

Searching Tips

This guide was constructed for use with EBSCO databases, but these suggestions are transferable to other databases.

Steps to Follow in Searching:

1. Determine the proper database. Check those listed on a Subject Guide (<http://www.library.unt.edu/research-tools/guides>), a Class Page (<http://www.library.unt.edu/research-tools/class-pages>), or use the Browse feature on the Electronic Resources page, <http://irservices.library.unt.edu/>. A good general database with many full text scholarly journals is **Academic Search Complete**, (http://irservices.library.unt.edu/resource.cfm?ai_id=88)
2. Start with a simple or basic search using one word or a phrase.
3. If you get **too many hits**:
 - a. Add another search term, connecting it with the original term using "and," the Boolean operator which focuses the search. Be sure it is not a synonym for what you already used. You can add the term in the basic search box, or you can go to the Advanced Search, which lays out the search for you in boxes. Example: homeless and Texas.
 - b. From the Advanced Search screen, use the drop-down box on the right to have the computer look for your search terms only in Subjects.
4. If you get **too few hits**:
 - a. Add a synonym to one or more of your original terms using "or," the Boolean Operator which expands your search. It's easiest to do this from the Advanced Search screen. Put the "or" search in one box.
 - b. Also from the Advanced Search screen you can have the computer look in the Default Fields index if you have focused your search into Subjects using the drop-down box.
5. **Very useful tip:** When using an advanced search, do the "or" searches within the search term entry box, and leave the drop-down box as "and." Not all databases do the "or" search the same way; following this advice will work every time.
6. If you don't find what you need, Ask Us for help - <http://www.library.unt.edu/ris/ask-us>.



Boolean Searching in Brief

Boolean searching is defined as a system of logic used to find information in the UNT databases as well as the search engines on the Internet. Uses "and" and "or" to connect ideas.

- **"and"** is used to focus or limit a search to more relevant issues. Connects different concepts.
- **"or"** is used to expand a search. Connects ideas or terms that mean the same thing.
- **"not"** is best used very carefully, as it can rule out many useful articles on the subject. "Cats not dogs" will screen out useful articles on both species. The best use of "not" is shown in this example: "Texas Rangers not baseball" when you are looking for information on the law-enforcement body.