

Finding a needle in a haystack – web search engines vs online databases



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15 reasons for YOU to use online databases FOR LITERATURE searching

- 1** Web search engines are designed for coverage, accessibility and for general or personal use. Online databases are designed with detailed functions for quality of results, particularly for research purposes.
- 2** Literature found by web search engines is not regulated and its authority is often doubtful, opinionated and biased. Literature in online databases is scholarly/peer-reviewed and subject specific. It comes from quality controlled sources.
- 3** Web pages and sites on the internet may change or disappear, and it is difficult to replicate searches. Literature contained in databases does not change and is retrievable each time you run a search on that topic.
- 4** The non-academic types of material and repetitive title tags from multiple sources present a greater challenge in web results as it takes time and effort to select scholarly literature out of millions of search hits.
- 5** Web search engines are limited in their functions compared with online databases. Online databases have advanced filters to narrow down fields and formats to find refined and relevant information.
- 6** Web search engines often don't have a truncation facility as used in online databases to facilitate comprehensive and expanded literature searches. Most have truncation for missing words, but not missing letters.
- 7** The researcher cannot be certain that the basic principles of Boolean logic will apply in web search engines, particularly when the order of concept groups is altered.
- 8** Web search engines cannot export abstracts and full text in the way that databases do.
- 9** Databases have the facilities to save search history and combine different searches to find the most relevant information.
- 10** Databases facilitate web alerts to track down latest publications on the research topic.
- 11** Older scholarly publications may not be accessible via web search engines.
- 12** Many databases have tools to automatically generate citation styles of your choice. You need to manually enter citations for your references found on the internet.
- 13** Web sites on the internet are not maintained, having broken links and outdated information; whereas electronic databases are regularly updated and maintained.
- 14** Clicking links from unknown websites on the internet to download information compromises cybersecurity.
- 15** Based on algorithms that web search engines use, the information produced may be based on what the web search engine thinks the searcher wishes to see and not the actual information that they are seeking.



Using CONNECT Research Library
tile search the following sites:

-  Library Catalogue
-  Journals A-Z List
-  EBSCOhost Web
-  GIDEON
-  Gold FFX
-  National Criminal Justice
Reference Service (NCJRS)
-  New Zealand Legislation
-  ProQuest Public Health
-  PubMed
-  Science Direct
-  Standards NZ Library
-  Web of Science