

Library Podcast Interview with Alicia Webb

(Opening Music, Introductory Remarks)

Alisha is reference librarian at the JT campus; will be talking about searching the online library catalog and databases.

How is searching library resources different from searching Google or Wikipedia?

The chief problem with information gathered this way is credibility. Is the information current, valid, and has been vetted. Information gathered through library resources has already been through this process.

Searching like ordering in a restaurant.

When ordering in a restaurant you must speak the language that is in use to order from their menu. Searching the catalog or a database is the same thing...you must use the language. The language of database is keyword searching.

Broad entries in things like Google or Wikipedia are acceptable, but the library catalog or library databases require more specific keywords. In a sense you are ordering your information. Keywords describe the topic you are seeking information on. In the catalog or database use specific words, not phrase like you would use in Google.

Keyword searching is trial and error. To save some time up front spend a few minutes brainstorming words that could be related to your search. And after examining your results you come across other words relative to your subject...you can use those as well in your searches.

Boolean searching

Boolean searching is the use of something called connectors that allow you to connect terms in your search. To go back to the restaurant example – when ordering a steak must specify how it is to be cooked. Use of the connectors is the same thing- you are telling the database how to run the search.

There are 3 choices of connectors

AND – will provide results that contain both terms – dogs AND family – results where both terms are present. Practical result is fewer results.

OR - will produce results that will contain one or the other of the terms specified, but not both

Dogs OR canine will produce results containing both terms. Practical result is more results.

NOT will be the one of these you use the least. The “bad boy” of the group – Using Not may exclude results that you could use.

Specifying Full-Text and Peer Reviewed

Peer reviewed is the process of publishing articles in a source that is regarded as credible – peer reviewed journal articles will be regarded as having the most validity.

Another example is the evening news – when a newscaster talks about research showing “X” results, they are consulting a peer reviewed journal.

For example – an article on cancer is better received if found in the New England Journal of Medicine.

How to specify peer reviewed – back to the restaurant again. When ordering a salad please put the dressing on the side and the lemon for my tea on the side as well.

Same thing with the database – you can specify by checking a box you will only get full text articles (vs just citations) and the same mechanism is available for specifying peer-reviewed articles – check the box.

Library can always be contacted for assistance.

(Closing remarks and music)