Overview: When should I use this database?

- Web of Science provides abstracts and full text access to scientific literature. Web of Science allows you to search across several databases, including its Web of Science Core Collection and other databases included in Johns Hopkins’ subscriptions like MEDLINE and BIOSIS.
- Note that some articles may be found in multiple databases, and Web of Science prioritizes results that are from within Clarivate-owned databases first in the list of results.

Before you start searching, keep in mind . . .

Prepare to save your search in a document, the database, and/or a citation management software (EndNote, Refworks, Zotero, etc)

- By saving your search, your strategy will be reproducible for another time and properly documented.
- Explore options for [citation management](#) here, and find tips on how to export results.
- Sign up for a Web of Science account by clicking “Sign In at the top of the landing page or “Searches and alerts.”
- Use the “Searches and alerts” button at the top of the page to locate your search history.

Keywords — How to Find & Use

- Keyword terms can be single words or phrases.
- Use quotes around all phrases to ensure that the phrase is searched instead of each word individually. (e.g. “public health”)

Controlled Vocabularies — How to Find & Use

Locate Controlled Vocabulary

- Web of Science does not have its own Controlled Vocabulary, but individual databases housed within Web of Science may. When you choose your database by using the “Select a database” dropdown or selecting “More Settings,” you will be able to search some database’s controlled vocabulary index under the Advanced Search. For example, if you are searching in MEDLINE, you can browse the MeSH (MEDLINE’s Controlled Vocabulary) hierarchy by clicking on the “Thesaurus” hyperlink under “Field Tags” on the right side of the page.

Locate Web of Science Product Indexes

- When using the Advanced Search with Web of Science product databases, you can view a list of field tags with pre-defined Web of Science “Research Areas.” Look for the hyperlinked “SU= Research Area” under “Field Tags” to view specialized fields, like MeSH headings, mapped to broader umbrella terms created by Web of Science.
- The Web of Science Core Collection and Web of Science product databases “Research Areas” also appears as a filter on the search results page under “Refine Results.
- See the “Field Tags” and “Advanced Search” section to view more information.
**Types of Searches**

Note: Select “Select a database” to choose which databases you would like to search. Information about each database will appear to the right when you hover over the database name. Click “More Settings” at the bottom of the page to expand the list of databases that appear below.

**Basic Search**
- In a Basic Search, the search defaults to a Topic search. A Topic search is equivalent to a Title/Abstract/Subject search.
- Type your key term/s in the search bar. Use the dropdown next to the search bar to choose which field tag you would like to search.
- Save your search results by checking the box next to each record’s title.

**Cited Reference Search**
- This allows you to locate articles that cite another person’s work.

**Advanced Search**
- Use Advanced Search to access more fields and edit searches that you have previously performed.
- Note that you can only use the “NOT” Boolean operator in Advanced Search. You also must use parentheses when searching the Topic field for more than one term.

**Author Search**
- This allows you to search for authors by last name and initials. Once you have entered the name, you can select the Research Domain, and then select the Organization from a list provided.

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**Combining Searches Using Boolean Operators**

- A comprehensive and systematic search of Web of Science includes both controlled vocabulary and keyword terms (i.e. free text, natural language, and synonyms).
- **Boolean operators** combine search terms and concepts. In the context of database searching, Boolean logic refers to the logical relationships among search terms. The Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT can be used to combine search terms.
- Boolean operators MUST be used as upper case (AND, OR, NOT, SAME, NEAR).
  - **OR:** use with similar terms in a concept—makes search broader
  - **AND:** use between opposing concepts—makes search narrower
  - **NOT:** rarely used but can exclude specific terms
- Click “+ Add search field” to add on to your search with a Boolean operator.
Types of Searches Continued

Structure Search

- You will need to sign in to your account or create a new profile to create a structure search. Draw the structure using the tool that appears when you choose this search. Enter search data in the boxes below if you would like to search by compound properties and reaction conditions, and select the “Search” button at the bottom of the screen. You can toggle between compound and reaction results after results display.

Applying Limits

- Your search may return many results, including results from multiple databases. The databases you previously selected will be recorded in the search history on the left side of the page. You can sort your results by Date, Times Cited, Usage Counts, and Relevance.
- On the left side of the screen, you will see an option to "Refine Results" with options for Publication Years, Source Titles, Languages, Research Areas, and more. You can also select whether you want to filter your results by the most highly cited in the field, hot papers in the field, open access papers, and/or associated data. Finally, you can search within the results returned by entering terms into the box below “Refine Results.”

Field Tags

In the Advanced Search you can manually edit or input Field Tags. The Advanced Search page will describe the Field Tags you can use. Note that tags may be different depending on the databases you are searching. Useful tags include, but are not limited to the following.

- **TS**= (term) — Searches the Topic field
- **PY**= (year) — Searches the Year Published field
- **AU**= (name) — Searches the Author field

Truncation & Wildcards

- Web of Science truncation involves using an asterisk (*). This allows you to find plural forms and variant spellings of words. Use the dollar sign ($) symbol to replace zero or one character/s and search for variant spellings of words. Use the question marks (?) when there is one unknown character within a word.

  - `arthroplast*` will return arthroplasty, arthroplasties, arthroplastic, arthroplastics, etc.
  - `mobili*` will return mobility, mobilization, mobilisation, mobilize, etc.

Proximity Searching

- Web of Science allows for proximity searching through the use of two operators along with a number to indicate the proximity of the words (up to 255 words). The NEAR command searches terms that are near each other in any order. NEAR/5, for example, includes search terms in maximum of 5 words from one another.
Citation Tools

Citation Network

- After clicking to view a record, you can view how many times the work has been cited by others, the cited references within the publication, the publication’s use within Web of Science in the last 180 days and since 2013, and toggle between the versions within the databases if duplicated.

Citation Reports

- Web of Science has Citation Report feature enabled for searches that return less than 10,000 records. You can view your Citation Report after you conduct a search by selecting “Create Citation Report” on the top right side of the results screen. You can also select the results from which you would like to create a report by checking the boxes next to relevant articles and selecting “Marked List.”

- On the Citation Report page, you can view the Total Publications, h-index, Sum of Times Cited, and Citing Articles. You can also sort your results by Times Cited, Date, Author, Source Title, or Conference Title.

Analyze Your Results

- On the left side of the search results page, you will also find links to analyze your search results as treemap or bar graph visuals.

- If you search for the Topic “asthma” in the Web of Science Core Collection, for example, and Analyze your Results, you will see a treemap representing the number of records within the Web of Science Categories related to your search. You can include and exclude results below based on your needs.

- The “Results Analysis” will also allow you to create visuals based on Publication Years, Languages, Research Areas, Grant Numbers, Funding Agencies, and more.

Accessing Full Text

In Web of Science, the FIND IT icon (above) will often appear within a citation. To access the full text, click the icon and you will be taken to an external page where you should see a listing of full-text options. If there is no option for full text, then there should be a heading titled “Request a copy from Inter-Library Loan.” Selecting an interlibrary loan option will allow you to get a pdf sent from a partnering library free of charge (Hopkins researchers only).

More Information

- General principles on searching in any database

- Web of Science Video Tutorials