How to use PsycINFO (Revised 1/14/07)

This guide provides information on the following topics:
- Accessing PsycINFO via the RU McConnell Library webpage
- General Keywords vs. Subject Terms
- Searching PsycINFO using General Keywords
- Navigating, Marking, and Saving Search Results
- Searching PsycINFO using Subject Terms
- Combining Searches using the Search History (AND, OR, & NOT)
- Refining/Limiting searches
- Searching for Authors
- Searching for Journals

Accessing PsycINFO

PsycINFO can be accessed on or off campus via the McConnell Library webpage (http://lib.radford.edu/)

- From the McConnell library homepage, move the cursor arrow over “Find Articles & More” option.

- You will notice that several options appear to the right (as displayed here).

- From these options select (left-click) the “I know exactly which database to use!” option

- There are two ways to proceed from the Finding Articles & More page.

A- you can choose your database from an alphabetical list.
- We want PsycINFO so we would choose P from the list.

B- you can choose your database from the lists of shortcuts.
- EBSCOhost is the service through which we access PsychINFO
Accessing PsycINFO from the Alphabetical List

Scroll to Bottom of List

Accessing PsycINFO from the EBSCO database list.

Scroll to Middle of List
**General Keywords vs Subject Terms**  
- Before getting started, it is important to distinguish between the two most common methods of searching for topics: the **General Keyword** search and **Subject Term** search.

  - A **GeneralKeyword** search will return all of the citations in the PsycINFO database where the word or words of interest appear in any of the default fields of the citation (e.g. abstract, title, journal title, keywords, subjects, author name, author affiliation, etc.)
  
  - A **Subject Term** search will return all of the citations in the PsycINFO database where the word or words of interest appear in the **Subject field**. The subject field represents the terms that PsycINFO has identified as reflecting the central components of the Article, with respect to the larger classification system for articles that PsycINFO has developed. **Subject Terms** searches are far more focused than **General Keyword** searches.

- It is also important to note that there is another keyword search that we will refer to as a **Specific Keyword**. The **Specific Key** words are words or terms that the author(s) and/or journal editor have identified as reflecting the central components of the Article. These keywords are presented in the **Keywords field** of a full citation.

- The default for PsychINFO is not to perform a **General Keyword** search. To conduct a **Subject Term** search you must check the **Suggest Subject Terms** option.

### Searching with a General Keywords

- To conduct a **General Keyword** search, be sure the “**Suggest Subject Terms**” option (circled above) is not checked. The default is for it to be unchecked.
- Type the word or term in the “Find:” field, and then either press “Enter” on the keyboard or left-click **Search**.

- This will generate a results list that will include all of the citations in which the word or term appears somewhere in the default fields of the citation.
- On the following page are the results of a search for the term Leukotomy as a General Keyword. Thought full page is not displayed, on this page of results you would find the first 10 of 63 citations where the word Leukotomy appears somewhere in the default fields of the citation. (Note that if we did this search today, the number of citations will be larger as more articles have been published on the topic)
Navigating, Marking, and Saving Search Results

- The results frame (above) presents partial citations for all of the citations that match the search criteria. Specifically, the title, author(s), other citation information, and the abstract (if available) are presented. Also, information on number of cited reference the article contains and information on the number of citations in the database which reference that citation. The example above cites 11 other works, but has not been cited by any other works in the PsycINFO data base. **HTML Full Text** and **PDF Full Text** do not seem to be available for this article.

- For many articles Full Text will be available. Full Text comes in two formats

  **PDF Full Text** – PDFs (Portable Data Files) present the article exactly as it would appear in a hard copy of the journal. This is the ideal format. These files can be printed off or saved to your computer, your university H: drive, or to a portable storage device. You could also email these files to other people you may be working with.

  **HTML Full Text** – here the article appears as a web page. It will look considerably different from what appears in the actual journal. This makes it a very poor substitute for the real article. Only in extremely rare circumstances would it be acceptable to work from this version of the article. If HTML Full Text is all that is available then you should submit an Inter-Library Loan request for the PDF version or a hard copy.

- **Find Full Text** – This option will typically take you to a McConnel Library page that will indicate whether the library carries the journal or whether we have an online subscription to that journal. If we do not, then you can click the **Interlibrary Loan** option (under Step 3), log into ILLIAD, and the system will past the citation information into an article request form, you will only need to fill in “Not Wanted After Date” field and the “Will you accept this item in a language other than English” which is a real time saver.

- The complete reference can be accessed by left-clicking on the article title. Full citation is presented below.
- When saving or printing citations, it is typically useful to save the full citation. The full citation provides us with three useful pieces of information, above and beyond the information presented in the results frame.

  1. It gives us the ISSN or ISBN number with can speed the Interlibrary Loan procedure.
  2. It gives us the subject terms under which this article has been located. This could help identify other relevant articles on this topic and give you ideas on other relevant subjects to search. Notice too
that the subject terms are hyperlinked, and clicking on any subject term will generate a search for all articles with that subject term.

3. It gives us the **Specific Keywords** that the author has identified which may help us find other relevant articles.

- **Marking relevant Citations**
  - Ultimately, the goal of any search is to get the large number of articles narrowed down a smaller set of specifically relevant citations. The initial search list will typically contain a large number of citations that are really not germane to the topic of interest. Thus, as you find citations you want to keep, those can be marked or Added to a search Folder. This folder is essentially another results frame that only includes the articles that you add. This folder can then be further searched and narrowed down, printed, saved, or emailed to you.
  - To add a citation to the search folder, left click the “add to folder” icon for the relevant article. This can be done either from the results frame or from the full citation window.
  - The list of marked articles can be viewed from nearly all windows in PsychINFO, by clicking the “View Folder” option located at the top right of the screen above the EBSCO header.
  - Citations can be removed from this folder by left-clicking the X next to each citation or using the Remove all option at the top of the Folder List frame.

- **Printing, Saving, E-mailing, and Exporting Marked Citations**
  - Individual citations can be printed, e-mailed, or saved from within the full citation window, by using the icons at the top of the widow.
  - Within the folder contents window you can print, e-mail, or save multiple citations at once.
- Printing
  - Clicking the Print icon will open the EBSCO Print Manager window.

- NOTE: If any of the articles in your folder have HTML Full Text available then the default in the Print Manager is to include the HTML Full Text in the print out. Generally this is not useful. You will want to turn this option off.
- Also, be careful about leaving the “Remove these items from folder after printing” option checked. You may lose information that you do not want to loose, and you will have to repeat much of your search strategy.
- You can choose the fields that you want print by selecting from the Standard Field Format options. The Detailed Citation and Abstract is the recommended format. You can also customize the fields that are printed. For example, you could just print the author information if you so desired.
- Also there is an option to print the Citation Format for APA. This can be useful if you want to see how it should be cited in the references section of an APA paper. But it is not useful for saving your search results as all the critical information (subject terms, keywords, ISSN, etc.) is lost.

-E-mail
  - Clicking the Email icon will open the EBSCO E-Mail Manager.

- The options here are much like they are for printing.
- Note that the “Remove these items from folder after printing” option is in a different place.
- Also Note: that the Include HTML Full Text option is turned on as a default. This should be turned off.
- Finally, notice that you have the option to include the PDF full text as a separate attachment. This is ok to include, but only if there are not a large number of articles with PDF files that you are sending (more than 2 or 3 cause problems with your email account if you do not have a lot of space).

- Saving the search as HTML or TXT
  - Clicking the Save icon in the Folder Contents window will open the EBSCO Save Manager.

  ![Save Manager](image)

  - Again the options are much like the print options. Decide whether you want the items removed from the folder after printing.

  - It is be advisable to keep the HTML links to the articles, should you decide later that you want to retrieve the HTML full text.

  - Note that the EBSCO does not really save your searches. It creates an HTML file that you must then save. To save click **File** and then **Save As** from the pull-down menu on the tool bar. Saving the file in the “Web Page, HTML only” format will preserve the hyperlinks in the citation. Saving as (.txt) will not.

- Exporting Citations
  - Click the **Export** icon will send the citations in your folder to a program that manages your citations like EndNote or RefWorks. The programs work with your work processor when you are writing paper and as you cite sources in the body of your manuscript, the program automatically adds the full reference to the References or Bibliography section of your paper.
Searching PsycINFO using Subject Terms
- Remember that the default search option for PsycINFO is not to suggest Search Terms

- To search by subject terms simply enter the word or phrase you wish search in the Find: field, make sure the Suggest Subject Terms option is selected and then either press Enter or click Search.
- This will open the Thesaurus window, where you will find a list of suggested Subject Terms that you can choose from.
- In the example below the work Leukotomy has been searched, Psychosurgery has been offered as the only suggestion. We have selected psychosurgery by checking the box next to the term, and we have added it to the Find: field by clicking Add. Finish by clicking search.

- If we had been offered multiple search terms we could have selected more than one to search by adding multiple terms to the find list, before we clicked search. Using multiple search terms requires the use of the AND, OR, and NOT operators which will be discussed later.

- The Search History frame containing the results of three searches is presented in the following page. Here Leukotomy has been search as a General Keyword, Psychosurgery has been searched as a General Key Word, and Psychosurgery has been searched as a Subject Term.
- Notice that there are fewer citations for Psychosurgery as a Subject Term, compared to the number of citation for Psychosurgery as a General Keyword. Remember that General Keyword searches include citations that just mention Psychosurgery. Psychosurgery could even be part of the institutional affiliation for one of the authors; or even an author’s name (Bob Psychosurgery Jones, Ph.D.). So the General Keyword is a far broader and less focused search. The Subject Term search,
on the other hand, is much more focused and only includes citations that PsycINFO editors have agreed reflect the central points of the article.

- Note that we can distinguish between the search results obtained using the General Keyword strategy and the Subject Term searches by the way the terms appear. Subject Term searches with the letters DE in front. DE “Psychosurgery” indicates that we have used the Subject Term search for psychosurgery.

**Combining Searches using the Search History (AND, OR, & NOT)**
- The search history page provides us with a convenient way to combine the results of multiple searches in order to either narrow down or broaden the scope of our search.
- Searches can combined using the operators AND, OR, & NOT.
  - Using AND to combine two searches will narrow the scope of the search, to the degree that the two search terms overlap. That is, AND will only return citations that meet both search criteria. For example, combining Search 1 (leucotomy as a keyword) and Search 3 (Psychosurgery as a Subject Term) using AND will only return articles that have Psychosurgery listed as a subject and have the word Leucotomy somewhere in the citation.
  - Using OR to combine two searches will expand the scope of the search. Or will return all citations that meet either of the search criteria. For example, combining search 1 and search 3 will generate a list of articles that have Psychosurgery listed as a subject or have the word Leucotomy somewhere in the citation.
  - Using NOT to combine two searches will narrow the scope of the search by eliminating articles that meet a given criterion. For example, combining Search 1 with Search 3 in the following manner: Search 3 NOT Search 1, will return all the citations that have Psychosurgery in the Subject field, but only as long as Leukotomy does not appear anywhere in the citation. Conversely, if we combined S1
and S3 in the following manner: S1 not S3, then the results would contain citations that have Leukotomy somewhere in the citation as long as Psychosurgery does not appear in the Subject field.

- To combine two (or more) searches:
  - Clear the find field (**not the search history**)
  - Select the articles to be combined,
  - Select the operator to be used from the pull-down menu
  - Click Add, and the desired search combination should appear in the Find: field (the find field is not shown here)

We have generated the combined searches described in the examples above.
Refining/Limiting Searches

- When conducting a search you may want to limit your search based on specific characteristics. For example, you may only want citations after a given year, you may only want articles from a peer reviewed journal, or you may only want studies that address a specific age group.

- Limitations can be set when you are conducting a new search, or they can be applied to a search that you have already conducted. In each case the search limitations are set using the options in the Refine Search frame (this is the default view when you first open PsycINFO).

- In the example below, we have placed limitations on a search that we have already conducted. Specifically we have place year restrictions on our third search S3, which searched for Psychosurgery as a Subject Term. This search will only return citations with Psychosurgery in the Subject field which were published between 1990 and 2001.

- The results, as viewed from the Search History frame, are presented below.

- Where we originally found 463 citations with Psychosurgery as a Subject Term, there were only 161 published between 1990 and 2001.
Searching for Authors

- There are two basic ways to conduct a search for an author.

  - First, if you know the author’s exact name, e.g. Freud, Sigmund, you can use the same search procedure as demonstrated with General Keyword or Subject Term searches. This will return all citation where Sigmund Freud is either an author or the two names appear anywhere in the articles. This can be limited to just articles with Sigmund Freud as an author by changing the search field from Default to Author.

  - However, both of these procedures are limited in that they will ignore citations by Sigmund Freud where his name appears in alternate ways. For example, S. Freud and S. D. Freud, will no be included in the search results.

  - Also, if you are not sure exactly how the name should appear, this method is not very useful

- The second, and ultimately better, method for conducting an author search will allow you to specify multiple authors or multiple forms of the same author’s name. This method makes use of the Index search option.

  - Click the Index button on the EBSCO tool bar

  - In the Browse an Index field select Author from the pull-down menu.

- After selecting your index, enter the name of the author (last name, first name). If you use an initial, then follow it with a period.

- Here we have requested an author search for Freud, S (Note that the period was omitted. Later, you will see that it has consequences.).

- Clicking Browse will generate an Index of Authors in alphabetical order with the closest match to your request at the top (see the example on the following page, and notice that Freud, S with no period does not appear in the database)
- Next select (check) the name(s) that you want to search. In this example we have chose 3 variations that seem likely to be the Sigmund Freud we are interested in, and then click ADD. Be sure the OR operator is selected, otherwise your results will probably have 0 citations.
- This will generate a find list, similar to the one below.
- Click Search to generate the resulting list of citations.

- The Search History frame of the results for our example are presented below.
Searching for Journals

- In short, you search for a journal the same way you search for an author. The best procedure is to use the Index and set the Browse by an Index option to Journal Title, as illustrated below.