



Library Research Tips

How to Select an Appropriate Database

Databases contain articles from periodicals (magazines, journals, newspapers, etc.). Each database covers a unique group of periodicals and other materials.

If you're not sure which databases to use to find information for your assignment, consider the following:

- **Program Resource Guides**

Check the Articles section of your **Program Resource Guide** (<http://www.nait.ca/library/856.htm>) for databases recommended for your area of study.

- **Database Category Groupings**

Use the category tab in the **Find Articles & More** section of the website (<http://www.nait.ca/library/831.htm>). It may be helpful to look at more than one category. For example, you might decide that your topic fits best into the Science & Engineering & Technology grouping, but don't discount other categories such as Canadian Coverage, Multi-Subject, and News databases.

- **Database Descriptions**

Once you've chosen a category click on the titles of the databases to read their descriptions.

- **The Journal Title List**

- If you know the name of a relevant journal search for it in the **A-Z Journal List**. (<http://aena.findit.talonline.ca/tal/azlist>). You'll get a list of databases that cover that journal. You can click right through and into a database or make a note of the databases that you want to search.
- You can also use the subject tab in the **A-Z Journal List**. Choose a category and subcategory, then scroll through the resulting list of periodicals to see which database names appear frequently.

- **CUFTS journal search**

CUFTS (<http://cufts2.lib.sfu.ca/MaintTool/public/search>) allows you to get a list of databases that index articles from a particular journal. Search results are not restricted to databases available through the NAIT library, so follow these steps: Enter the title of a periodical, click on the correct title in the results, and then compare the resulting list of databases with the databases available through NAIT library (<http://www.nait.ca/library/852.htm?v=a>) to determine which database to search.

- **Test searches in the databases**

Once you've identified a database that seems appropriate for your research, try some basic searches to assess its value for your topic. If you're not finding results adequate for your needs, revise your search strategy or try another database.

- **Library staff**

Library staff are experienced database users. If you're having difficulties locating or selecting a suitable database, **Ask Us** for suggestions. Databases are frequently updated and expanded, so consult library staff for recommendations.

Visit the library website: www.nait.ca/library