Become a Web of Science Superuser!

Web of Science is a multidisciplinary database from Clarivate Analytics that is broadly used across the arts and humanities, social sciences and sciences.

Web of Science is a citation index which means that you can find the citations of articles, conference proceedings, and more but not, most of the time, the full text for articles: to access full text, you must link back to the library’s holdings.

Use the seven strategies below to get more out of Web of Science and strengthen your research process.

1. **A little planning goes a long way**
   - Before you even begin searching, break down your research question into main concepts.
   - From the main concepts, gather your keywords (synonyms and related terms.)
     - These steps can be done using a concept map!

2. **Don’t do it all at once**
   - It’s tempting to search all of your keywords at the same time, but it is more efficient overall to search one at a time and then combine them.
   - Search History (top right of the page) allows you to build your search one keyword/concept at a time and combine your searches.

3. **Speak the language of the database**
   - Once you have your keywords, search for the first one in Web of Science.
   - You can search with much more than just keywords: Web of Science allows you to search for author, funding organization, and more.
   - Web of Science also allows for wildcards, which represent unknown characters in your search terms.

The asterisk (*) represents any group of characters, including no character.
- Enzyme* matches enzyme, enzymes, enzymatic, enzymic
The question mark (?) represents any single character.
- Wom?n matches woman, women, womyn
The dollar sign ($) represents zero or one character (especially useful for English/British words!)
- Col$r matches color, colour
4. Put it all together
   - Put your searches together using Search History at the top right of the page. For each search that you want to use, select AND or OR under Combine Sets and click Combine.
   - Click on the number under Results to see your new search.
   - You can use Boolean Operators too. AND is most common, but you’ll see OR among the subheadings you are using, and NOT is sometimes a powerful tool for excluding a common aspect of your topic that you do not want to include in your search.
     - For more on Boolean Operators, see https://youtu.be/sdx9dACkvyI.

5. Exercise your options
   - Use limiters at the end of your search once you’ve combined all of your search terms.
   - Limiters are on the left side of the page and give you some great options- Web of Science Categories, Document Type, and more.

6. Retrieve your articles
   - Web of Science often only provides citations to articles. In order to get the full text of an article, click Full Text Options and select “Get this item from the libraries of the Claremont colleges” in the upper left of the page. This brings you back to the library website, where you can access the full text of the article, if we own it, or request it from another library if we don’t.

7. Don’t repeat your work
   - Create an account in order to save your searches and use them again.
   - Use a citation manager like Zotero or RefWorks to save individual articles that you find in your search.

More options
   - Web of Science allows for forward and backward searching!
   - You can sort the order in which you see results at the top of the page.
   - Under More Settings on the main search page, you can select which citation indexes you want to search in (rather than the entire Core Collection.)
   - For a full explanation of Web of Science’s special search rules, see http://bit.ly/2obDnxb
   - The library has Research Guides that provide research guidance in many different disciplines.
   - You can also make an appointment with a Subject Librarian to get research help.

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