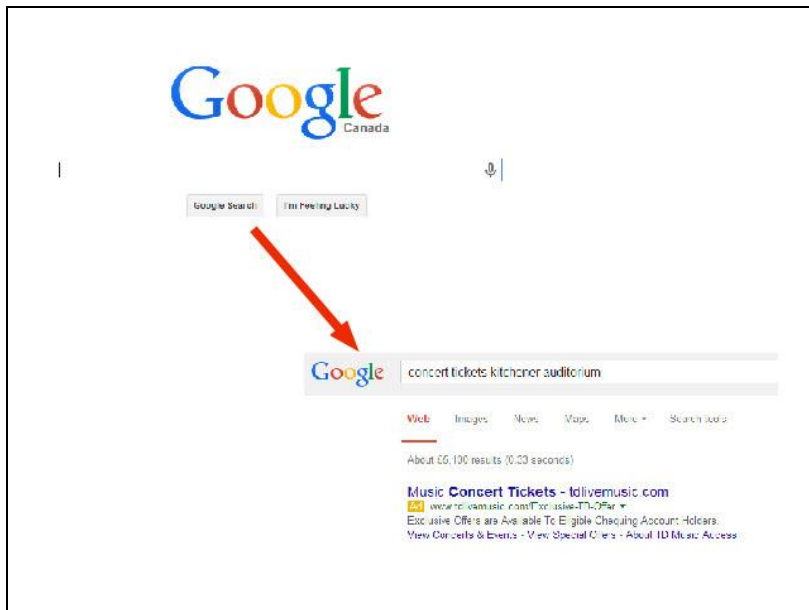


Creating a Search Strategy



When searching for regular information, we're used to just typing something into Google and getting quick results.

When searching for scholarly information for your assignments though, the process is more complex and takes more time and effort.

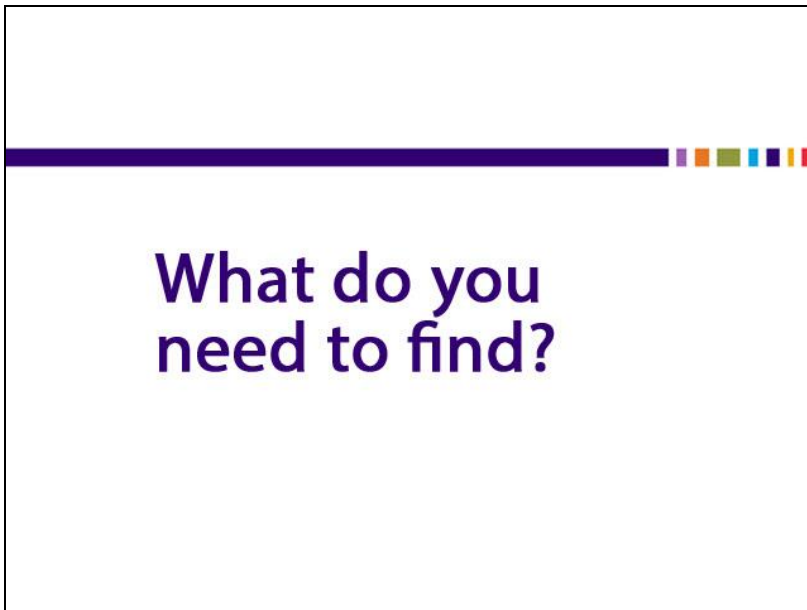
It helps a lot if you have a plan before you start.

In this video we'll look at how to create a good strategy before you search, to help you avoid frustration and get better results.

Creating a Search Strategy



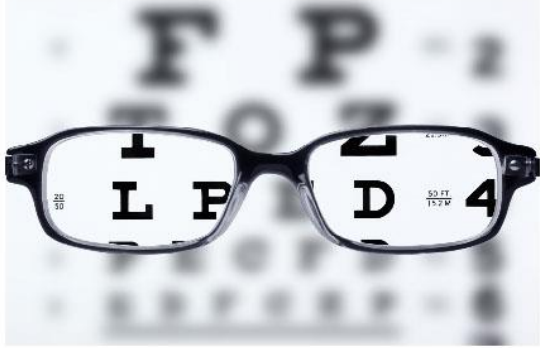
A search strategy involves thinking about what you need to search for, where you will search, and how you will search for it. We'll look at all 3 of these.



Let's start with deciding what you need to find.

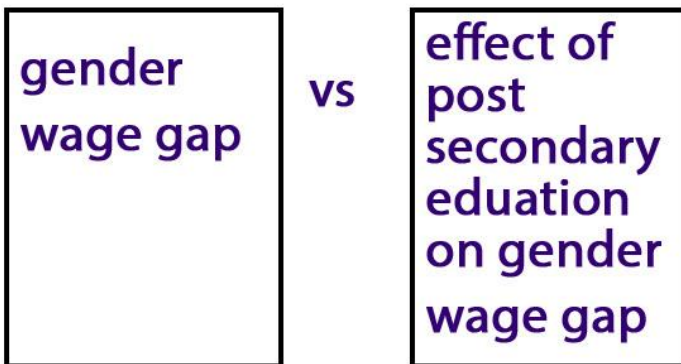
Creating a Search Strategy

Have a Clear Topic



It's important to have a clear, focused topic to make your search easier.

Be Specific



Try to make your topic as specific as possible. Often, it's hard to find sources on a general topic, but easier for a more specific one.

For example, instead of searching for the gender wage gap, think of narrowing that to one aspect of the topic, like the effect of post secondary education on the gender wage gap.

Sometimes you won't know enough about a topic to pick a specific aspect of it. If that's the case, you should do a quick search on your general topic first and see what you find.

You can look through the results to get some idea of what people write about, and what specific aspects of that topic exist that you could think about choosing.

Creating a Search Strategy

Choose Types of Information



Once you have a clear topic, think about what types of information you need to find. This will really depend on the topic.

Scholarly articles are the most common, but books are more useful for broader topics and getting an overview, and are more common in some areas.

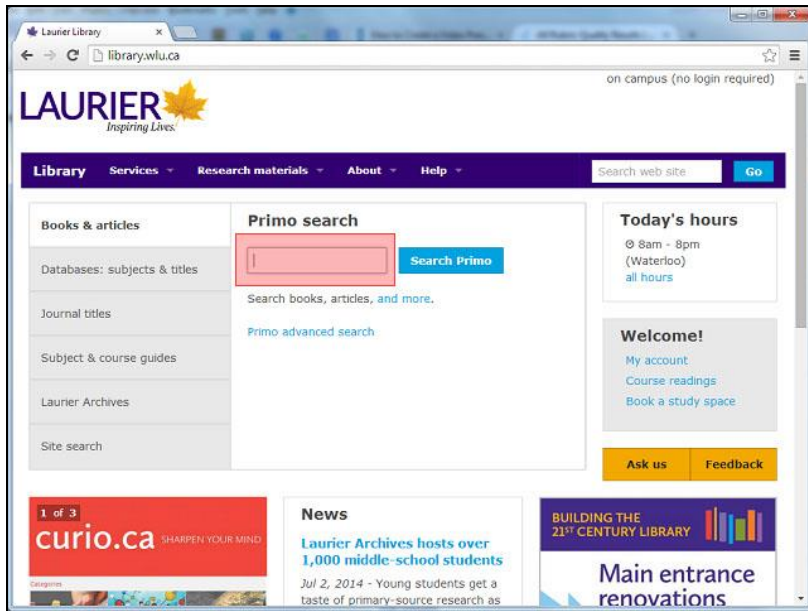
You might need data and statistics, or you might need a primary source like a film or diary that you'll be analyzing.

If your topic involves something that just happened, you may only find news articles since scholarly journals and books take much longer to publish.

Where to Search

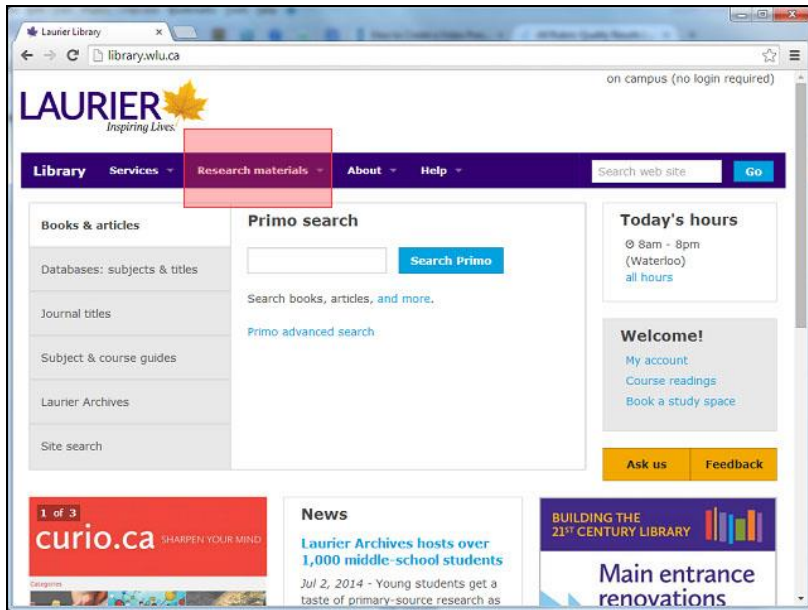
Once you've thought about what to look for, think about where to search.

Creating a Search Strategy



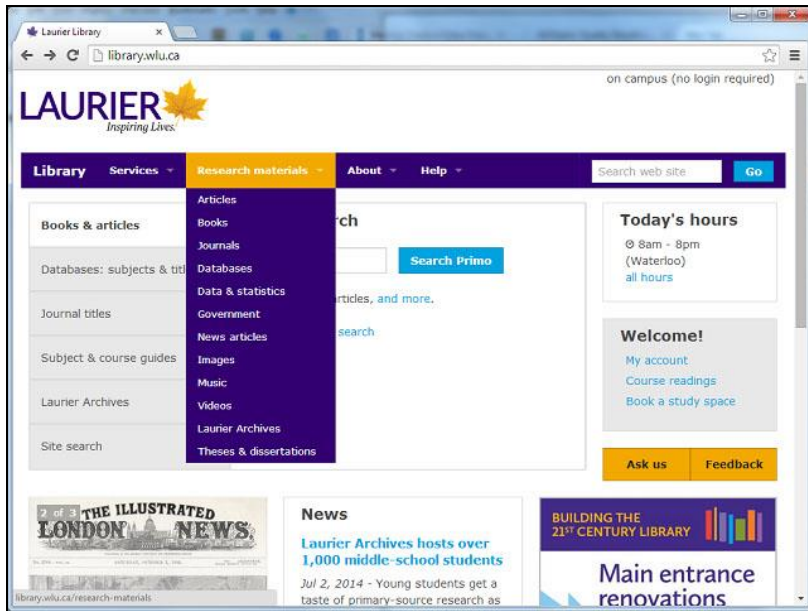
For scholarly articles and books, the Primo library catalogue is a good starting point.

You can find the Primo search box in the middle of the library web page, at library.wlu.ca. Just type in your search.

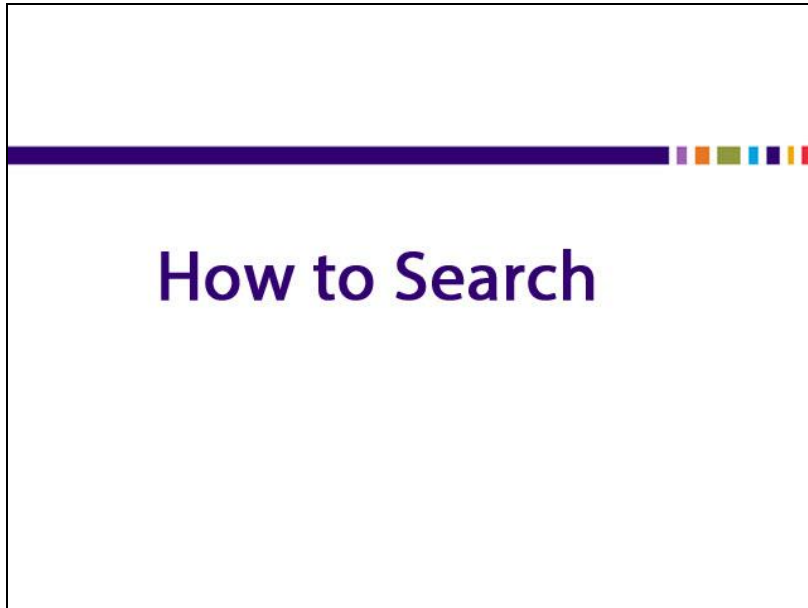


If you're looking for statistics, videos, news articles or other types of sources, click on the Research Materials menu in the top navigation bar.

Creating a Search Strategy



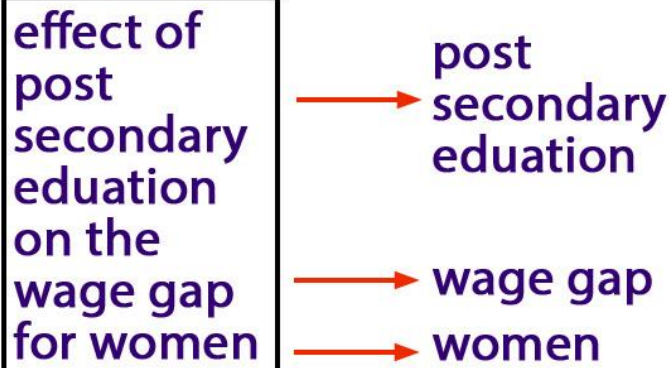
You'll see a list of different types of information in the menu, and can pick the one you want.



Now that we have a good topic and know where to search, let's look at a strategy for how to search.

Creating a Search Strategy

Main Concepts

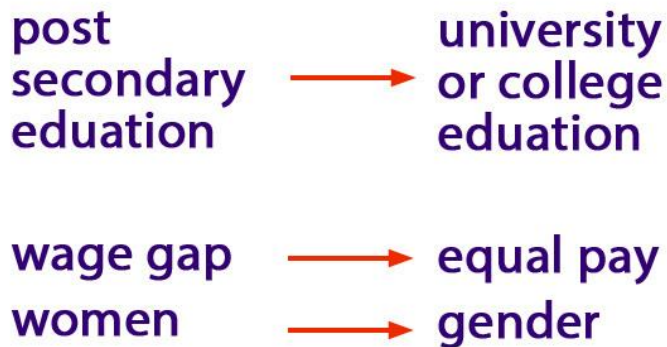


Before you search, think about your topic and try to pull out the main concepts.

You will use these main concepts as words in your search.

For example, if our topic is the effect of post secondary education on the wage gap for women, our concepts will be post secondary education, wage gap, and women.

Alternate Words



Once you have your main concepts, think of other words people might use to talk about those concepts.

In our example, alternate words for post secondary might be college or university, for wage gap might be equal pay, and for women might be gender.

Since different people use different terms for the same concept, using some of those different terms will help you find more results on your topic.

Creating a Search Strategy

More videos



library.wlu.ca/help/tutorials



We have other videos that help with effective searching, at library.wlu.ca/help/tutorials.

Questions?



library.wlu.ca/help/askus



If you have a clear topic, pick a good place to search, and use good words in your search, your search process should be a lot easier.

If you have any questions about search strategy, ask us at library.wlu.ca/help/askus.