State Library of South Australia
North Terrace
Adelaide

Search Like a Librarian

Doing research…let us help

Doing research is an important part of your studies at school and in particular your research project. To be a good researcher, you must be able to locate, organize, evaluate, and communicate information. This is what library staff do all the time.

The key to a successful assignment or project is in understanding how to select and use *the right information resources* for your specific needs.

We can help you find information in online databases, e-books, e-journals and e-newspapers, library catalogues, and print resources. Access is free at the State Library.

Our specialty is South Australian materials, the collection and preservation of material relating to South Australia and its people is a primary role of the State Library.

Perfecting Your Skills
Think about the magazine section in your local newsagent, if you reach out with your eyes closed and grab the first magazine you touch, you are about as likely to get a supermarket tabloid as you are a respected journal.

Now imagine that your newsagent is so accommodating that he lets anyone print up a magazine and put it in the magazine section. If you reach out blindly, you might get the *Michael Jackson Lives with Aliens Monthly* just as easily as Time Magazine. Welcome to the wonderful world of the Internet! Of course you will find an extremely wide variety of material there. But it will range hugely in accuracy, reliability, and value.

Unlike much of the information found in books, newspapers and magazines, no one checks Internet content before it is made public. With online searching most of us enter a couple of words and click on the first or second link that comes up. The order of what we find is generally determined by the selected search engine, such as Google, Yahoo or Bing. Internet information exists in large quantities, in a large variety of ways and is continuously being created and revised. Much of what is found is opinion rather than fact. Stories can be invented to persuade or sell an idea or belief. This means that the quality of what is found is extremely variable. It's your job to evaluate what you locate, in order to determine whether it suits your needs for your research project.

Your Topic
Analyse your topic before you start as this will help you to search more quickly and effectively. Work out what terms to look for and what search tools will be the most appropriate. You may also learn more about your topic as you go along. This can open up new research paths. Additional clues may present themselves which will broaden your information hunt in new and unexpected ways

For effective searching, look for the following
Credibility
Goal: To locate an authoritative source that supplies trustworthy evidence.

Look for: the author's credentials or background; evidence of quality control, peer support known or respected authority; credible organisational support of the site.

Accuracy
Goal: To locate a source that is correct and up-to-date, that gives information based on verifiable sources.
Look for: Sites that are up to date, factual, detailed, precise, whose purpose is to provide users with clear, comprehensive information.

Reasonableness
Goal: To select a source that engages the subject thoughtfully and reasonably, that is concerned with presenting the truth.
Look for: A tone that is fair, balanced, objective, reasoned, and that avoids conflicts of interest, incorrect information or bias.

Support
Goal: To find a source that provides convincing evidence for the claims made. This will be a source you can verify and find at least two other sources to support the information presented.
Look for: Listed sources, contact information, available support, and supplied documentation.

Search Like a Librarian

Before starting your search ask yourself
What specific words, phrases and names will occur in the document I want
This could be:
- Unique terms, names, organisations
- Phrases or word strings
- Similar words
- Time frame

Boolean Searching
All search engines use logic to combine search terms. Boolean search logic lets you combine keywords with operators/modifiers such as AND, NOT and OR to produce the most relevant results. This allows you to conduct faster, more effective searches.

The most commonly used concepts are:

AND
Pages returned will mention **all the words** in the search.

For example, a Boolean search could be **skateparks** and **Adelaide**. This would return search results specific to those pages containing *both* the two keyword search terms.

All search engines assume that the connections between the search terms will be "AND" unless otherwise specified.

NOT
The search engine will eliminate those pages which have the selected keyword or phrase mentioned after NOT.

OR
Pages returned will include ANY OF THE WORDS in the search. This may return masses of results. This is not useful unless the terms are very unusual, or you want to include synonyms, interchangeable terms or variant spellings.

Quotes
If you are searching for an exact phrase or term you can enclose it in quotation marks. These can be used at the same time as other Boolean search operators.

Parentheses [ ] (a type of bracket)
Each of the Boolean operators described above will work on either a simple search term or a more complex query marked by parentheses.
For example, [bed and breakfast] AND [grapes AND California] OR [wine country]

Near/Proximity
Some engines/databases also recognise a proximity operator. This will return results if the search terms appear within 10 words of each other.

Wildcards & Truncation
To get the best results when searching, you may need to consider the variations of a word in your search. Using the asterisk ***** truncation symbol: **work*** finds **work**, **works**, **worker**, **workplace**   Using the question mark? wildcard symbol: **organi?ation** finds **organization**, **organization.**

Google does not use truncation. Instead it suggests alternative terms and asks 'Did you mean'?

Limiting by date
Limits results to pages published on the Web within a specified period of time. This may be in the form of drop down menus activated by radio buttons or by using a date range operator.

Word filters
These provide an area to specify further words or phrases that should be included or eliminated.

Many search engines/databases are also able to limit your search to finding words in the:
- Exact Phrase
- Page Title

It is possible to limit your search by language, country of origin or media. Search engines vary in the limiting options they offer. All search engines provide a "Help" link, which explains the best way to use that particular service.

Filters
At the top or bottom of a search results page, you'll see a number of ways to filter your results to see one type of content. For example, click Images to have all of your search results be pictures, or Shopping to see search results that help you find ways to buy the things you searched for.
Once you've decided which type of results you want, you can refine your results even further using Search tools. Search tools can include things like location, color, size, and the date a page was published.

URLs
URL is short for Uniform Resource Locator. It is really an Internet address that locates a resource on the Internet. A quick look at the URL can also give information about the Web page, its organisational and geographic origins. Each URL will contain a suffix or ending which indicates the type of organisation which has sponsored the page.
These suffixes include:
gov – Government agencies
edu – Educational institutions
mil – Military
org – Organisations - for example Red Cross
com – Commercial organisations
net – Network organisations
info – General use
biz – Business
name – Individuals
pro – Professionals
museums – Museums
au – Australia

Now for something really useful

The State Library has developed Library guides http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/
to especially help you get the best from the State Library, as well as some specifically for students http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/forstudentsandteachers

eResources
The State Library of South Australia has a number of very helpful FREE eResources that you can use in the Library or from home. http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/content.

State Library of South Australia Library Card
All you need to do to access them is register for a State Library Card, goto our homepage at www.slsa.sa.gov.au. Click 'Register with us', then follow the prompts.
Or use the following link: http://goo.gl/6gD7Lw to go straight to the registration page.
Select your preferred option to either pick up your card in person or have it posted to you.

When you've finished, hit the 'submit' button. That's all there is to it.

Once you have your card, State Library Home Access lets you use a large range of eResources from home.
The SLSA licensing agreements prohibit use of the eResources from school.

The following State Library eResources may be of interest to you for your research.

[SLSA Library Guide *Internet Search Tools*](#) provides an excellent introduction to digital libraries, archives and databases, internet contacts and research networks.

AustLit: the Australian Literature Resource
AustLit is the key resource for information about Australian writers and writing covering the 1780s to the present. It provides biographical and bibliographical information and the full text of critical articles, creative writing and information resources about many aspects of Australia's literary heritage. It includes indigenous writers, children's literature, drama and popular theatre, multicultural writers.

Australia/New Zealand Reference Centre
This database combines Australasian newspapers, magazines, newswires and reference books to create a large collection of full text Australian and New Zealand content. South Australian newspapers are a major feature, with a number of full text newspapers including the Advertiser and Sunday Mail from October 2000, and Messenger Press newspapers from early 2009. It also includes leading Australia/NZ periodicals and international periodicals in full text, reference books and biographies and a large Image Collection of photos, maps and flags.

Ebsco Databases
Ebsco Databases is a multi-subject eResource with full text, multimedia and index databases. It provides an extensive range of journals, conference papers, books and newspapers from around the world. It covers the social sciences, humanities and science and technology subject areas.

Encyclopaedia Britannica Library Edition Online
With over 73,000 articles, Encyclopaedia Britannica is one of the most complete and accurate information sources in the world. It contains both short and book-length articles on every subject. It also has Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and thousands of links to other World Wide Web sites selected by Britannica editors.

eLibrary Australasia
eLibrary Australasia is an extensive eresource featuring newspapers, magazines, reference and multimedia sources including over 150 Australian and New Zealand newspaper titles. It contains The Advertiser and the Messenger Press from 1995, The Australian, The Age, The Sydney Morning Herald and many more. New Zealand titles include The Christchurch Press and The Dominion Post. Also featured are Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) transcripts and Australian Associated Press (AAP) newswires.

Australian Public Affairs Full Text
Australian Public Affairs Collection is a major research database of full text articles in the social sciences and humanities. It brings together around 500 periodicals, newspapers, scholarly journals, conference papers and books covering Australia's political, economic and social affairs. Subject coverage includes current affairs, business, health, economics, humanities, law, literature, politics and social sciences.

PressDisplay
PressDisplay has online access to the full content of over 2000 current newspapers from around the globe. It covers newspapers from approximately 100 countries in nearly 60 languages and provides an exact replica of the printed edition. Issues for the last 12 months are available for each newspaper. The Age newspaper (Melbourne), the Sydney Morning Herald and the Australian Financial Review newspaper are not available on PressDisplay.

Other resources
SLSA Library Guide *Internet Search Tools* provides an excellent introduction to digital libraries, archives and databases, internet contacts and research networks.

Top sites for research

Trove http://trove.nla.gov.au/
The National Library of Australia's Trove database, contains over 434 million Australian items in the form of historic newspapers, books, maps, music, diaries, images and more.

Google Advanced Search www.google.com/advancedsearch
Google Advanced Search provides a menu based mechanism to conduct more powerful and effective searches. The menu includes Boolean searches as well as filters to narrow searches by country, when a site was last updated, a sector domain or a specific site, where the term appears (i.e. in page title, web address or whole page) and lastly file type (i.e. Adobe Acrobat .pdf or Microsoft PowerPoint .ppt).

Europeana www.europeana.eu
Europeana is a portal that acts as an interface to millions of books, paintings, films, museum objects and archival records that have been digitized throughout Europe. More than 2,000 institutions across Europe have contributed to Europeana. These range from major international names like the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the British Library in London and the Louvre in Paris to regional archives and local museums from every member of the European Union. Together, their assembled collections let users explore Europe's cultural and scientific heritage from prehistory to the modern day

World Digital Library www.wdl.org/en
The library intends to make available on the Internet, free of charge and in multilingual format, significant primary materials from cultures around the world, including manuscripts, maps, rare books, musical scores, recordings, films, prints, photographs, architectural drawings, and other significant cultural materials

National Archives of Australia www.naa.gov.au
The National Archives of Australia is a body established by the Government of Australia for the purpose of preserving Commonwealth Government records. The National Archives' collection covers public records pertaining to Federation, Governors Generals, Prime Ministers, Cabinet and Ministers and most of the activities with which the government has been involved. The Archives' repositories are "closed access" so the public cannot browse its 300,000m of shelves, but items can be requested for viewing in the reading rooms or copies made.

The Australian War Memorial www.awm.gov.au
The Australian War Memorial is Australia's national memorial to the members of its armed forces and supporting organisations who have died or participated in wars involving the Commonwealth of Australia. The Australian War Memorial holds many records relating to World War I military personnel, including films, photographs, private archives, art, published works, official records and audio collections, many of which have been digitized.

Good Luck with your Research Project

The State Library is here to help, contact us at info@slsa.sa.gov.au/goto/askus or
08 8207 7250 or www.slsa.sa.gov.au