We have Google, plus a whole lot more

Almost everyone starts a research project by heading to Google or Wikipedia. It’s natural, and it’s not a bad way to get started. As a CSU student, you should also take advantage of your library databases to find authoritative information from scholarly and popular publications. Once you know how to find and use your library’s databases, you’ll impress your professors (and yourself) with well-researched papers that cite top quality resources.

Academic Search Premier Database

This multi-disciplinary database is a great starting point for your academic research. It searches more than 13,500 peer-reviewed journals, magazines, and a few major newspapers.

From the Libraries’ homepage, select the “A-Z Database List” (under the default search box). Find Academic Search Premier under the “A” (in the middle of the page) or listed under “Starting Points.”

Search Tips:

• Break your search into the most essential terms (ex. food waste, college students, genetically modified food)
• Avoid using unnecessary words (including repetitive words and short words like the, an, of, in, etc.).
• If you don’t find what you need, try using synonyms or related ideas for your terms.
• Use the options on the left-hand side to limit your results by date, by scholarly (peer-reviewed) articles, or to newspapers and magazines (under “Source Types”).

How do I get the article? Use FindIt@CSU

In your search results, some citations have links to full text PDF or HTML articles. Other citations will have a FindIt@CSU button. Getting the article is as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Click FindIt@CSU (you may need to sign in)
2. Click the link after “Full text available at:”
   OR if you don’t see that...
3. Click the link for “CSU-Fort Collins Interlibrary Loan” and you’ll get directed to CSU’s award winning Interlibrary Loan service. Login with your eID and password to request the article. You will be notified by email when your article arrives (usually in 24-48 hours). It’s quick, easy, and free! Note: The first time you use Interlibrary Loan you will need to fill in some basic information. Contact the Help Desk with any issues.

Scholarly Journals vs. Popular Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarly journals</th>
<th>Popular publications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written by and for experts; authoritative</td>
<td>Magazines and newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluated by experts; peer-reviewed or refereed</td>
<td>Written by journalists; reviewed by editors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include bibliographies and/or footnotes</td>
<td>Written for a broad audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contain charts, tables, or graphs</td>
<td>Brief articles that use non-technical language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lengthy articles that contain specialized language</td>
<td>Contain advertisements, photos, flashy covers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Example: Journal of Social Psychology</td>
<td>Examples: Time or Newsweek</td>
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Primo

The default search box on the library’s main page is Primo, a tool used to search multiple library resources at once. Primo can do a broad search for many resource types, including articles, books, encyclopedia or handbook entries, government documents, and more. Here are some additional Primo search tips:

- To search for books, change the “Almost Everything” drop-down to “Books and more.” You can search for books by title, author, or topic. Morgan Library has popular books as well as academic books.
- Use the left-hand options, under “Tweak my results” to choose a date range, language, and other options.
- The “Almost Everything” and “Articles and more” searches have the option to limit to “Peer-reviewed Journals”.
- Click on an item in the results to see how you can get it, under “View It” (articles/online items) and “Get It” (books).
- Sign into Primo with your CSU eID to see additional options, including access to your library account, book request options, and the option to save items to your “Favorites.”

Search Strategy

Describe the topic/issue/question are you going to explore. Write it down, and then circle the main ideas/keywords.

Using the keywords you just identified, write down a search strategy, experimenting with:

- **Boolean Operators** AND, OR, and NOT –
  
  ![Venn Diagrams](https://via.placeholder.com/200)

  - **AND** Both A and B terms
  - **OR** Either A or B term
  - **NOT** Just the one term (A)

- Use **AND** to combine separate ideas (TIP: put separate ideas in different search boxes)
- Use **OR** to combine alternate search terms, ex. college OR university OR “higher education”
- **NOT** is rarely used; it can exclude a concept (ex. aids NOT hearing)

**SAMPLE TOPIC:** How do hydropower plants affect migrating salmon and other fish?

**DATABASE:** Academic Search Premier

*Library Webpage ➔ A-Z Database List ➔ Academic Search Premier*

**Search 1: hydropower plants salmon**

This search doesn’t return any results because the database isn’t sure what we’re looking for. All the words? Any of the words? Those words as a phrase?

**Search 2: hydropower AND salmon**

Break your search into single-concept words or phrases (one in each box) to create a better search.

**Search 3: hydroelectric AND salmon**

You can use single words or short, single-concept phrases. Try synonyms and other ways of describing the concepts (you might find some good ones in relevant articles you find).

**Search 4: (hydroelectric OR hydropower OR water power) AND (salmon OR fish)**

You can use AND/OR/NOT to specify how you want to combine ideas for a complex search. Logic can get very complicated, so keep an eye on whether you’re finding relevant results.