Using VCU Libraries Search: Part 2

Once you’ve completed your initial search in the VCU Libraries Search, you may want to narrow it down to focus on the information that is relevant to you. My search for “euthanasia” brought up fifteen thousand entries...a lot for me to sort through. The first thing I might try to do is add an additional search term. My research is focused on ethical issues surrounding euthanasia, so I can try adding in the term “ethics” to my search. I’ll just do this by adding ‘ethics’ into the search box in the upper left of the page after the word “euthanasia.”

I now have a significantly fewer set of results than my original search, but still too many to review. Fortunately, the VCU Libraries search has easy tools to help narrow this down even further. Tools for narrowing your options can be found in the sidebar on the left side of your screen. First, if I know that I am interested only in material from peer reviewed journals, I can select that choice under show only. Selecting peer-reviewed journals narrows down my search only a little. I am going to need to continue narrowing by exploring the different options. I can refine by Material Type, such as articles and then I further narrowed my results, just a little. I can also explore the options under Subject. Think of the subject terms as “tags” that are a description of the material. I can see plenty of subjects listed here, but I am going to click More Options to get a full view of the different information that might be available.

Since my research on ethics and euthanasia happens to be focused in a certain area, I need to find subjects related to that. Using the checkboxes, I can include certain terms. At first glance, I can already see quite a few that would be helpful. But I am also going to want to see if there is anything else relevant; and, I will want to avoid the things that are irrelevant.

This time, I am going to include anything that has the word “Euthanasia;” but I am also going to select the one that says “Assisted Suicide.” I will hit continue at the
end. So, now you can see, next to the “Refined by,” everything that I’ve narrowed my topic to. There are more options for me to explore on the left hand toolbar; but, I already see a few articles that might be helpful in my research. So, I am just going to start going through this list and pick out information. Remember, to access the full-text of any article, you are going to click View Online and follow the blue links.

If you have any questions or want advice in finding information, just ask a librarian.

If you need additional research assistance, just ask us: www.library.vcu.edu/askus