

Search and Retrieve

Search Tools

The world of research is MUCH more than Google. University library resources will retrieve extensive and high-quality materials suitable for research papers. The primary library searching tools are the online catalog (OPAC) and library databases. The Sawyer Library's librarian-written Help and Research Guides (<http://suffolk.libguides.com/index.php>) provide the user with subject-specific information gathered from all tools (OPAC, databases, and even better websites).

The OPAC is the gateway to a number of information sources including books, ebooks, journal/periodical titles, videos and microforms. The databases are electronic indexes of journals/periodicals with abstracts of the articles. Full-text content is available in most databases. The subject matter of a database can be very broad or extremely specific, depending upon the particular database. Materials in a library database are chosen for the database and are authored, dated, and usually go through editorial evaluation (or review by other scholars). This makes them much more reliable than the free-wheeling and often unsubstantiated content that you find on many general webpages.

Accessing Search Tools

You can utilize these tools using these major points of access: keyword, subject, title, and author.

A **keyword** search is best when you only have a word or basic phrase to work with. It is possible to search all fields by keyword, including title, author, subject, abstracts or even the full-text of a document. The downside of keyword searching is that you might retrieve a lot of irrelevant information, as well. The next point of access is **subject** searching. The OPAC and most databases use special or controlled vocabulary called *subject headings* to describe what each item in the database is about. It is necessary to know the actual subject heading for this search to be fruitful. **Title** and **author** searching is fairly self-explanatory. It is possible to search for a journal/periodical or book with a partial title. Be sure to drop any "The" or "A" at the very beginning of the title. When searching for a particular author, always search by the last name. If that retrieves too many results, you can add the first name or first initial but it is not necessary.

Retrieving Information

From the OPAC: Once you find an item of interest, you will see the bibliographic record which will tell you the author, title, publishing information, etc. At the bottom of the record you will see **location, call number** and **status**. The location tells you if the item is in the Sawyer Library or at another Suffolk library. The call number will tell you where the item is located on the shelf. The status tells you if the book is available (on shelf), non-circulating or if it is checked out (due date is given). E-books have a yellow link box instead of a call number.

From a library database: Once you have found an article, you have a few options regarding retrieval. If the fulltext is available, you can read it online, save it, print it, or email it. If the full-text is not available through that particular database, you can check the OPAC to see if the Sawyer Library has the article in a print journal, in microform, or has an electronic subscription to the journal containing the article. If you are only interested in locating the article online, enter the journal title into the eJournal Locator on the library home page.

Full-text database options: Subscription databases provide various methods for obtaining the full-text of an article. Reviewing the abstract first will help you to determine if the article is relevant to your topic. If you choose to read, print, save, or e-mail the full-text articles, you will generally have the following options: **HTML** full-text, **PDF** full-text, or "**360 Link to Full-Text**," which opens the Sawyer Library's E-Journal Locator. The Locator will inform the reader if the article is available in full text from a different Sawyer Library database.