



Subject Searching in Databases Transcript NAIT Library

Hello and welcome to the NAIT library tutorial on subject searching in the library databases.

Databases provide access to articles in magazines, academic journals, and newspapers. Some may also provide access to reports, company financial data, and even e-books. Often, you can read the complete article online.

Start at the NAIT Library homepage www.nait.ca/library; click on the **Find Articles & More** tab, then **Choose database by category**.

Remember: Although you can use the same general techniques to search most databases, each database is unique and may offer different search options. If you have any questions or don't get the results you expect, consult the help section in the database or see the Quick Tips guide beside each database name.

This tutorial demonstrates subject searching in a multi-subject database. Select the **Multi-Subject** databases category to choose a database. For this demonstration, we'll use the database **Academic Search Complete**. From the description of the database, click the title to open. You'll be asked to authenticate or login by entering your student ID number and last name.

You can search databases for resources on your topic in a number of different ways. One effective method is a subject search.

Subject searches are excellent for retrieving articles that deal with your search term as a major focus of the article. Subjects are assigned from a set list of subject terms.

One way to access the subject headings relevant to your research topic is to start with a keyword search, noting the subject headings assigned to relevant articles you find.

For example, let's enter **career change** into the search box and click **search**.

Click the title of the **first result** to see the full record. (*Buying Your Next Career*). **Scroll down** to see all the citation elements of this article including the Author, Title, Journal Name, Year, Volume & Issue Number, & Database name. The **Subject Terms** assigned to this article are listed, as well as a brief **Abstract**, or summary, of the article.

In the **Subject Terms**, "**Career changes**" is one of the subjects assigned to this article.

Click on **Career changes** to see other articles with career changes as a main topic. You now have a complete list of the articles in this database with **career changes** as a subject heading.

If you already know a subject heading for your topic, search for articles by entering that subject heading in the **advanced search box** at the top of screen; then choose **Subject** from the **Select a field drop-down box** to the right.

For example, let's enter the subject **mathematical statistics** as a search. All of the results will include mathematical statistics as one of the main topics. For a successful search, however, you need to know the exact wording of the subject heading used; keyword searching does not work here.

To find additional subject headings, click on **Subject Terms** on the blue bar at the top. (In other databases, this may be called **Thesaurus**.) Then type a term in the **Browse for** box, choose **Term Contains** and click the **Browse** button. Let's type in **statistics**. Click **Browse** to get a list of recommendations for the correct subject heading. For example, for the math of statistics, use the subject heading **mathematical statistics**.

A subject heading search may retrieve a large number of results. Use a combination of subject headings and keywords to narrow your search to articles with your subject as the main topic and your keyword somewhere in the article or record.

For example, let's enter **mathematical statistics** and select **Subject Terms**. On the next line, enter the word **students**, leave the default at **Select a Field**, and click **Search**. All results will be on the topic of mathematical statistics and will have the word **students** somewhere in the article or record. Combining keyword and subject searching is an excellent way to narrow down your results.

If you have questions about subject searching in the library databases, or want to know more about our services and resources, please use one of the **Ask Us** options listed on the library website. Thank you.