Guide to Using General BusinessFile

What is General BusinessFile? General BusinessFile consists of four separate components: 1.) Business Index provides access to articles on economics, management, trade, and industry. Along with Business Source Elite from EBSCOhost, Business Index is one of the most comprehensive business databases that Roberts-LaForge library maintains; 2.) Company Profiles provides brief profiles of more than 100,000 public and private companies, links to articles relating to that company, and links to investment reports; 3.) Investext offers investment reports and forecasts for more than 11,000 US and international companies and for 53 industries prepared by Wall Street and international brokerage firms; 4.) SIC Descriptions – full descriptions of all SIC codes with parent groups; includes links to articles about the particular industry, profiles of companies in that industry, investment reports, and a link to the SIC parent group.

How do you access General BusinessFile? To begin, first go to the DSU’s Electronic Database’s page at http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/676.asp. Click on the Gale Group icon located at the bottom right of the screen. Click on General BusinessFile which is the first database listed. For off-campus instructions go to http://www.deltastate.edu/docs/library/offcampus.pdf or pick up the off-campus guide at Roberts-LaForge Library.

Searching: There are four primary ways to search this database: Subject Guide, Relevance Search, Keyword Search, and Advanced Search. To choose one of these searches, click on the appropriate link located in the left-hand menu. By default, the Subject Guide is selected.

The Subject Guide provides an alphabetical list of all subjects in the database. You will see one of five buttons in a subject search.

View – Follow this link to view articles for the desired subject.
Read – Indicates a company profile.
Narrow – Indicates that a subject has been divided into categories.
See – Directs you to the appropriate subject term.
See Also – Provides alternative or related subject terms to peruse.

Avoid using lengthy search phrases by limiting your entries to one or two terms. If you use the Boolean operators, or or not, a Keyword Search is automatically performed. The operator, and, is ignored.

The Subject Guide is appropriate for broad subject searches such as “business ethics” or for browsing all subject terms or phrases to get a better picture of the database’s scope. For more precise searches, use the Advanced or Keyword searches.
The Relevance Search ranks search results by their “importance.” The more a term or phrase appears in an article, or the scarcity of a term in other articles will give results higher relevance. Those articles with the highest relevance appear at the top of the list.

Although you may enter as many terms as necessary in a Relevance Search, you must follow a strict protocol. Boolean operators (and, or, not) cannot be used. Instead, you must use either “+” in place of and or “-” in place of not.

For example, the search +Mississippi –River retrieves articles that contain the word Mississippi, and excludes river. Quotation marks may also be used for exact phrases.

The Keyword Search allows flexibility because you can enter as many keywords or phrases as necessary separated by Boolean operators, and, or, or not. For example, the search Mississippi and “delta blues” not river will retrieve any article containing the word Mississippi, the phrase “delta blues,” but not the word river. Avoid using articles or prepositions because the database will ignore them. If you enter delta blues (or any phrase) without quotation marks, the database searches for your words within two words of each other. This also applies to the Relevance and Advanced searches.

The Advanced Search allows experienced users to search within specific indexes, or fields. For example, if you knew you wanted to search for articles by Carl Smith, simply choose the Author index and then type in Carl Smith in the search box. The advanced search is basically a keyword search with the ability to choose specific indexes. Advanced Search results are available at a link at the bottom of the page.

You also have the ability to search in multiple indexes at the same time. If you knew Carl Smith wrote an article with the word “money” in the title, an effective search would look something like this: 
au Carl Smith and ti money
When searching multiple indexes you must enter the index codes. (See Figure 3)

Understanding the Search Results: Once you have performed a search, the results are easy to navigate. To the left of each citation, a small icon will indicate the article’s availability.

- denotes full-text

- denotes full-text with graphics

- denotes an abstract only

- denotes a citation only

To retrieve an individual record, click on the icon or the linked title (in blue). If the title is not available full-text through the Gale database, click on the SFX button ☇ SFX to see if it is available in another Roberts-LaForge database. If the full-text is not available at all electronically, the SFX button provides a screen to submit an Interlibrary Loan request. Interlibrary Loan requests will not be filled for articles we have in print.

Figure 3 – Advanced Search Screen with a list of indexes and codes.

Figure 4 – Search results page of a Keyword Search
**Limiting Results:** For the *Relevance, Keyword, and Advanced* searches, limiters are available.

In the yellow search box, you can limit your searches to search in the title, citation, and abstract or in the entire article content which includes title, citation, abstract, and full-text if available.

You may also limit searches by date, to full-text only, or to refereed publications. You also have the option of searching within a specific journal.

For a complete list of journal titles, click on the *Title List* link in the blue area on the left side of the screen.

**Search History:** The *Relevance, Keyword, and Advanced* searches all provide search histories at the bottom of the page. All searches included in an individual session are saved. The search history is an excellent way to analyze what information you have already seen, but Gale’s search history also allows you to use the history to create new results.

**Additional General BusinessFile Features:** General BusinessFile consists of four components: *Business Index, Investex, SIC Descriptions, and Company ProFiles*. Unless you specify otherwise, you will automatically search *Business Index*. To access these additional features, go to the *Advanced Search* screen where you will be able to choose the desired database. For a complete description of this database, please see the *What is General BusinessFile?* section at the beginning of this document.
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 index in the Advanced Search. Remember that a keyword search will look throughout the whole record, whereas a subject search (su) will limit your search to results that are about your topic.
  o Use the limiters described on page 3. These limiters are designed to provide only the results you want.
  o Use the Search History combination feature to reduce the number of results.
  o For more precise searches, use proximity operators such as Wn or Nn. Typing Mississippi W3 Delta looks for results in which Delta occurs three or fewer times after Mississippi. Mississippi N3 Delta looks for Delta within three words in any direction of Mississippi.
  o Remember to use quotation marks to find an exact phrase.

• Not Enough Results?
  o Use synonyms or variant forms of your word. 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?
  o Check for any misspellings or typos.
  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.

• Additional Tips
  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 are entered. Please be patient and explore all avenues. Have fun!
  o If after consulting all these search tips and you still find no results, try a different database. Or, ASK A LIBRARIAN!

Printing/Emailing: You can print or email individual or groups of results. To print or email several results, click in the open box next to each article title. Then click View Mark List located in the blue area to the left of the screen.

Figure 8 – Search Results Screen with articles checked for printing or emailing.

Figure 9 – Printing and Emailing Options
You can choose to print or email either the citation or full article if available. For emailing, you must enter your email address and an easily recognizable subject.