III. Searching Online Databases

A. What are Online Databases?

- Generally, databases refer to information which has been organized into a specific subject or type. For example, TSU Library's Online Catalog is a database which provides information concerning where a certain book may be located within the library. In the same way, electronic periodical indexes such as ***EbscoHost*** and ***Infotrac*** provide access to full text articles, while citation indexes such as ***CINAHL*** provide access to where articles may be found in a particular journal. Our databases may be located and accessed online from our web page by using the following steps:

If you're on campus:

- Type in http://www.tnstate.edu
- Click on ***Library***
- Click on ***Databases***
- Click on the top line. That will take you to our database page.
- Click on a letter of the alphabet that corresponds with the first letter of the database you are looking for. For example, click on the letter***"E"*** for ***Ebsco Host.***

If you're off campus:

- Type in http://www.tnstate.edu
- Click on ***Library***
- Click on ***Databases***
- Click on the bottom line. That will take you to our ***Remote Access*** page.
- The first time you log in, give us your TSU assigned username (usually your first name and your last initial), and the last six digits of your Social Security Number.
- The system will prompt you to change your password.
- Type the last six digits of your Social Security Number again.
- Make up a new password which is easy for you to remember.
- Type it in twice.
- Click on ***Save Changes.*** This will take you to a list of choices.
- Click on either ***Online Databases by Title*** or ***Online Databases by Subject.***
- If you choose ***Online Databases by Title,*** click on a letter of the alphabet that corresponds with the first letter of the database you are looking for. For example, click on the

letter***"E"*** for ***Ebsco Host.*** Should you choose the ***Online Databases by Subject*** link, you would be taken to a list of databases subdivided by subject area.

- Should you have problems logging on, your contact person is **Mrs. Colette Bradley**. She may be reached at the following number and electronic mail address: **963-5489**, and **cbradley@tnstate.edu.**

In order to use databases effectively and properly, you need to understand their ***structure, type, coverage,*** and ***attributes.***

1. ***Structure:***

   Databases contain records informing the user about each item within those databases. For example, the Library's online catalog houses a record for each book, periodical, and microform it owns. By the same token, each record contains information which is called ***fields.*** The fields in each record may items such as author, title, publisher, subject headings, and others. Records in other databases may include fields such as author, article title, periodical title, volume number, date, year, and page numbers.

2. ***Type:***

   The kind of information located in a database will determine its type. The most common types of databases include ***Bibliographic, Full-text, Numeric, Image, Audio, and Mixed.***

   Bibliographic databases do not contain the articles on the screen, but they do provide information as to where the article may be found. Information provided by bibliographic databases may contain items such as Author, Title, Publisher, Publication Date, Volume and Issue Numbers, and other items. These records are often referred to as ***citations.*** Sometimes these records include abstracts (summaries) or descriptions of items. An abstract is useful to determine whether or not the item will be useful to you in your research. If you are interested in finding records or citations about a given topic, you may wish to use this type of database to create bibliographies. However, if you need to locate the article in its entirety, you will need to locate the source cited in the record, or use what is known as a

full-text database. An example of a bibliographic database such as an online catalog might look like this:

Title: *Contemporary Issues in Lung Cancer: a Nursing Perspective* / edited by Marilyn Haas

Call Number: RC280.L8 C656 2003

Publisher: Sudbury, Mass. : Jones and Bartlett, c2003

Subject Heading(s): Lungs—Cancer

Display Related Subjects (if any)

Description: xvi, 322 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Notes: Includes bibliographic references and index.

ISBN: 0763719145 : $42.00

Item Holdings

Location – Shelf – TSU
Call Number - RC280.L8 C656 2003
Volume –
Material – Book
Status – Available

As you can see, the information which may be obtained from the above record is quite extensive. From this record, we are given the title of the book, author(s) or in this case, editor(s), call number, publication data, copyright date, number of pages, both preliminary and in the text, illustration data, book size, whether or not illustrations are included, international standard book number assigned to the book, location and availability of the book you are looking for.

A bibliographic index for journal articles, book chapters such as ***CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature)*** or ***Medline/PubMed*** will provide citations and/or abstracts on your research topic. For example, you may want to look for sources in ***CINAHL*** concerning cancer and patient care. By using no limits on

your search, **694** records regarding cancer and patient care would be retrieved. If, however, you limited your search to the publication dates to **1995-2003** and the **English language**, you would retrieve only **485** records. In addition to limiting your searches to language and publication dates, you may also limit results to magazine, abstracts, author, journal subset, publication type, gender, age related, and special interest. However, you don't want to limit your searches too much, because you'll retrieve very few, if any records. After you've entered your search, a list of brief records will come up. Click on a title which is highlighted in color that interests you, and a complete record will appear on the screen. This record will give you not only the title, author and source; but also gives you the writer's affiliation, editor, publication data and type, language, major and minor subjects, journal subset, special interest area, ISSN, Medline and publication information, entry date, accession number, and database. In addition, if there is a link to a full text article included, it will give you the link to the article in full text. Finally, ***CINAHL*** will supply the bibliographic references included in the article as well.

Full-text databases:

These databases are called full-text because they contain the complete text of the articles and/or journals they index. For example, ***ProQuest Nursing Journals*** provides full-text articles from peer reviewed or scholarly journals along with summaries or abstracts. For example, a basic search under **nursing** and **cancer patient** will retrieve **115** articles. Before you read or print the article, however, you may want to scan the abstract in order to determine if a particular article will be useful to you.

Hint: You may also want to take a close look at the title in your results list to make sure the article is not a book review or a bibliography. Usually, if the article is a book review, the citation will include the phrase "book review" in the title. By the same token, if the article is a list of sources, the citation will include the term "bibliography" or phrases such as "resource guide", "list of sources", and so forth. In those cases, it would probably not be to your advantage to look at those sources.

Numeric Databases:

As the heading implies, these databases provide numeric data, which includes statistics, census information, and other data. For example, ***Census Data*** provided by the **U.S. Bureau of the Census** includes birth and death statistics, along with other types of numerical data.

Image Databases:

These databases provide access to art prints, animations, photographs, and other types of images. For example, the **Library's Virtual Reference** web page provides a ***Nursing and Medicine*** link which will take you to a list of nursing and medical websites. For example, click on the **U.S. National Library of Medicine,** and then click on ***Dream Anatomy,*** and then click on **Gallery,** and that will bring up anatomical images.

Audio Databases:

These are databases which provide access to audio clips to music and sound effects. For example, the **Library's Virtual Web Page** would provide access to the **Internet Public Library Listening Room** where you may listen to and watch the videos of Ray Brooks, Steve Wood Quintet, Pamela Wise, and others through software programs such as ***Real Audio.*** Another example of a site where you could listen online would consist of radio station web sites such as ***WPLN, WLAC, WWTN,*** and others.

3. Coverage

When doing research on your topic, finding an appropriate database is one of the most important factors in retrieving relevant information. Descriptions of information covered in a particular database are usually found on the introduction screens.

Subject Area:

Some databases cover specific subject areas or disciplines such as education, psychology, nursing, engineering, and others. Others such as ***Infotrac's Expanded Academic ASAP*** are more general in scope, and cover broader areas. In Nursing, for example, the ***Brown-Daniel Library***

provides access to ***ProQuest Nursing Journals; CINAHL; Sigma Theta Tau; EbscoHost Academic Search Premier; Infotrac (Expanded Academic ASAP, General Reference Gold, Health and Wellness Resource Center, Health Reference Center Academic and Infotrac OneFile); Medline/PubMed; Science Director, Wiley InterScience; WilsonWeb (Applied Science and Technology Full Text and others.*** For other databases relating to the nursing profession, you may find them listed in the Library's Home Page underneath the heading:

Databases by Subject at
http://www.tnstate.edu/library/databases_subject.html

Type of Publication:

Many databases contain information from only periodicals. For example, ***MIT Press*** will grant access to articles from periodicals they publish in the areas of science and medicine. Still other databases will include articles from a combination of sources such as periodicals and chapters from books. Some databases include articles from **popular sources** such as magazines and newspapers which appeal to the mass market along with articles from scholarly journals. An example of this type of database would be ***Infotrac's Expanded Academic ASAP.*** It provides access to **popular magazines** which appeal to the mass market such as ***Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report,*** alongside articles from scholarly and peer-reviewed or refereed journals. By the same token, some databases include only **scholarly** materials found in scientific journals, conference proceedings, and reports, such as example, ***Wiley InterScience, ScienceDirect*** and ***MIT Press***.

Databases also differ in frequency of ***updating*** materials, accessibility of the ***most up to date*** periodical articles, and ***publication dates*** of the materials included in the database. Some publishers will place an ***embargo*** or block full text availability of their most recent issues online. If, for example, you are performing a search in ***EbscoHost***, you might find periodicals where their publishers have blocked accessibility of the entire article for a certain amount of time. That means you aren't allowed full-text access for a period of time set by the publisher.

Another aspect to think about in choosing databases for your study is that of ***availability.*** If you want the text immediately, you might want to select a full text database, so that you can read and/or print it right away. Or if you are more patient, you could choose a bibliographic database which provides only source information, if your library has access to or owns a majority of the items in the database. Provided you've planned ahead, you might consider using interlibrary loan for items the library does not own or subscribe to. In this case, you would be able to perform searches on a more comprehensive scale in much larger databases. How you approach these matters is up to you.

4. Attributes:

After you select the databases you want to use, you will need to determine if the databases use ***controlled vocabularies.*** Controlled vocabularies are specific lists of subject terms in organizing the database by subject.
If you want to retrieve relevant articles or information, using "controlled vocabulary" in your searches can be quite helpful. For instance, ***CINAHL*** provides the user with a list of subject headings specific to this particular database that you can use to find the information you need. If you type in the word "cancer," ***CINAHL*** will instruct you to use the term "**neoplasm**." The database will then supply a list of subject headings that you can use in your search.

Subject Headings may be found in specialized thesauri such as ***ERIC***, the database itself, or in the five-volume set of the ***Library of Congress Subject Headings.*** Most databases may be searched by

Subject: Using controlled vocabulary
OR
Keyword: Using your own words

In addition, some databases use ***field searching***, which means that terms used for the search are only retrieved from specific fields. For example, when using the Library's online catalog, and select keyword searching, your search will only locate items with that specific search term in the title, subject, or content fields. By the same token, other databases use ***free-text searching***, which means that the search term or string will show up anywhere

in a document or record. Unfortunately, this type of searching tends to retrieve what is known as false drops or hits, because your search term can be located anywhere in the record. Some databases will give you a choice of these two methods. To be sure of what types of searching each particular database allows, check it before you begin your search.

B. Searching Online Databases

1. Search Strategies –

The Brown-Daniel Library provides access to over 100 databases for the **TSU** community to use. You can perform searches from any computer on campus and/or from remote or off campus sites. In selecting the correct database(s) that will provide access to appropriate and relevant articles you will want to keep the following factors in mind:

- **Subject discipline of your research topic –**
  Specialized or multidisciplinary
- **Type of resources needed –**
  Basic, scholarly, or professional and trade resources
- **Target audience –**
  Is your research for a term paper, independent study, senior project, thesis, or dissertation?

2. Databases Relevant to Nursing Available at TSU

The Brown-Daniel Library subscribes to over 101 general interest and specialized online databases for your use. Databases which would be the most relevant for nursing students are as follows:

CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature)

Years Covered: **1982-present**

Relevancy: **Nursing and allied health**

Truncation: *

Search Tips:

- Use the truncation symbol to retrieve words beginning with the same letters. For example, the use of patient* as a search term retrieves patient, patients, patient care, etc. In addition the use of nurs* as a search string retrieves nurse, nursing, nurses, etc.

- To search for an exact phrase, enclose your search string in "**quotation marks**". For example, if you want to look for the phrase nursing cancer patients, you would enter the phrase this way, "nursing cancer patients."

- You may also search by field tags such as author, article title, etc.

Nursing Collection (ProQuest) Provides access to 320 leading full-text journals in nursing and allied health.

PubMed/Medline

Years Covered: **Mid 1960's-present.**

Relevancy: **Medicine, Nursing, and Life Sciences.**

Truncation: ***

Search Tips:

- You may enter one or more search terms, or you may use the Preview/Index link for advanced searching.

- If you want to retrieve various works by a particular author, you may enter the writer's last name only. You may wish to add the author's initials if he/she has a common last name. For example, if you want to find articles by P.D. Henderson, you would enter it as follows: Henderson, PD.

- If you are looking for articles from a particular journal, you may enter the title in full, or use the ***MEDLINE*** abbreviation. In order to find out what journals are indexed, you may use the ***Journals Database*** link.

- If you find an article you are interested in, and would like to see references to **related articles**, links are available for you to see other articles which may be relevant to your research.

***Note*:** PubMed is primarily a bibliographic database. Should you find articles which interest you, look in full text databases and/or our print holdings. If neither of these options prove helpful, you may also contact our interlibrary loan librarian, Mrs. Barbara Van Hooser, and request the articles you need through interlibrary loan. However, if you need to use our interlibrary loan services you **MUST** plan ahead!

Science Direct

Years Covered: **Varies by journal titles.** You might want to use the journal browsing feature in order to determine coverage.

Relevancy: Nursing and medicine

Truncation: **(?), (*), (**)**

Search Tips:

- **(!)** Use the exclamation point to find the **root word** plus all the words made adding letters to the end. For example, **patient(!)**

- **(*)** Use an asterisk to **replace** characters in the middle of a word. Use one asterisk for each character you want to replace. For example, **wom*n** would find **woman** and **women**.

- **(*)** Use the asterisk to **hold a space** for variations in spellings at any point in a word. For example, **behavi*r** would pick up both British and American spellings of the same word.

- If you use **(*)** at the **end of a word**, they do not all have to be filled, but may find up to the specific number of characters. For example, **transplant**** would find **transplant, transplanted, transplanter.**

- ***Note:*** **Transplant**** does **NOT** find **transplantation** or **transplanting** because only two wildcard characters are used. If you want to find all the variants of transplant, use the **(!)** character.

- In order to find a specific journal or publication, the **journal title finder search box** is available for your use, by clicking on journals on the navigation bar. In addition, you may also browse the journals which are listed in alphabetical order by title. The journal screen allows different options for browsing the list by offering a drop down menu. You may choose to look at the entire journal list available through ***ScienceDirect,*** or choose **Subscribed** (by your library) or **Non-subscribed** (not subscribed by your library).

- ***Quick Search:*** This type of search may be performed for an **author** or **subject** of interest. This search will look for any relevant results from abstracts, titles, authors, and article keywords. You may enter your search string into the **Quick Search** bar underneath the main navigation bar. You may choose to search from all **Full-text Sources, All Journals, This Issue, This Article,** etc. Using words such as "cell" and "behavior" is not recommended as they will retrieve too many hits. To focus and narrow down your search, it is recommended that you use Boolean syntax in order to make your hits more precise.

- ***Basic and Advanced Searching:*** These features perform accurate and detailed searches, improve relevancy of retrieved articles, and save searches. Searching by these methods enable you to search across all journals, journals by subject, abstract databases, ***Scirus***, etc. In addition, you may specify your search string within parameters such as abstracts, titles, authors, references, or the full text of the document. Finally, you may also limit your search by data, journal volume, issue and page number.

- ***Search Within Results:*** Enables you to refine your searches by confining a new search to the articles you have already retrieved. There is no limit to the

number of times you can refine your search, thereby restricting your search to the number of hits you already have. Every time you enter a search string during this process, your query appears in the search history, thus allowing you to return to various stages of your search at any time.

- ***Search Using Scirus:*** In order to retrieve additional scientific information across the entire World Wide Web, you may do that by clicking on the ***Scirus*** tab. This feature provides access to information which complements the resources available through ***ScienceDirect.*** When you enter a search string for "cancer patients" via the **Basic Search** feature, you would retrieve **6,003** records, while a search via the ***Scirus*** feature would retrieve **139,243** records.

Sigma Theta Tau:

Years Covered:

Relevancy: **Nursing**

Truncation: **(*)** asterisk substitutes any character from none to infinite number.

Search Tips: Uses the ***Inktomi*** search engine so that you may search the entire ***Sigma Theta Tau*** web site, ***Online Journal of Knowledge Synthesis for Nursing,*** or the entire web**.** In order to retrieve the results you want, type one or more search terms and indicate how they are to be connected:

- To retrieve articles containing both terms **nursing** and **cancer** use the Boolean operator **AND.**

- To retrieve articles contain one or both terms such as **cancer** or **carcinoma**, for example, use the Boolean operator **OR.**

- To retrieve articles containing an exact phrase, use quotation marks around **"cancer patients"**, for example.

- To require a term, use the **"+"** or addition sign. For example, to require the words, **cancer, patients,** and **nursing,** use **+cancer + patients + nursing.**

- To exclude a term use the **"-"**or subtraction sign. For example to exclude the term **carcinoma,** use "**cancer patient" – carcinoma**.

- Capitalize proper names such as Bill Gates.

- You may also use a natural language search by using key words or plain language such as **nurse's role in palliative care**.

Wiley InterScience:

Years Covered: **1946-2003.**

Relevancy: **Medicine and Life Sciences**

Truncation: ***

Search Tips: The **Search** feature allows you to set goals in your research process by restricting the scope of your search to specific fields of an article. Results are displayed whenever exact matches are found for your search string. Your searches will be supported by the following fields:

- Search all text
- Article title
- Section title
- Author
- Keywords
- DIO
- Tables
- Figures

Basic Search allows you to:

- Select desired field in the pull-down menu.

- Specify search expressions in the text field next to the menu. To search using root words such as nurse, insert asterisk **(*).** For example, the word **nurse** with a **(*)** e.g. **nurs*** in place of the letter **"e"** at the end will retrieve **nurse, nursing, nurses,** etc.

- Click on the **Begin Search** button.

Advanced Search allows you to:

- Find **Characterization of material contents**
  specifically by entering any combination of article or section title; author; keywords; **DOI**, table or figure.

- Select desired field in the first pull-down menu.

- Specify search expressions in the text field next to the menu. To search using root words insert the asterisk **(*)**.

- Up to five search expressions may be specified, using the operators **AND, OR.** For example, you may search for all the articles which contain the word **"cancer**" and the author, **"Owen."** As a short cut for **OR,** you may use a comma **",".** For example, the search string:

  cancer**,** carcinoma **and** nursing and cancer **OR** carcinoma **and** nursing **retrieves articles containing either cancer or carcinoma** which are relevant to nursing.

- In order to limit your search to specific subject areas, select your desired subject area from the scroll down menu in the **Journals in Subject Category.**

- To limit your search to specific dates or ranges of dates, click the appropriate radio button and select the dates needed using the drop-down menus provided for you.

- Click on **Begin Search** button.

  - In searching for variants of an author's name, separate parts of the author's first and last name with **AND.** For example, to find Mary E. Cooley, enter Mary **AND** Cooley or Cooley **AND** Mary.

  - In the **Search Results** Section, you will find the relevancy value of the articles which have been retrieved. In this database, **relevancy value** is represented by a decimal number between .01 (partial match) and 1.00 (complete match).

Databases in general providing information in the area of **Nursing** include:

AOTA
Biosis Previews
CINAHL
Compendex Web
Current Research
Dissertation Abstracts
EbscoHost
- ***Academic Search Premier***
- ***Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Collection***

Emerald
ERIC
INFOTRAC
- ***Expanded Academic ASAP***
- ***General Reference Gold***
- ***Health and Wellness Resource Center***
- ***Health Reference Center Academic***
- ***InfoTrac OneFile***

INFOTRIEVE (Electronic Document Delivery Service)
Linda Hall Library
Medline/PubMed
MIT Press
Nursing Collection (ProQuest)
Project MUSE
ScienceDirect
Sigma Theta Tau
SpringerLINK
UnCover Plus (Electronic Document Delivery Service)
Wiley InterScience
WilsonWeb
- ***Applied Science and Technology Full Text***

C. Locating Print and Electronic Journal Articles

The quickest and easiest way for you to locate and access journals in our library is via the ***Complete List of Online and Print Journals*** link on your Library's Home Page. This is especially true when you know the journal and article titles you are trying to locate. The service provides you with the following:

- Accessibility to journals in print, online and microform formats.
- List of databases including the journals you are looking for.