Maximizing Your Search Skills
at the Health Sciences Library
hslibrary@smh.ca, ext. 5059

Before Class:

1) Review the Resource Guide for Maximizing Your Search Skills found on our “Library Search” page under “Resource Guides”
or visit http://bit.ly/W7nSn

2) Complete handout questions and write down any questions you may have for the instructor.

Table of Contents

1. Access our Website, p.2
2. Our Resources and Services, p.2
3. SALI (Search All Library Information), p.3
4. ABCs of a Literature Search, p.4
5. Journal Tools & Tips, p.6
6. Manage Your Results, p.7
1. Access Our Website

a) From home

- Go to the external website: stmichaelshospital.com
- Click on “For Staff” under the “Working Here” section (bottom of page)
- Click on “Intranet Portals, Home & Network Files” this will take you to the Intranet portal where the HSL webpage lives

b) On a hospital device at the hospital

- Go to portal.smh.ca
- Find “Quick Links” on bottom left of the homepage
- Click on “Library Search”

2. Our Resources and Services

- Books, eBooks, databases  
  90% online!
- Interlibrary Loan Requests
- Resource Guides
- SALI (for quick searches)
- Search consultations with an Information Specialist
- Topic Searches by an Information Specialist
- Workshops – General & Customized

Question 1

What is an Interlibrary Loan? (Answer found in “Journals @ SMH” slides)
3. SALI (Search All Library Information)

- Searches the library catalogue and many other library resources simultaneously.
- Great if you’re in a hurry, you only need a couple things, and you are only interested in the items that the library has immediately on hand.
- Not suitable for in depth research (if you’re doing a systematic review, this is not the tool for you)

**Question 2**

Use SALI to find the article, “Dietary education tools for South Asians with diabetes”.

**Do we have access to full-text?**

☐ Yes  ☐ No
4. ABCs of a Literature Search

A) Articulate the concepts of your search question

Databases can process searches for keywords and subject headings much more easily than phrases.

It’s important to break your question down into concepts and search them individually.

   e.g. What is the typical recovery time that hockey players face after sustaining a head injury?

The major concepts are: recovery time, hockey and head injury

   What is the typical recovery time that hockey players face after sustaining a head injury?

B) Build a list of search terms using Keywords & Subject Headings

Write down all of the possible subject headings and keywords for each concept and search them separately.

Subject Headings: Subject Headings are pre-defined “controlled vocabulary” words used to describe the content of each item (book, journal article, etc.) in a database.

To find Subject Headings many databases have a thesaurus you can browse, or others may automatically suggest a Subject Heading when you enter a keyword.

Keywords: Keywords are the normal, plain language words used within a text. Databases may search for a keyword in the content’s title, abstract, author, subject headings, journal title, full-text and more.

Find recent articles or trends with keywords that Subject Headings have not yet caught up with.
Which of the following places can you find Subject Headings?

- a) Database thesaurus
- b) MeSH database
- c) At the bottom of an indexed citation
- d) All of the above

c) Combine Your Terms

You’ve searched for your terms individually, now it’s time to combine them in your search history using Boolean operators. Boolean operators is the fancy term used for the small connecting words **AND** & **OR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AND</strong></th>
<th><strong>OR</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="#" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OR** to retrieve results that have one or more of the terms listed. The red area in the diagram below indicates that using OR would retrieve items that have the term acetaminophen OR aspirin, OR both. OR combines like concepts. i.e. (senior OR aged OR elderly OR geriatric) **OR IS MORE!**

**AND** to retrieve results that have BOTH terms, not just one or the other. The red areas in the diagram below indicates that using AND would retrieve items that have the term headache AND the term aspirin. AND combines different concepts together i.e. (senior OR aged OR elderly OR geriatric) AND (diabetes). **AND NARROWS!**
Example of Combining Terms in Medline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Searches</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>exp Cranioencephal Trauma</td>
<td>109,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>exp Sports</td>
<td>96,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Recovery of Function&quot;</td>
<td>23,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 and 2 and 3</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concepts searched separately

Concepts combined with AND

5. Journal Tools & Tips

Anatomy of a Citation

Discover if we have full-text

Easiest way: Type in the article title in the SALI search box!

You can also link to our journal subscriptions through our Find Journals page on the Library Search Homepage. This will show you how to access the journals electronically and in print. It will also show you the dates we have access to.

Question 4

What years do we have access to electronically from BMJ: British Medical Journal?

a) 1975-present
b) 1988-present
c) 1993-present

6. Manage Your Results

Save Your Search History in whichever database you are searching by registering for a free personal account. You can re-run your searches months later without having to re-build your search strategy.

Save Your References by emailing, printing, or using a reference management tool such as Endnote. Endnote is a free to all SMH staff. Visit our Endnote Resource Guide for more information: http://guides.hsict.library.utoronto.ca/SMH/Endnote

Questions?
Contact the Health Sciences Library at hslibrary@smh.ca or call 416-864-5059