Effective Literature Searching

Points to remember

DO!

► Define your subject and your objectives

► Decide how comprehensive the search will be. Do you want everything on your subject? Do you require information from a specific time period only?

► Choose the right tool for your purposes.

► Consult online Help to produce the best search results.

► Keep a systematic record of the search terms and searches you carry out and revise your search strategy until you find the information you want.

► Remember that just because an article is on the database does not mean that it is in the library and that we have access to the full-text online. Check for the journal title on the library catalogue if you are unsure or ask a member of library staff.

DON’T

► Use vague keywords – it will take a very long time to process the query, and will not give you targeted results. Choosing a more precise topic, and appropriate keywords, will retrieve a more manageable and targeted set of results.

► Misspell keywords. Don’t expect to find the information you need if you search for “tecnical” or “comittee”

► Overlook alternative spellings. For example, if you want to find out about an American Organisation, this is likely to be Organization.