

# Search Tips for Research Databases

OhioLINK offers over 100 databases for finding information. Not all databases are searched the same way. However, many of these databases reside on computers in Columbus and use search software called Dataware. The information below is intended to assist you in searching these databases, but can be applied to database searching (even Internet search engines) in general.

- ❑ Define your topic and think about the type of information you are looking for. Here are a couple of questions to consider.
  - Do you need information from books or articles?
  - Do you need current or historical information?
  - Do you require specific types of publications (book reviews, research articles, statistics, or news articles)?
  - Does your topic relate to a specific population or age group?
- ❑ Formulate a research question.
- ❑ Identify the key concepts of your research question and/or any synonyms or related terms. Use truncation or wildcards to retrieve alternate forms of a word.
- ❑ Search these terms in the online database as separate concepts. Use online **Help** for additional search tips.
- ❑ Use Boolean operators (AND—All of these words, OR—Any of these words) or proximity searching (ADJ—This exact phrase) when entering more than one word in a search box.
- ❑ Use Boolean operators (AND, OR) to combine search sets from the **Search Menu**.
- ❑ Use proximity searching for phrases (ADJ—This exact phrase).
- ❑ Limit your search results, especially if you have a large search set. Common limits are date and publication type.
- ❑ **Advanced search options:**
  - Type your search strategy in the keyword box using search operators. Use parentheses to group (nest) terms or to override the order of precedence of search operators (ADJ, AND, OR—in that order).
  - Use Thesaurus searching if it is available.

Try a sample search. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to consult a librarian.