Research Resources and Strategies

Many class assignments, such as research papers, require knowledge of library resources and ways to utilize these resources. Here is a quick overview of major library resources with general search strategies for electronic resources:

**How Do I Find Books or Reference Materials on My Topic?**

Use the Library Online Kansas City and/or MOBIUS Catalog -- Books from Longview and other academic libraries across Missouri. FREE on Internet at: [http://kansascity.searchmobius.org/search~S3](http://kansascity.searchmobius.org/search~S3). Use campus ID number and request books--even from home!

Can't think of the right terms to use when searching? Try these two methods:
1. **Use Library of Congress Subject Headings** to find words (subject headings) -- do a **subject** search in online catalog using these words.
2. Use **keyword search** and type in most likely words to describe topic (these are called keywords). Find results that are useful, then see what real "subject headings" are attached and use these for another search.

**How Do I Find Magazine/Journals Articles On My Topic?**

Use handout [Where Do I Find Information On My Topic?](#) to get a quick overview of some of our major print and electronic sources. Use the database/print source most appropriate for your topic. For example, a science research paper on "global warming" would probably best be researched in *Science Online* database.

Example of an electronic databases with general topics coverage:
--Academic Search Elite and ProQuest Research Library: Cover 3,500+ periodicals with 2,000+ full text.

*Be aware that Library’s Online Databases are available via remote access.*

- To use online databases on campus, go to: [http://www.mcckc.edu/services/libraries/longview_lib/lv_lib_databases.asp](http://www.mcckc.edu/services/libraries/longview_lib/lv_lib_databases.asp)
- To access databases off campus, login to MyMCCKC, located at [http://www.mcckc.edu](http://www.mcckc.edu). Note: Problems with logging in to a database should be reported to a Reference Librarian at 816-604-2268.

**What is a good search strategy for searching electronic databases?**

Please note, electronic databases can usually be searched in two different ways: by subject or by keyword. These searches do very different things. Keyword search is done automatically by database and finds any words typed in (keywords) anywhere they appear in articles, citations, or abstracts. Example: search on effects of light on green plants (plants and light) could bring up articles on concrete plants and a street light nearby. Keyword searches can retrieve large numbers of unusable results. Subject search only brings up articles that have exact search term in articles’ subject fields, narrowing down results to a smaller, more relevant list of articles. It is best to use subject searches whenever possible.
Typical search strategy:

1. Pick topic and create search question: Example: effect of divorce on children
2. Identify main terms or concepts (keywords) of topic or research question--use synonyms as well. Example: children--families--stepchildren, etc. Use Library of Congress Subject Headings for ideas on other terms to use.
3. Choose database to search. Database should be appropriate for topic! What search capabilities does database have? Most allow keyword and subject searching. If topic is common (abortion, gun control, etc.) subject search is best. If unsure of a subject term--use keyword search from words put together in step 2.
4. Keyword searching. Do keyword searching by combining words together with boolean connectors, (and, or, not).
   - and terms on both sides of and must be in search. For example: children and divorce must include both words in an article.
   - or term on either side may be in search. For example: children or families and divorce.
   - not do not search for term after not. For example: children and divorce not separation
5. Scan results. Find results that might be ok for topic--see what subject headings are listed and search those.
6. Revise search if necessary. Broaden or narrow topic and repeat steps above.

How Can I Use the Internet Most Effectively?

--Use any of many search engines available--like Google, Ask.com, etc. or meta-search engine that searches several search engines at once. Read "help tips" from each search engine.
--Use a meta-sites. These are big groups of reliable web sites which can be searched by topic or category. For instance, Choice has 600 Best Internet Sites for Undergraduates.
--Use Web Links at Longview library's home page. It lists reliable Internet sites compiled by Longview Librarians. http://www.mcckc.edu/services/libraries/longview_lib/lv_weblinks.asp
--Use printed books that give overviews of reliable web sites. Library has many of these.

How Do I Cite Resources I've Found?
"Citing Sources," for both MLA and APA are available in the library and on the web on the Longview Library's homepage under Research Tools.
http://www.mcckc.edu/services/libraries/longview_lib/lv_researchtools.asp

Remember to ask a Reference Librarian for help!