

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 "technical" or "comittee"
- ▶ **Overlook alternative spellings.** For example, if you want to find out about an American Organisation, this is likely to be Organization.