Search Strategy Worksheet

“Quick-and-easy” search method

Preparation: Just think before you type and make some conceptual analysis.

Think about some proper search terms (other than those words jotted down already)

1. Write your problem down in a sentence; what would be the title of your search?

Search Title:

2. What words represent the constituting elements for your subject?

Search terms:

3. Which element is most vital (and which next?)

Most vital search element:

Second most vital search element:

Third most vital search element:

Other vital search elements:

4. Compose a simple query using a few important terms linked by AND or OR operators
Use quotation marks "..." for adjacent words and truncation * for words with the same stem.

5. Display abbreviated records and modify with simple changes as needed

Click on "Show abstracts" to view more details of a document in your results list.

6. Print complete records retrieved.

Click on "Full Text" for a link to full text and other library services. The links are customizable and depend on the set-up at your institute.

"Building Blocks" approach

Preparation: Determine the main elements or concepts associated with your problem in somewhat more detail than in the "Quick-and-easy" approach.

1. Write your problem down in a sentence; what would be the title of your search?

Search Title:

2. Write characteristic words for them, next to each other

3. Think of synonyms or alternatives for these words. Write these words under the corresponding concepts
4. Formulate queries based on the elements or concept groups, "OR"-ing synonyms, using controlled or free vocabulary. Retrieve individual result sets for each element or concept group

First block:

Second block:

Third block:

5. Combine systematically retrieved sets with Boolean operators (mostly AND) to build a solution set for the whole problem

"Pearl growing" approach

Preparation: Begin with a specific document or document set that is known to be relevant (the "pearl")
1. Use the characteristics of the "pearl" to successively grow a set of related documents: Use assigned index terms, title- or text-words, names, citations, publication data, or structural and statistical properties to formulate queries to retrieve subsequent sets

Characteristic words found in the "pearl":

2. Click Select Keywords to select the specific keywords to include in your search. At the displayed page, select the specific keywords that you would like to include in your related documents search.

3. Click Search to display a list of related documents

"Successive fractions" approach

Preparation: Begin with a large subset of the entire database

1. Compose a simple query using a few important terms linked by AND or OR operators

If you are searching for a phrase which contains the word "and," omit the word "and" from your search. For example: profit loss would find the phrase "profit and loss"

1. Successively pare the large subset down with concepts specific to the problem [restrictions]

First restriction [filter]:

Second restriction [filter]:

Work document for information search:

Research question:

Search terms or phrases (in all relevant languages) - brainstorm all the relevant search terms you can think of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facet</th>
<th>Terms in English</th>
<th>Terms in other languages</th>
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Division of the facets into blocks - remember to include related terms and synonyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 1</th>
<th>Block 2</th>
<th>Block 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
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Limit your search - using categories like the ones below will be useful for limiting your search and will help you define selection and rejection criteria

Time frame /language

Geography:

Academic level

Log book:
Defining the literature and materials to be used in your paper

Criteria of selection:

Criteria of rejection:

**Search history**: overview of the databases and search terms that have been used and of the different search results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Search strategy</th>
<th>Search terms (combination of search terms, use of phrase search, keyword search etc.)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Number of hits</th>
<th>Items selected</th>
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You can add this overview to your paper as an appendix

**Motivation for your choice of documents** (your notes for the methods and materials section of your paper)