FINDING SCHOLARLY ARTICLES ON A TOPIC

INTRODUCTION

This video will show you how to find scholarly articles on a topic.

There are two different ways you can do this, using Omni or a specialized subject database. We'll look at both, along with some tips for searching effectively.

SEARCHING USING THE OMNI LIBRARY CATALOGUE

First we'll look at Omni. It has articles on a wide variety of topics and is often a good starting point for research.

The search box is on the Library's main web page. Just type your search and press Search Omni. I'll search for legalization and prostitution.

Your results will include books and many other types of resources. To limit to scholarly articles, look under Availability in the left column and click on Peer-reviewed journals. This gives me 2,700 articles.

Click on the record to see more details about an article. Here you'll see a list of options to locate the article. Click on one to go to the article page and find the PDF. If you're off campus, you'll need to log in at this point. Here you'll also see related articles on the right.

Scroll down to see a description of the article. At the bottom, there are sometimes options to see what this article cites and which articles cite it.

2700 articles is a lot to look through. You can refine your results by using the search limits on the left, for example date or language. One useful way of making your results more relevant is to use the Subjects. Click on Subject to see a list of subjects. Click the box to the left of a subject to include it in your results, or the box on the right to exclude it. I'll include Human Trafficking and exclude History and Archaeology, then click Apply Filters. Now I have narrowed to 170 results, which are focused on one aspect of the topic.

For more precise searching, use the Advanced Search. Click on Advanced Search beside the search box at the top of the page. It is helpful to keep different search concepts on different lines, so I'll type legalization in the first box, and prostitution in the second box. I can specify which resource type, language, or date range I want. In the Any Field dropdown, I can choose whether I want to search everywhere in the record or just the title, author, or subject fields.

SEARCHING IN SPECIALIZED DATABASES

Next, we'll search for articles in a specialized subject database.

Omni is often a good place to start your search, but it only has a subset of the Library's articles. Other databases have a lot more articles in a focused subject area. These are better for in-depth research or for some subjects not covered well in Omni.

To find subject databases, choose Subject Guides from the Research menu at the top of any Library web page.

You'll see a list of different subjects. Pick the one most appropriate for your topic, which in my case is Criminology.

The databases at the top of the Criminology page are the most helpful. I'm going to search Criminal Justice Abstracts.

Many subject databases work like the Advanced Search in Omni. Type different concepts in search boxes on different lines. I'm going to type legalization in the first box and prostitution in the second.

Once you've typed in your search, scroll down to the Search Options area and click to limit your results to articles from Scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals, then click Search.

I get 36 articles. This might sound ok, but actually I'm missing a lot. That's because of the words I used in my search. I'll redo my search and include my alternate search words. I'll type legalization OR laws in the first search box, and prostitution OR sex trade in the second. Now I get 1300 results instead of 36.

Like in Omni, you can limit your results using options on the left, including Subjects. Click on Subject, then on Show More. You'll see a list of subjects to help narrow your search. I'm going to check the box to include Human Trafficking, then click Update. When I do this I get 500 results, which are much more focused.

To see the articles, click on the GetIt@Laurier button. Most of the time, you'll go to the article in Omni where you will see a list of places where your article is available electronically. Pick one of them to get to the article page with the full text or PDF on it.

HELP & FEEDBACK

That's a basic overview of searching for scholarly articles. If you have any questions, ask us at library.wlu.ca/help/askus.

Let us know whether or not this video was helpful. Go to library.wlu.ca/videofeedback to give us feedback and help us improve.