

Tools for Effective Literature Searching to Support Your Research

Database/Journal Alerts

- Automatically receive search results from databases or new Tables of Contents from selected journals.
- Depending on the database or journal, these can be either e-mailed or delivered via RSS.
- Look for the words Alerts, or Saved Search, or My [DATABASE], or RSS from inside the database interface.

Dissertations and Theses Full Text (Proquest)

- Full text for most dissertations from 1997 to the present.
- Look at relevant dissertations' bibliographies and literature review chapters.
- Available from <http://library.vcu.edu/search/1074>, or Databases A-Z on the VCU Libraries home page (<http://www.library.vcu.edu/>).

Google Alerts

- Powerful tool to discover new scholarly information on the Web via automated searches.
- Use effective search terms and strategies to improve the relevance of your results. Check out www.googleguide.com for a tutorial.
- Google Alerts are available from <http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en>. Note: you do *not* need to have a Gmail account for this to work.

RefWorks

- Citation management software to collect and organize references.
- One-click bibliography generation function, from part or all of your references database.
- Free to VCU students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Can export database in multiple formats.
- Available, with setup information and additional help, at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/refworks/>.

Research Guides

- Discipline-, topic-, or group-specific web pages with search tips and strategies.
- Links to VCU Libraries and free online resources you may not have used.
- Available from <http://guides.library.vcu.edu/>, or on the VCU Libraries home page.
- You can also search Databases by Subject on the VCU Libraries Home page.

Your Librarian

- Every department, program, or school at VCU is assigned one or more librarians.
- Librarians can suggest useful databases, bibliographies, and other tools you may not know.
- Who's your librarian? <http://tinyurl.com/6zqlop8>

****Search Reminders****

- AND narrows your search. (dna AND rna)
- OR broadens your search. Good for synonyms, related terms. (cats OR felines)
- NOT eliminates irrelevant terms. (street drugs NOT narcotics)
- Quotes usually find phrases. ("arthroscopic rotator cuff" finds the phrase, not the words separately.)
- Wildcards find words with the same root. (anthropol* finds anthropology, anthropologists, etc.)
 - Different databases use different wildcards. Try * first. If that doesn't work, \$ or ! may do it.
 - Check the Help or Tutorial link in the interface for more information on wildcards.
- Parentheses create complex searches. E.g. "active learning" and (adult* or juvenile*)
- Check out the Advanced Search interface for better limiters.