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## Searching Infotrac Periodical Databases

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The opening screen of all Infotrac periodical databases defaults to the "Subject Guide" search capability. If you type a word or two and these words match an indexed Subject entry you will next see the relevant portion of the "**Subject Guide**". There you will see the number of articles that match your search term and you can select a single aspect of your topic or a related topic. If you then click on a selected topic you will see the matching articles. Results are listed by date with the most recent first.

If the word or words you type do not match a subject entry, or if you click on "**Key Word Search**", you will see citations for articles where the words appear in the title, citation, or abstract of the article. If a key word search does not find enough information, change the default radio button to "Search for words in entire article content" to search the full text of articles. Results are listed by date with the most recent first.

A "**Relevance Search**" puts the best matches for a search first in the list of citations. Under "Help - Search" several special search characters specific to this kind of search can be found.

The **Advanced Search** option will allow you to do much more complex and precise searching. You can use the drop down index selection menu or create complex search expressions directly in the search entry box.

## Advanced search

Click in the entry box and enter search expression

-- Select index (optional) --

-- Select index (optional) --

Key Word (ke)

Title (ti)

Date (da)

Journal Name (jn)

Journal Name List (jn=)

Text Word (tx)

Subject (su)

Subject List (su=)

Author (au)

Abstract (ab)

Refereed (re)

Content (ac)

Record Num. (rn)

term. Use AND OR NOT to connect the expression.

History

The Search Indexes found in Advanced Search allow you to search, for example, for articles that are by a specific author, in a specific journal, only full-text, or by date. The Title Index, for example, contains all the words found in article titles. To select a search index, click on the box and highlight the appropriate index in the pop-up menu. A two-letter code indicating the index chosen will appear in the entry box. Click in the entry box and type a search term or terms after the code, and then click on "Search".

All searches can be **limited** by clicking appropriate boxes under "Limit the current search (optional)". It is possible to limit to articles with full-text, by date, to a specific journal and to peer reviewed journals. These are academic journals where peers of the author, members of the same profession, review the articles before they are published.

Each Search method provides a **History** option. A successful search will produce a set of results that appear under "History". These are in the format " R1 (jn "Time") (60778 Citations)". The "R1" identifies the first search results set, and the "jn" is an abbreviation for the index, in this case "Journal". If you click "view" you will see the citations. You can perform more searches and combine the results sets using "and", "not" or "or". To do this you click in the entry box and type the names of the sets, for example, "r1 and r2".

## History



In the above example from an Advanced Search, the sets for Time Magazine (R1) and Chelsea Clinton (R2) were combined by typing "R1 and R2" in the results box. If you click on "View", you will see the results, set R3, 19 articles in Time Magazine about Chelsea Clinton.

- Each search method provides a method to **search for words in the body of articles**. Change the radio button under the entry box from "Search for words in title, citation, abstract" to "in entire article content". In Advanced Search use the drop down menu and select "Text Word" then type one or more words in the entry box, or type "tx" and one or more words. This will retrieve articles where the term you are seeking is in the text of the article but not necessarily in the Title, Citation or Abstract. It can be used when searches using other methods have found no or few resulting articles. It can, also, be used to find citations from the list of References at the end of a scholarly article.
- Each record has a unique record number made up of letters and numbers. **If you have the record number you can find the record again** by selecting "Record Num" from the drop down menu in Advanced Search or typing "rn" in the entry box and then typing the record number. However, this method will only work if you search the database in which the record is found.
- Any search that consists of two or more words will find occurrences of these words **within two words of each other in either direction**. If you put "*and*" between the two words, the search will find records where **both words occur in the part of the record you are searching**. If you put "*or*" between the two words, the search will find records where **one, or the other, or both words occur in the part of the record you are searching**. If you put "*not*" between the words, **the word before the not must appear, but excludes the word that follows from appearing** from the record to be selected.
- **Proximity operators** can be used **between two words** in any type of Search to specify that the words must occur in a record within a specific distance of each other. *Wn* specifies that the next word must occur within *n* words after the first word. *Nn* specifies the words must occur within *n* words in **any order**.

## Advanced search

Click in the entry box and enter search expression

Abstract (ab)

Select index then enter search term. Use AND OR NOT to connect the expression.

This search will retrieve articles where the words "nature" and "nurture" appear within 2 words of each other in the abstracts of the articles.

- **Wildcards** are characters that can be used to broaden your searches by finding **variations of a word**. An \* stands for any number of letters, for example "star\*" will retrieve star, stars, starring, and starship. The \* can, also, be used inside a word, "wom\*n", will find woman and women. A ? stands for one letter, "star?" will retrieve stars or start. An ! stands for one or no letters, "star!" will retrieve star, stars or start.
- **If you use more than one operator in your search expression, they will work in a specific order.** First variations of words are found through wildcards, next the proximity operators are implemented, third the range operators used to limit dates such as "before", "after" and "to" are used, and finally, the logical operators, first "not", then "and" followed by "or", are evaluated. Using parentheses can change this order. If parentheses are used the system does the search within the parentheses first, then combines this result with the search terms that are outside the parentheses.

Several terms can inadvertently cause problems in searches. These include "W", "N", "and", "or", "not" and any of the two-letter index codes such as "re", "au", "ti" or "ac". If you put quotation marks " " around the term or the entire search expression that will force the system to search what is inside the marks verbatim.

If you need more information consult the **help** available through Infotrac, or ask a Reference Librarian.