific subjects, authors, titles, keywords ex) *Castles of the North*, Hotels in Canada
- adjust backwards to less specific if no results are returned or try adding another search technique (see below).
- **Pros:** will find a specific item or subject quickly
- **Cons:** will not provide broad coverage of the topic, may not return any results

### 3. Try synonyms and/or plurals

- ex) Cooking, cookery, cuisine, recipes

### 4. Boolean (and, or, not)

- And: includes multiple fields ex) Chrisholm, Barbara AND *Castles of the North*
- Or: search for either one subject or the other ex) baseball OR softball

- Not: Excludes one topic from searching ex) composers NOT classical
- Combination: Eisenhower AND President NOT General
- **Pros:** provides more control over results, can combine searches
- **Cons:** can provide too many results or not enough

#### 5. Related subjects

- First conduct a broad search and locate an item on a particular topic
- Use the subject indicators to narrow or expand your search
- Ex) search for Berton, *Vimy* will reveal subject expansion to World War, 1914-1918 – Participation, Canadian
- **Pros:** offers several other related subject searches and the potential for search expansion
- **Cons:** must find an item already on the topic

#### 6. Saskatchewan Libraries: Ask Us!

- Still can't find what you're looking for? 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/>

**Prepared by James Richards, Branch Supervisor**  
**Southeast Regional Library**  
 49 Bison Avenue  
 Weyburn, SK S4H 0H9 (306)848-3100

© 2005, **Southeast Regional Library**

Saskatchewan Libraries are free to use this material providing proper credit is given. All other potential users shall contact Southeast Regional Library.