



# Library Research Tips

## Searching Databases

Library databases provide access to licensed electronic resources such as articles in eBooks, magazines, technical, trade or scholarly journals. To find a database, go to the **Find Articles & More** tab from the library's website ([www.nait.ca/library](http://www.nait.ca/library)), then choose a database by name or by category.

### What does a database look like?

- A database typically has a search screen, a results screen and a way to access the article or the record of the article.
- The search screen allows you to input keywords, author names, a document title, etc.
- The results screen lists and provides access to information available in the database that relates to what you input on the search screen.
- There are usually options to allow you to print, email, save and export the information. Look for icons or links for these options.
- If the information is available in full-text, you will have access to the entire article.
- If the information is NOT available in full-text, a green "Find it" button is displayed which, when clicked, will search for the article in another database or in a print journal available from the library.




### Why do databases look different from one another?

- Databases are published by vendors (Eg: ProQuest, EBSCO).
- Each vendor has created a unique look and feel for their database(s).
- Even though databases may look different from one another, they generally interpret searches in a similar way, so the search skills you learn for one database can be transferred to another.

### Having trouble searching?

- Searching can sometimes be frustrating because databases interpret search queries in a particular way that may not be how we are accustomed to thinking about a research topic.
- You might find that you get too few or too many results and they may or may not be relevant. If you search by title or author your search results will likely be quite limited. If you search for a single, general term you may get too many results to look through.
- It's important to become familiar with how a database will respond to your searches before beginning your research. Try a couple of test searches when you go into a new database.

### How do I learn how to search a database properly?

- Many of the NAIT databases have a light bulb icon to the right of the database title, displayed prior to logging into the database. Click the light bulb for a handy, one-page PDF guide for searching. 
- This video tutorial from the University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries called "Thinking Like a Database" will help you understand how to construct effective searches in any database: <http://www.library.umass.edu/static/captivate/thinkdb/thinkdb.htm>.
- For more assistance, contact the library staff through the ASK Us section of the library website.

Visit the library website: [www.nait.ca/library](http://www.nait.ca/library)