

Creating a Search Strategy

Example topic: Anorexia and women athletes: Are women athletes prone to anorexia?

I. Pre Search Analysis

<i>What kinds of resources do you want to use?</i>	<i>Where to find resources</i>
<i>Books</i>	Axe WebPAC (local Library sources) http://library.pittstate.edu > Online Catalogs > AxeWebPAC WorldCat (libraries throughout the U.S.) http://library.pittstate.edu > Online Databases > Title > W >WorldCat
<i>Journal articles</i>	Online Databases (provide full text and abstracts of journals) http://library.pittstate.edu >Online Databases> Starting Point (Or: use one of the subject specific databases)
<i>WWW sites</i>	Search Engines (search the World Wide Web) http://library.pittstate.edu >Search Engines
<i>Government sources</i>	Government web sites http://library.pittstate.edu/docs GPO Access http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/databases.html
<i>Statistics</i>	Statistical Universe (large statistical database) http://library.pittstate.edu > Online Databases > Title > S > Statistical Universe
<i>Laws</i>	Legislative Online databases http://library.pittstate.edu > Online Databases > Subject > Laws and Regulations
<i>Newspapers</i>	Academic Universe (Major U.S. and Regional newspapers) http://library.pittstate.edu > Online Databases > Subject> Newspapers

II. Developing a search strategy

Identify the main concepts of the topic--choose words with meaning; ignore words such as effect, relationship, comparison, etc.

Brainstorm for various words to use to describe the topic--synonyms, word variations, related terms

Think about how to combine the terms--use AND to connect main concepts; use OR to connect related terms; use NOT to exclude unwanted terms

Use phrase searching or keep words "near" each other. FirstSearch databases--use quotes for phrases; use "n" to indicate how near the words should be

Use truncation or wildcards to retrieve words with varying endings.

FirstSearch databases: use + for plurals; use ? for wildcards; use * for various endings.

InfoTrac databases: use * for plurals and various endings; use ? for wildcards

1, Identify the main concepts of your topic. Example topic: Anorexia and women athletes

Concept 1: Female athletes

Concept 2: anorexia

2. Expand the terms (remember word variations):

Female, females

Women, woman

Girls, girl

Athlete, athletes, athletics, athletic

Sports

Anorexia, anorexic

Eating disorders

3. Combine synonyms or related terms with OR

Female OR women OR woman OR girls (all variations or synonyms of "Women")

Athletics OR sports OR athletes

Anorexia OR eating disorders

4. Apply truncation/ wildcards, word variations and phrase searching markers

PerAbs {FirstSearch}: + for plurals; ? for internal or ending wildcards

Expanded Academic {InfoTrac/Gale}: * for plurals/ endings; ? internal wildcards

5. Combine concepts with AND

Using FirstSearch --PerAbs

(Female+ or wom?n) AND (Anorex? or "eating disorders") and (athlete+ or athletic+)