DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

A guide to finding information in the Roberts-LaForge Library

Guide to Using EBSCO*host*

What is EBSCO*host*? EBSCO*host* is an authoritative research tool and database system that offers indexing/abstracting and selected full text retrieval of periodical (magazine and journal) literature, monographs, reference works, theses, book chapters, and much more in approximately fifty databases. Combined, these databases contain millions of citations, full-text articles from over 5,000 periodicals, indexing and abstracting for over 8,500 journals, magazines, and newspapers, and specialized subject area content only available through EBSCOhost.

How do you access EBSCO*host?* To begin, first go to the DSU's Electronic Database's page at http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/676.asp. You can choose an EBSCO database by locating it through the subject directory, or click on **EBSCOhost** located at the bottom left of the screen. At the login screen, click on "All EBSCO databases" to see a complete list, or choose one of the subject groups. If you are off campus, please consult the DSU Virtual Library Guide available at http://www.deltastate.edu/docs/library/VirtualLibraryonline.pdf.

Figure 1 – Database Selection Screen
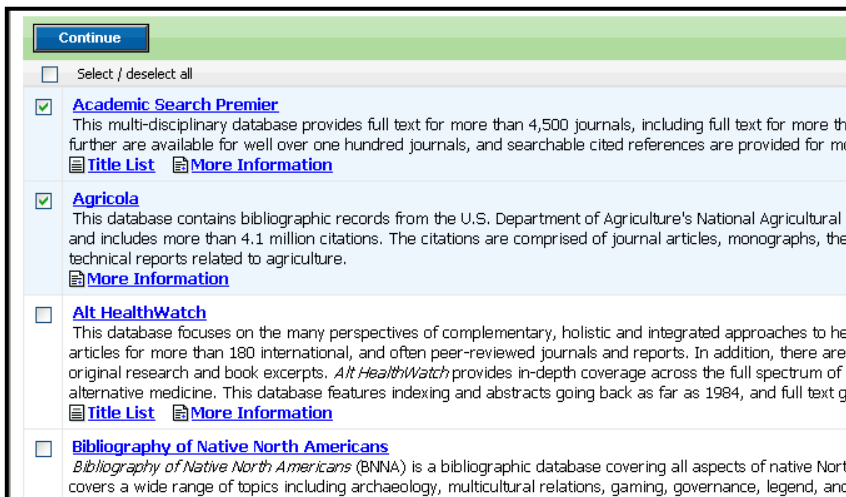
How do you choose a database? If you choose a database from the subject directory, you will go straight to that database. If you clicked on the EBSCOhost box, however, you will be prompted to choose a database(s). To search one database, click on the name of the database. To search more than one database, click on the box to the left of each database, then click the **CONTINUE** button. Once you have selected a database(s), you are ready to begin searching.

Searching in EBSCOhost: By default, EBSCOhost takes you to the *Advanced Search* screen.
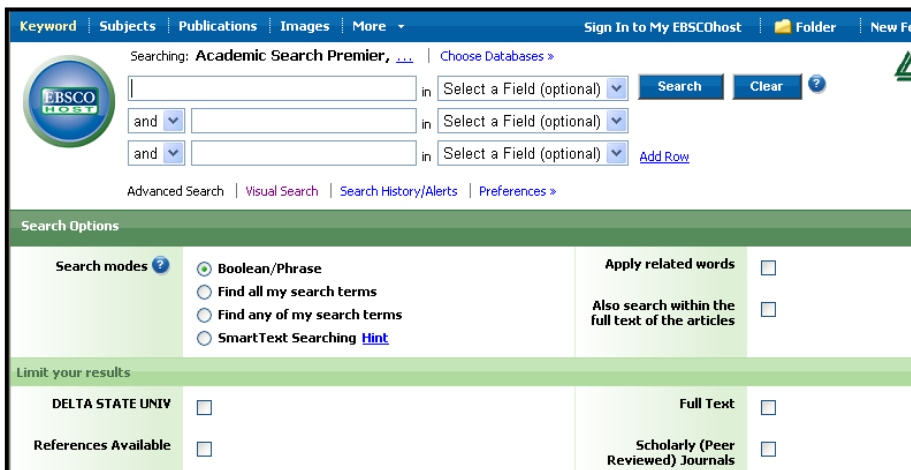
Advanced searching allows the user the most flexibility in performing searches. It provides three keyword search boxes (or more, if desired) to separate unique terms or phrases as well as capabilities to search within specific parts of each record. (Note: Each record consists of the citation information, abstract, and possible full-text.)

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Figure 2 – Advanced Search Screen

A typical search consists of either phrases or words combined together with Boolean operators (and, or, not). Boolean operators allow the user to create an exact search. To find out more about the uses of Boolean operators, click on the Online Help Button at the top right corner of the screen.

Search example: **"educational technology" AND classroom** will retrieve articles that have the exact phrase *educational technology* and the word *classroom* somewhere in the record (usually, in the title, subject, or abstract fields). By using quotation marks, you ensure that the database will search for the phrase exactly as entered.

In an *Advanced Search*, the user has the capability of limiting the search to a specific field such as the subject, title, or author field. (To see all of the searchable fields, simply click on the drop down box located next to the search box.) Naturally, using the field limiters is more specific and more appropriate for those users who know exactly what they need. Figure 3 is an example of the advanced search screen with drop-down menu shown.
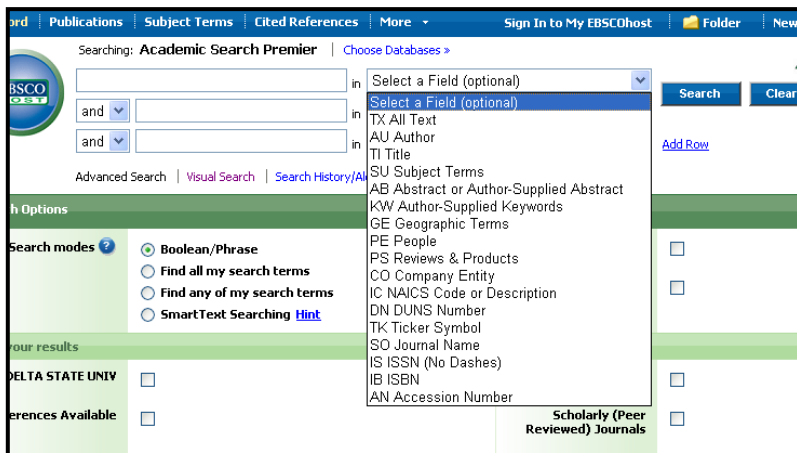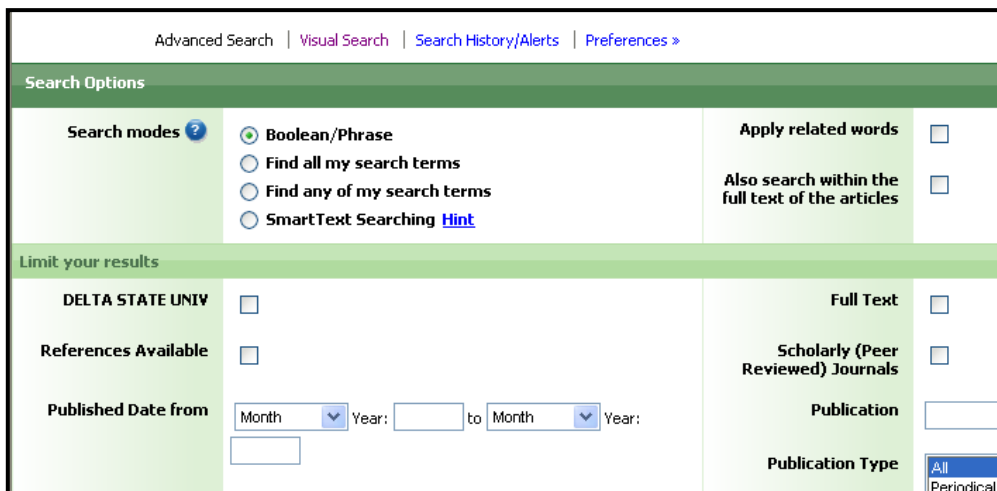

Figure 3 – Drop-down Menu

Figure 4 – Search Options

On the home search screen, you also have access to additional specific limiters and search options. For instance, if a researcher knew he needed to find a cover story, find articles of a certain length, or particular publication types, the special limiters would be most useful. Be advised that each EBSCOhost database has its own distinct limiters.

The *Search History/Alerts* link provides a complete history of all searches.

Understanding the Search Results: When viewing search results, citations are typically in chronological order, with the most recent articles first. Some databases, however, may default to a relevancy ranking. Regardless of the database default, results may sorted in various ways.

Click on the title (underlined and in blue) to see the complete record which includes complete citation information, subject headings and other keywords, and an abstract. Full text is indicated by either "HTML Full Text," "PDF Full Text," or "Linked Full Text."

If full-text is not available: 1.) The LinkSource button links to full-text outside of EBSCOhost. If the full-text is not available elsewhere, LinkSource provides an interlibrary loan request. 2.) A separate link takes you to the library's catalog to check print holdings. 3.) A link is provided to request the article through Interlibrary Loan.

Figure 5 – Search Result Screen

For convenience, you can add any result to a folder by clicking on "Add to folder."

Also, if you are interested in accessing the full-text, but no full-text link is available, please view the Notes section which indicates whether DSU subscribes to the journal or magazine in print.

Searching Tips: On occasion, you may not get the desired results, which can both be a frustrating and overwhelming experience. The following tips will allow you to expand or narrow your search as desired.

- **Too many Results?**
    - o Try adding more search terms. It is crucial when searching any database to be as specific as possible. If you enter only one word, search results will abound, and more than likely the results will not have anything to do with what you are researching. Remember to use the Boolean operators and provide terms that completely reflect your search interest.
    - o Search within a specific field. Remember that a keyword search will look throughout the whole record. If you want results that reflect the essence of your topic, limit your search to one of the fields provided in the *Advanced Search* module.
    - o Use the limiters at the bottom of the home search screen. These limiters are designed to exclude any undesirable results.

- **Not Enough Results?**
    - o Use synonyms or related terms. Think of other ways to describe your topic.
    - o Truncate your term using the "*" which will search for the stem of your word and any ending it may have. For example, by typing educat*, you will get educate, educates, educational, educating, etc. This is particularly helpful for those terms that do have multiple variations.
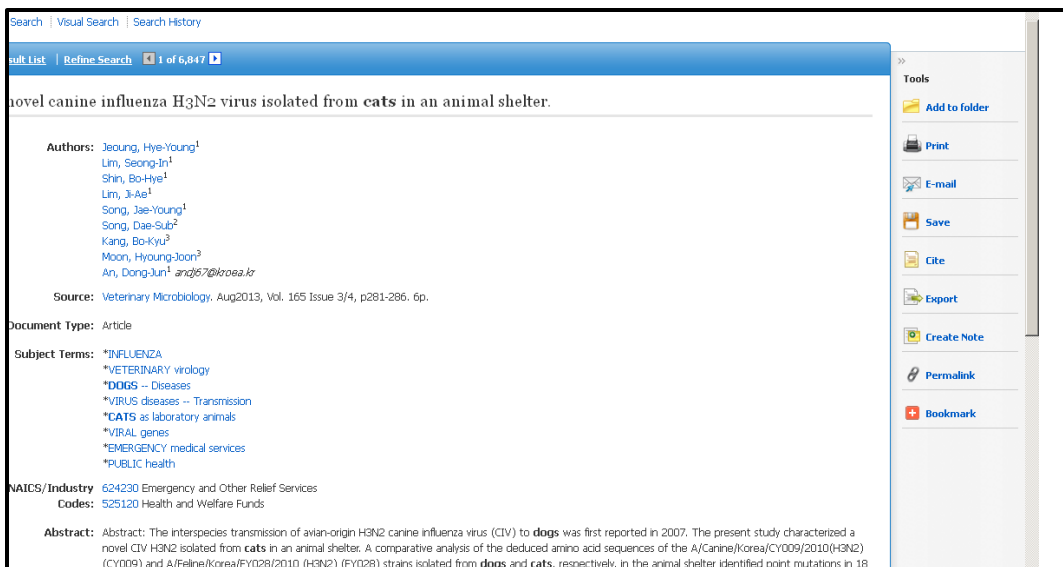
- **No Results or Wrong Results?**
    - o Check for any misspellings or typos.
    - o **Subject searching** sometimes is the best option. Click on the Subject box in the top blue bar (depending on which database you're searching, it will read "Subjects," "Subject Terms," or "Thesaurus"). This is a browsable list of all possible subject terms used to classify resources. In addition to a definition, the **Subjects** feature will also provide you with related, narrower, or broader terms to aid in your search.
    - o Do not enter long phrases. "Stop words" such as *for, as, to, the, of,* etc. are hardly ever indexed and therefore are inconsequential when doing keyword searching. If these words are entered, the results will be skewed. Do not enter articles, prepositions, or other common words that would appear regularly in narrative writing.

- **Additional Tips**
    - o If you find an article or document you like, you can find related articles by clicking on the appropriate subject(s) – sometimes also called descriptors.
    - o Constructing an effective search is both a creative and scientific process. Search results are not random. They rely solely on the terms entered and the manner in which they were entered. Please be patient and explore all avenues.

Printing/Emailing/Saving Records:

Figure 6 – Record with Print, Email, and Save Options: To print, email, or save an individual record, simply click on the appropriate link at the top of each record.

To print, email, or save several records, use the *Add to Folder* button included in each record as seen in Figure 5. You can also add an item to your folder while viewing the individual record rather than the search results page. Once you have added all the necessary records, click on your folder, which should now contain one or more items. Once you go to your folder, you will then be directed to a Print, Email, or Save Manager.

- *Print* – Select either the Citation/Abstract or Full Text (when available) option, then click on the blue **Print** button.
- *Email* – Enter in your email address and subject then choose whether you want the citation(s) and abstract(s) only or full text if available. Click on the blue **Send** button to email.
- *Save* – Once you have clicked on the blue **Save** button, your items will appear on the screen. To save to a disk, click on **File** and then **Save as** from your browser's toolbar. Be sure to save the document as a plain text file (.txt) or an HTML file (.html).

Have a Question? Ask a Librarian!

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