PADM 650 – Search Tips

These tips supplement and complement the demonstrations in class for searching databases

Tips for All Databases:
- Use quotation marks – “xxxxx xxxxx” – when you are searching for phrases.
- Look for a peer-reviewed or scholarly or academic link to limit to scholarly articles.
- Use the limiters and other tools within the database to save time and effort.
- Look at the abstract and search terms that are attached to promising references – you should discover additional vocabulary to try.
- Use navigation aids in the database, e.g., back to results, modify search, rather than using the browser back button.
- Search history is usually retained for the session; look for # recent searches or search history or previous searches.
- Look for links to articles that cite your article (e.g., cited by) and to sources used in your article (e.g., references). These will lead you forward and backward from your article.
- Look for the Get it @ VCU button or a PDF/Full Text link to lead you to the full article.

1. ABI/INFORM Collection (ProQuest) [NOTE: The other ProQuest databases, e.g., PAIS Index, are similar]

Example: Building a search and using database features to limit / expand

1st line – "nonprofit organization*"

Select Anywhere except full text

Why? ABI/INFORM Collection has much full text in it, and this choice will search just the important parts of the reference, i.e., title, abstract, subject terms, and ignore the irrelevant use of your terms in the last paragraph of a very long article.

2nd line – leadership; select Anywhere except full text

There will be 8,535+ results.

Select Peer reviewed. The number of results will decrease to about 830+.

Note the choices under Source Type and Document Type on the left. These can be very useful when you are looking for a particular type of material. Look at the Publication Date graph. It sometimes will provide clues as to when an issue became important. Note that you can enter date ranges if you wish. Notice that there are other ways to limit on the Narrow results menu, e.g., Subject,
Classification, and Location. The number of results you will obtain is listed next to each choice. For example, selecting Experiment/theoretical treatment under Classification will find about 290+ results, all of which are research articles.

Select preview for several of the references and note words and phrases such as transformational leadership, management styles, executives, associations. If you decide to add these to the search -- Select modify search and add those terms to your search. The 2nd line might look like this:

leadership OR executives

Check the peer-reviewed box

There should be about 1,105+ results from this particular search

Limiting to Experiment/theoretical treatment and 2011-2017 reduces this to about 205+

2. Business Source Complete (EBSCO) [NOTE: The other EBSCO databases, e.g., Academic Search Complete, are similar]

Search Example:

1st line – fundraising
2nd line – "nonprofit organization"

There will be about 2,815+ results

Limit to scholarly articles - Select scholarly (peer reviewed) from the limiters on the left

This will reduce the number of results to around 420+
Look at the abstracts and the subjects being used to describe the records for possible additional terms.

*Revise the search to limit to research articles:* This database does not have a way of easily limiting to research articles. However, you can enter research-related terms into your search and change the search type to AB Abstract.

1st line – *fundraising*
2nd line – "nonprofit organization*"
3rd line – research OR study OR empirical; [change Select a Field to AB Abstract]
There will be about 170+ results

3. Advanced Search (VCU Libraries Search)

Tips:
You may want to select a Material type, e.g., 'articles' or 'books'
Use the limits on the left of the results as applicable
Click on view online to reach the link(s) to ejournal articles or ebooks

1. SEARCHING FOR ARTICLES OR BOOKS BY TOPIC
   - Enter your search term(s) and change the search type to 'in the title'. Items with your terms in the title have a high probability of being useful.
   - Select a Material Type if you are searching for just one type
   - When the results appear, use the options on the left to limit.

2. SEARCHING FOR SPECIFIC BOOKS
   - Search using 'in the title' or 'as author/creator' or both
   - Select 'books' as the Material Type