

Search strategy for library users

Your search strategy is your plan of action that takes you from thinking about the information you need to processing the information that you have found.

Regardless of the resources that you are using - a database, an index, or a www search engine - the searching strategy is essentially the same.

IDENTIFY KEYWORDS

SELECT RESOURCES

<http://dozer.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/SuRe/subject.php>

FIND RELEVANT INFORMATION

- *Build a search*
- *Use search operators*
- *Limit search to fields*
- *Use wildcards*

EVALUATE SOURCES

PROCESS INFORMATION

<http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/cite/>

Subject Resources@Library

Selected research resources are listed for each subject (eg Finance, Criminology, Genetics, Musicology, etc.) as well as specialised areas (eg Images, Patents, Theses etc.)

They are called *Subject Resources@Library* and include academic materials (subject to editorial or peer-review) and other *reliable* sources.

Connect to *your* Subject Resources@Library

<http://dozer.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/SuRe/subject.php>

INFORMATION DIVISION

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Library information contacts

www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/contact.html

- *ALL FACULTIES* 03-8344-0444

EXCEPT...

- *LAND & FOOD RESOURCES*

Burnley	03-9250-6851
Creswick	03-5321-4115
Dookie	03-5833-9224
Gilbert Chandler	03-9749-8012
Glenormiston	03-5557-8256
Longerenong	03-5362-2236
McMillan	03-5622-6003
Parkville	03-8344-5017

- *LAW* 03-8344-6177

- *VETERINARY SCIENCE*

Parkville	03-8344-7353
Werribee	03-9731-2331

Key library websites

- *INQUIRY:* www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/inquiry/
Includes FAQs
- *LIBRARY HOME:* www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/
- *LIBRARY CATALOGUE:* cat.lib.unimelb.edu.au/
- *CITATION STYLES:* www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/cite/
- *RESOURCES@LIBRARY:*
dozer.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/SuRe/subject.php
- *CONTACTS FOR RESEARCH HELP:*
www.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/telars/staff/lr.html



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



Strategy for library users

1 What do you know already?

I am looking for...

- a specific journal title
- particular authors
- a specific date range
- factual information
- theoretical information
- case studies
- literature reviews

My topic is related to a particular...

- country
- region of the world
- theme/subject
- industry etc.

I need...

- journal articles
- newspaper articles
- magazine articles
- statistics
- government documents, etc.

When we research a topic, we often do not know the title or the author of specific books or journal articles, but we know enough about our topic to determine *keywords*.

Keywords

Keywords are words that we use to describe the items that we are looking for (using library catalogues, indexes and databases as well as the WWW)

Words used in doing a keyword search.

2 What are YOUR keywords?

- List the key concepts that describe your topic
Look at words in your essay question or research topic.
- List synonyms or related terms
Check dictionaries and encyclopaedias etc., in the Reference Collection.

You now have keywords and can do a keyword search.

3 Which database/index?

- Go to *Subject Resources@Library* and *Key Resources* to find relevant databases/indexes for your subject.

dozer.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/SuRe/subject.php

- Ask an information librarian

4 Build your search

A broad search is often called a keyword search and finds information by matching your words with words anywhere in a record.

A keyword search which allows a combination of terms - author, title, subject - can be used.

Keyword searching can be used to search the Library catalogue, databases, online indexes and www search engines.

A keyword search gives you a feel for the scope of a particular database - how relevant the coverage is to your topic.

If your keywords don't give a good result combine them with other words or select different words from your keyword list.

- Start with a broad search.
- Broaden or narrow your search, by combining keywords with *boolean operators*.

see: **Smart Searching 2**, Boolean operators

- Use wildcards or truncations when appropriate. ie. *purpos** for *purpose, purposes, purposeful* etc.

see: **Smart Searching 3**, Limiting/Wildcards

Subject words

Go to individual records in a database, and look in the subject or descriptor field:

- What words are being used in the subject field to describe your topic?
- Are these words the same as the words you have been using?

Your keyword list has words you use to describe your topic. Every database has *subject words* that describe the record.

Subject words are not always the same as your words but may be essential for successful searching.

Your keywords	Subject words
cars	motor vehicles
movies	motion pictures

Many databases have *thesauri* that can help you determine keywords or subject words.