Database Search Strategies

John B. Cade Library provides access to databases in a variety of subject areas. Because of the variety of databases you will find that some of the databases work differently from others. The following search techniques will work in most databases. To use databases effectively, read the screens and use the help functions to find the answers to your questions.

**What are Databases?**

Databases are files of articles, books, or information produced in machine-readable format which can be searched by using a computer.

**Examples of Databases:**

- John B. Cade Library Online Catalog
- EBSCO Databases: Academic Search Premier, Biography Resource Center, Business Source Complete, CINAHL Plus, Computer Source, ERIC, JSTOR, etc.

**Basic Principles in Database Searching**

The basic principles you need to master are: choosing keywords: using Boolean operations to structure the search.

**What is Boolean Searching?**

Boolean Searching, also called key word searching refers to how multiple terms are combined in a search. This type of search tells the database to retrieve all the records in the database which contains a word or a set of words. You can alter the results by using Boolean Operators which are the words **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**.

- **AND** requires that both terms be found.
- **OR** lets either term be found
- **NOT** means any record containing the second term will be excluded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boolean Operator</th>
<th>Example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AND</strong></td>
<td>child AND abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
<td>college OR university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOT</strong></td>
<td>stress NOT anxiety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Truncation**

Use Truncation to find different forms of words in a Boolean or keyword search. Some databases use the asterisk and others use the question mark. Check the help function of the database you are using to learn the truncation symbol.

**Example:** employ*

Employ* will retrieve records which contain the words: employ, employment, employs, employee, employer in a record.

**Nesting**

Using Nesting to preserve the “logic” of your Boolean Search. Nesting is the use of parenthesis to put your search words into sets.

**Example:** success and (education or employment)

Will retrieve records which contain the word success and the word education or the word employment. Nesting is often used when search terms have similar meanings:

**Example:** education and (employment or jobs)

**Stop Words**

Stop Words are commonly used words that will automatically stop a computer keyword search.

**Examples of Stop Words are:** (what, is, of, the, an, at, for, from, then)

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To view the complete A-Z List please visit the library’s website at http://www.lib.subr.edu

Click on “Electronic Library”, then click on “Databases”, Or “Ask a Librarian” by emailing ref2@lib.subr.edu or call the Reference Department at (225) 771-2875 for more information on database search strategies
**Truncation**

This story can fit 150-200 words. One benefit of using your newsletter as a promotional tool is that you can reuse content from other marketing materials, such as press releases, market studies, and reports.

While your main goal of distributing a newsletter might be to sell your product or service, the key to a successful newsletter is making it useful to your readers.

A great way to add useful content to your newsletter is to develop and write your own articles, or include a calendar of upcoming events or a special offer that promotes a new product. You can also research articles or find “filler” articles by accessing the World Wide Web. You can write about a variety of topics but try to keep your articles short.

Much of the content you put in your newsletter can also be used for your Web site. Microsoft Publisher offers a simple way to convert your newsletter to a Web publication. So, when you’re finished writing your newsletter, convert it to a Web site and post it.

**Nesting**

“To catch the reader’s attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

This story can fit 100-150 words. The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed internally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or earnings will show how your business is growing.

Some newsletters include a column that is updated every issue, for instance, an advice column, a book review, a letter from the president, or an editorial. You can also profile new employees or top customers or vendors.

**Stop Words**

This story can fit 75-125 words. Selecting pictures or graphics is an important part of adding content to your newsletter.

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or enhances the message you’re trying to convey. Avoid selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft Publisher includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your newsletter. There are also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.
Inside Story Headline

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This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

Back Page Story Headline

This story can fit 175-225 words. If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it’s a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you’ve received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organization is a good way to give your newsletter a personal touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a listing of those here. You may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you’ve created for your organization.

You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast meeting for vendors every third Tuesday of the month, or a biannual charity auction.

If space is available, this is a good place to insert a clip art image or some other graphic.