8.5: Annotated List of Useful Databases

Using databases and having access to such a variety of source material is an important part of the research process.

Search Engines vs. Databases vs. Catalogs

- How Databases and Search Engines Differ. Created by Undergraduate Library, University Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- How Databases and Online Catalogs Differ. Created by Undergraduate Library, University Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Evaluating both the database and the sources within the database. The following annotated list of databases helps with preliminary evaluation by describing the types of sources with the databases. Some of the databases are broad-based, interdisciplinary systems that can be used to search any topic or subject. Other databases provide sources according to specific type (such as newspaper or video) or specific subjects (such as literature or science).

Broad-Based Databases

Academic Search™ Complete. EBSCO Publishing.

Academic Search Complete™ is a multidisciplinary database that offers indexing and abstracts as well as full-text and scholarly sources. It also contains popular sources, such as magazines and newspapers. The variety of subjects includes "anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, civil engineering, engineering, ethnic & multicultural studies, geology, law, materials science, mathematics, music, pharmaceutical sciences, physics, psychology, religion & theology, veterinary science, women's studies, zoology, and many other fields." This database works well for interdisciplinary searches as well as being a starting place for subject-specific searches.
JSTOR. ITHAKA.

**JSTOR** is a multidisciplinary database that offers indexing and abstracts as well as full-text and scholarly sources. It also contains books and primary sources. The database offers both the usual search options along with a subject browse tool for the following areas: area studies, arts, business and economics, history, humanities, law, medicine and allied health, science and mathematics, and social sciences. This database works well for interdisciplinary searches, but may be better for students with more experience searching databases. For example, it has a more unique search interface that does not allow for subject heading (also known as subject term) searches. However, it contains high-quality sources that are worth the effort of searching.

ProQuest Research Library™. ProQuest.

**ProQuest Research Library™** is a multidisciplinary database that offers indexing and abstracts as well as full-text and scholarly sources. It also contains popular sources, such as magazines and newspapers. Specific subjects range from business to education to humanities to sciences, plus many more. This database supports interdisciplinary searches while still providing a good starting point for subject-specific searches. (ProQuest developed a LibGuide tutorial for this database, which is located [here](https://human.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen_Learning/Book%3A_American_Literature_I_(Lumen)/08%3A_Module_5%3A_Wr...).)

Web of Science®. Thomson Reuters.

**Web of Science®** is a multidisciplinary database that offers indexing and abstracts for sources. It offers links to full-text availability from other sources—either directly from the publishers (at cost) or through a library’s OpenURL connector to other databases. The database’s interdisciplinary nature comes from the combination of its indexes: Science Citation Index Expanded®, Social Sciences Citation Index®, Arts & Humanities Citation Index®, Conference Proceedings Citation Index, Index Chemicus®, and Current Chemical Reactions®. It also integrates EndNote Web® for managing articles and references online. This database works well for interdisciplinary searches as well as citation mapping, which is a form of search that locates articles based on their citations in other articles.

Source-Type Databases

ARTstor Digital Library. ARTstor.

“The ARTstor Digital Library is a nonprofit resource that provides more than one million digital images in the arts, architecture, humanities, and sciences with an accessible suite of software tools for teaching and research.” It allows users to search for, view, and download images related to a variety of topics, such as: art, architecture, religion, anthropology, history, and literature. The database also provides image credit information for properly citing the images. Students can use these images in papers, presentations, and other assignments.

CQ Researcher. CQ Press, SAGE Publications.

**CQ Researcher** is a topics-focused database that “covers a wide range of social, economic, political, and environmental issues.” The database’s standardized reports review current events as researched by journalists. The reports include twelve sections, some of which are: an overview, background, outlook, pro/con, and
bibliography. Students will be able to use these reports to research current events and controversial issues. The reports also provide broad background information to aid students in developing the foundations for their research.

Films on Demand, Films Media Group.

Films on Demand is a database of streaming videos. It includes both a search function and browsing ability by subject and collection. The collections come from a variety of well-known film production companies, such as the BBC, PBS, and other news organizations, as well as National Geographic and TED. Subject browsing begins with broad categories, such as biology and political science, and narrows down to more specific subtopics, such as genetics and political institutions. This database is a good option for visual learners and researchers who want a broad range of source types. The videos can be embedded into presentations, and many videos include transcripts and closed captioning, which helps for quoting material.

ProQuest Newsstand™, ProQuest.

ProQuest Newsstand™ focuses on news sources, including newspapers and wire services. It offers indexing, abstracts, and full-text availability. Its newspaper coverage “includes international, national and regional papers.” This database would be useful for researching current events or opinions, such as controversial topics. It also assists with historical, human interest, and genealogical searches.

Subject-Specific Databases

ABI/INFORM®, ProQuest.

ABI/INFORM® is a business research database that provides indexing and abstracts, full text, images, and graphics. Sources include articles from journals and conference proceedings, market reports, business news, business cases, and dissertations. This would be a good database choice for students researching topics in business, economics, corporate strategies, management, business trends, accounting, finance, etc.

ACM Digital Library, Association for Computing Machinery.

The ACM Digital Library focuses on computing, computer systems, and related subjects. The database contains “full text of every article ever published by ACM and bibliographic citations from major publishers in computing.” This means that it is both an indexing and abstracting database (for non-ACM publishers) and a full-text database (for ACM-published sources). Sources include articles, conference proceedings, books, interviews, and other sources. Students should be able to locate sources to support research involving information technology, computers, software, computer and/or software engineering, programming, technical communication, telecommunications, and other related fields.

History Reference Center®, EBSCO Publishing.

History Reference Center® is a history research database. It is created specifically for researchers ranging from high school students to undergraduates. Sources include reference materials, biographies, documents, photos, maps, videos, and scholarly articles. Students should be able to locate sources to support research involving historical events, specific time periods, figures, military history, and other related historical topics.
IEEE Xplore® Digital Library. IEEE [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers].

IEEE Xplore® is a subject-specific database for "scientific and technical content published by the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and its publishing partners." Sources include journals, conference proceedings, reports, standards, and electronic books. Students should be able to locate sources to support research involving engineering, computer science, electronics, and related fields. For a better idea of the range of related fields, review the IEEE Society Memberships page, which includes: IEEE Broadcast Technology Society, IEEE Education Society, IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society, IEEE Professional Communications Society, etc. All of these groups have publications included in the database.


Literature Resource Center is a subject-specific database for literature, literary criticism, and the humanities. It offers a variety of types of searches for both specific works and authors. Sources include critical essays, interviews, reviews, and other scholarly articles. This database would be a good choice for students researching literature, literary theory, poetry, and drama.


MathSciNet® is a mathematical literature review database. It includes the literature reviews along with abstracts, indexing, and links to articles. This database would be most useful for students researching the mathematical sciences: algebra, trigonometry, geometry, calculus, etc.


PsycINFO® is a subject-specific database that focuses on behavioral sciences and mental health studies (such as psychology, neuroscience, social work, medicine, nursing, etc.) along with related fields (such as forensics, business, engineering, etc.). It is an indexing and abstracting database that also provides either links to full text or the actual full text, depending on the platform. (The database is available from several vendors, including the APA, EBSCO, and ProQuest.) This database would be a good source for students studying behaviors, social sciences, psychology, medicine, and related fields.

ScienceDirect. Elsevier.

ScienceDirect is a science and technology database that provides indexing and abstracts along with full-text access to journal articles and book chapters published by Elsevier and its imprints. It carries very few third-party sources. The majority of the information contained in the database focuses on the sciences—physical sciences and engineering (such as chemistry, computer science, engineering, mathematics), life sciences (such as agriculture, biology, neuroscience), and health sciences (medicine, pharmacology, nursing, veterinary science). It also includes some articles from related fields in the social sciences and humanities, but in general, it's not a social science or humanities database. Students should be able to locate sources in the sciences, technical fields, and related subjects.
Further Reading

- Boolean Operators from Database Search Tips, MIT Libraries.
- Web Search Strategies
- Using Databases
- Search the Library Catalog
- Seek Help from Librarians
- Understanding Library Resources

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