

Wilson Chap 10: Information Searching

- Remember to learn the terminology on pages 137-139.
- Click on the link on iCollege (http://www.usg.edu/galileo/skills/unit07/internet07_08.phtml) and read about evaluating information from the web.
- Do the written assignment on iCollege

Types of Databases

1. Citation database - provides publication information about a journal or magazine article. May or may not include an abstract.
 - citation - publication information such as author, title, source, date, volume number, etc.
 - abstract - a brief description of the article's content, aka a summary.

Types of Databases (page 2)

2. Full-text database - provides publication information plus the complete text of the article.
 - In our current culture of instant gratification, full text databases are preferred by users.

Important Databases & Database Vendors to Know

1. Dialog - covers all subjects but is very expensive; usually seen in universities
2. EBSCOhost - covers all subjects
3. ERIC - Education related information
4. Gale - covers many subjects; also a book publisher
5. H.W. Wilson (WilsonWeb) - covers many subjects; also a book publisher
6. JSTOR - covers many subjects; JSTOR is an archive of older articles not usually found on other databases

Important Databases & Database Vendors to Know

7. Lexis Nexis - used mostly for news, business and legal information
8. netlibrary - electronic books
9. Medline - contains medical information
10. ProQuest - covers all subjects
11. PubMed - index of hard science journals - freely available online
12. Web of Science - index of science journals
13. WorldCat - catalog of materials owned by libraries

Databases and the Catalog

- A common misconception by library users is that the catalog contains links to full text content. This is usually not the case.
- However, the catalog may contain links to ebooks and may contain links to databases.

Searching Databases

- databases allow users to search in several indexes.
- for example users can search for author, title, subject and can search for keywords in the abstract.
- some databases allow users to search for keywords in the full text of the article.
- Stop words = common words such as articles (a, an, the) and prepositions (of, at, etc.) are ignored in the search.

Limits in Database Searching

- Databases include limits that can help users get better results
- Some common limits:
 1. type of publication: display only newspapers or popular magazines or scholarly journals
 2. title of publication: display articles only from Atlanta Journal-Constitution or Time or Journal of History
 3. dates (can be a date range or an exact date): display article from the last 6 months or from June 2006.
 4. full text: displays only articles with full text available online.

Searching by Subject Headings

- Articles in databases are assigned subject terms by a person.
- By using the subject terms, a user can obtain a more precise search result.
- Unfortunately, it can also cause a user to miss articles that are relevant but not assigned the subject term that is being used.
- I usually start with a keyword search. If the results are not sufficient, I will look in the record for subject headings. I will then do another search using the subject heading.

Searching the Web

- A Search engine is the primary tool for searching the web
- How Search engines work:
 - send out programs called robots or spiders
 - these spiders go to millions of sites and capture words
 - these words are returned to the search engine and added to a database
 - usually your search is a search of this database of words
 - the database is updated often but not every time a user enters in a search

Searching the Web (page 2)

Metadata = a set of data that describes a website.

- using metadata creates standards among websites
- examples of metadata:
 - content descriptions: title, subject, description, language, source, coverage
 - intellectual property: author, creator, publisher, rights
 - size
 - file format
 - date
- Note: metadata is similar to a bibliographic record.
- For more info on metadata: <http://dublincore.org/>

Searching the Web (page 3)

Advanced searching

- most search engines provide a simple search and an advanced search
- this allows the user to run a more powerful and specific search
- Examples: Boolean search, limit to a specific format (html, pdf, etc.);
limit to a specific language, date, or domain (.edu, .gov, etc.)
- http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en

Searching the Web (page 4)

Metasearch engines

- query several search engines and display their results on one page
- examples:
 - dogpile (<http://www.dogpile.com/>),
 - vivisimo (<http://vivisimo.com/>)

Searching the Web (page 5)

Evaluating websites:

- information obtained from the web may be biased, inaccurate, or even deceitful.
- most websites do not go through the editing process that published books and journals do.
- each website should be evaluated before using the information supplied by the site.

Evaluating Websites

1. Look at the Domain suffix

- a) .com = commercial site – “for profit” website
- b) .edu = educational institution – teachers, professors, and student websites
- c) .gov = government site – from the U.S. Government
- d) .org = non-profit organization – not for profit but can be biased
- e) .mil – military – from the U.S. Armed Forces
- f) .net = network – can be for profit or not; miscellaneous category
- g) Individual countries, .au, .uk, etc. – from foreign countries

Evaluating Websites (page 2)

2. Look at the authority of the website

- a) What is the author’s name?
- b) What is the author’s credentials?
- c) What institution is sponsoring the website?

3. Look at the currency of the site

- a) When was the site published online?

4. Compare websites to other sources

- a) Never rely solely on websites for your research.
- b) Compare information from websites to information obtained from books and articles.

Searching Multiple Online Resources

- Through the OPAC, libraries can offer patrons the ability to search websites, citation databases, full-text databases and book catalogs.
- This can cause some confusion to the patrons.
- To simplify the search process, libraries can:
 - use OpenURL Linking - create links from their catalog to databases.
 - use federated or metasearching - searching multiple databases simultaneously
 - allow remote access to users by using authentication

Searching Multiple Online Resources (page 2)

Metadata Harvesting Protocol

- Allows searching across multiple sources
- can search websites, databases, library catalogs, electronic journals, and digitized materials.
- How does it work?

Like a search engine, programs are sent out to “harvest” metadata and store it in a database. This database can then be searched to find online materials from a variety of sources.