

Web vs Library Research Databases

1. Introduction

1.1 Start

Web Versus Library Research Databases.

1.2 Welcome!

Welcome to *Web Versus Library Research Databases* tutorial!

You can listen to or view the contents of this tutorial on the left menu.

To navigate forward click the NEXT button located in the bottom right hand corner of this screen.

1.3 Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this tutorial you will be able to:

- Differentiate between research databases and sites on the open web, especially to access scholarly articles
- Recognize the differences between searching the web and searching research databases
- Conduct and understand searches in *Google* vs. *Google Scholar* vs. the ASU Library research database *Academic Search Premier*.

2. What About Websites?

2.1 Differentiate Between Research Databases and Websites

Your first thought upon receiving a research assignment might be to look for scholarly articles on the open web using search engines such as *Google*. However, this is not always the best avenue to pursue when searching for scholarly sources.

This tutorial will teach you the differences between searching the web and searching research databases, including the types and quality of resources available and the differences in search results.

2.2 Google

Let's look at *Google* as an example.

Google indexes millions of sites, pages, documents, and pieces of information, including some scholarly resources. This works if you are looking for basic information, browsing current events, or shopping.

However, since scholarly resources on the web are mixed in with blogs, news sites, *Wikipedia*, and other non-scholarly resources, it can be difficult to identify reliable, relevant, and current information.

2.3 URL Extensions

If you are unsure about the reliability of an Internet source, looking at the website's domain name extension, the part at the end of the URL, can help.

Some of the most common website URLs end in .com, .net, .gov, .org, .mil, or .edu.

.gov or .edu websites are generally more reliable than .com and .net websites, because the information can only be obtained from government organizations or educational institutions.

2.4 .ORG Websites

Websites with a .org are used for organizations of all types and can contain great information, but make sure you know the site's purpose and position on the topic.

2.5 .COM Websites

.com and .net sites may contain valuable information but are generally not accepted by scholars, and .com sites are in many cases commercial and attempting to sell something.

Anyone can create a .com or .net web site on any subject whether they are an authority on the subject or not!

Even sites that are not intentionally misleading may have biases, incorrect or incomplete information, or have ulterior motives.

2.6 URL Extensions Activity

(Drag and Drop, 10 points, 2 attempts permitted)

Drag and drop the URL ending to the appropriate description.

When you are finished click SUBMIT to continue.

Drag Item	Drop Target
.com	Commercial websites

.org	General organization websites
.net	Commercial websites
.gov	Government websites
.edu	Educational websites
.mil	Government websites

3. Differences between Web & Research Database Searches

3.1 Research Databases

With so much information readily available on the web, it's easy to do an internet search when looking for information. However, there are advantages to searching research databases over a simple *Google* search.

The resources found in research databases are selective, predominantly scholarly, and generally not found on the open web. They are screened for authority, quality, and credibility before inclusion in one of the library's research databases. This selectivity is a key part of their value. That, and the fact they often provide access to the full text, makes them a logical first stop along your research path.

Also, they are often subject specific, meaning there are databases that focus on one subject, such as *PsycINFO* for psychology, *ERIC* for education, or *CINAHL* for nursing and health sciences.

3.2 Website Results

Another point to keep in mind is that search engines like Google typically use a filtering system based on your search habits and results are personalized to you.

If you use your personal laptop or are logged into Gmail, Google recognizes and retrieves results based on your past searching history.

For instance, if you search the word “mercury” and previously have searched for information about classic cars, your search results will relate to automobiles. If your friend, who is a space geek and has previously searched for information about planets, enters the same search using mercury, the results will relate to the planet Mercury.

Unlike the open web, research databases return the same results no matter who is searching. They look only at keywords you entered into the search box.

3.3 Benefits of Research Databases

Ultimately, searching a research database saves you time, because you have greater control over your search results as the resources available to you have been added through a review process.

By allowing you to focus and limit the results to specific topics in scholarly journals, you can find credible and relevant resources in databases that support your research.

3.4 Google Filters Activity

Let’s say we have 2 students: Jane and John. Their search histories on *Google* differ, so when they search the same term, they may get different results.

Drag and drop the terms below into the appropriate places within the word map to see how this works.

When you are finished you can 1) view it again; or 2) click NEXT to continue.

4. Google vs. Google Scholar

4.1 Conduct and Understand Searches

While a *Google* search does include some scholarly journal articles, the coverage isn't comprehensive. There is no complete list of journals indexed on the web in the same way there is in a research database. In other words, you don't know what content you are searching and what content is missing!

To illustrate what we are discussing, let's try a search using *Google*, *Google Scholar*, and one of our research databases, *Academic Search Premier*.

If you are looking for scholarly articles on the causes of increased binge drinking among college students, you can search using keywords, such as "binge drinking" and "college students." You also could search for the words "causes" or "increase."

4.2 Introduction to Google Searching

Let's begin by typing our search terms in *Google*.

As you can see, a single *Google* search can result in millions of results, and, unlike in research databases, it is difficult to limit and narrow your results by type, date, author, or other categories.

The results are a mix of resource types, including journal and magazine articles, reports, government publications, books, websites, and more.

Even though a single *Google* search can result in a wealth of information, finding

that golden nugget of scholarly information you are looking for can be very difficult.

4.3 Searching Google

If you identify and locate an article using *Google*, it can be difficult to actually access the full text. In many cases, you will be asked to pay money for access.

Never pay for an article!

The ASU Library subscribes to publishers' licensed content specifically needed by ASU students, faculty, and staff. Free access is provided to the information in these resources when you use the ASU Library as your gateway!

4.4 Accessing Google Scholar

Google Scholar, a separate resource from *Google*, can be a useful tool when conducting research, but you will likely need to search other databases as well.

When accessing *Google Scholar*, remember to use the ASU Library or the MyASU portal as your gateway, because you may have full text access through the GetIt@ASU icon.

4.5 Conduct and Understand Searches

In *Google Scholar*, we'll search the same keywords as we used in our previous Google search.

Google Scholar identified fewer items than in our original *Google* search but still too many to adequately review.

Like *Google*, we do not fully know what content was searched and what wasn't

since *Google Scholar* only provides a broad statement about what is indexed within their database. Our results include scholarly journal articles, but they are mixed in with books, book chapters, theses, abstracts, court opinions, online repositories, and websites.

5. Academic Search Premier

5.1 Accessing Academic Search Premier

Now we are going to do the same search on binge drinking in *Academic Search Premier*, one of the ASU Library multidisciplinary research databases, and compare the results.

ASU research databases only can be accessed through the ASU Library website. If you are off campus, you must authenticate your ASU identity by logging in using your student account.

5.2 Differences in Searching Research Databases

Research databases require keywords be entered and combined differently so the search engine understands what you are searching.

Instead of entering your terms in a long string of words like we did in *Google* and *Google Scholar*, we need to combine these words or phrases with an AND between them. The term AND ensures that each word or phrase is represented in the search results.

Additionally, notice below the search boxes in *Academic Search Premier* the options for limiting your results to scholarly or peer-reviewed journals, to specific dates, and even to an individual publication.

5.3 Searching with AND in Academic Search Premier

You will see that we are typing each keyword or keyword phrase into a separate box. Notice the AND we discussed previously is already in place. Using our sample search, let's search the keywords we identified with several small but important changes.

We are searching a research database, therefore, our results will be smaller. Instead of entering 4 keywords or keyword phrases from the previous searches, we will only enter 3, and we will add an asterisk at the end of the word "increase." Our final search terms are: "binge drinking," "college students," and "increas*" (with an asterisk). The asterisk we added allows the database to search the word "increase" with various endings such as "increased," "increasing," or "increases."

5.4 Limiting Results: Academic Search Premier

This search retrieves a small number of items. These items are a mix of academic, scholarly journal articles and magazine articles. Remember, we are looking for scholarly journal articles on this topic!

Look at the section called "Refine your Results." *Academic Search Premier* allows you to limit the search results to "Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals" by clicking on the box.

When we limit the results of our original search to scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals, we find fewer articles than our original search.

These results are significantly smaller than what was found in *Google* and *Google Scholar*, but they fit the need for each article to be scholarly!

5.5 Matching Activity

(Drag and Drop, 10 points, 2 attempts permitted)

Drag and drop the words or phrases to the appropriate blank space in each of the following statements.

When you are finished click SUBMIT to continue.

Drag Item	Drop Target
Credible sources	Credible sources
fees for full-text	fees for full-text
limit search results	limit search results
More resources are retrieved	More resources retrieved
word string	word string

5.6 Fill in the Blank Activity

(Drag and Drop, 10 points, 2 attempts permitted)

Drag and drop the words or phrases to the appropriate blank space in each of the following statements.

When you are finished click SUBMIT to continue.

Drag Item	Drop Target
combines keywords with AND	combines keywords with AND
greater control over the results	greater control over the results
high precision searching	high precision searching
free access to full-text	free access to full-text
personalize the results	personalize the results

6. Conclusion

6.1 Learning Outcomes

Now that you have completed this tutorial, you can:

- Differentiate between library research databases and sites on the open web, especially to access scholarly articles
- Recognize the differences between searching the web and searching research databases
- Conduct and understand searches in *Google* versus *Google Scholar* versus the ASU Library research database *Academic Search Premier*.

6.2 Conclusion

Congratulations! You've completed the *Web vs Library Research Databases* tutorial!

Click on "Tutorials" to return to the Tutorials page or "Next" to complete a brief quiz.