

What is FirstSearch?

FirstSearch gives library users instant online access to many OCLC databases. Our libraries have access to the following:

Books in Print; EconLit; FactSearch;
GEOBASE; GPO Monthly Catalog;
MLA Bibliography; PAIS International;
RILM Abstracts of Music Literature;
Union Lists of Periodicals; WorldCat

These databases contain citations for periodical articles, books, book chapters, Internet sites, dissertations, and archival materials. Carefully read the description for each database to see exactly which of these materials it contains. Library holdings are displayed so users can easily identify items in their own library's collection.

How do I get to FirstSearch?

1. Through the web browser, locate the UofL Libraries' Research Center at: <http://library.louisville.edu/>
2. Click on All Databases A-Z under "Articles" section in the center of the screen.
3. Click on "F" and scroll down until you reach FirstSearch. This will list all of the databases that UofL has access to.
4. Determine which database you wish to search and go to it by clicking on the first letter of the title and scroll down until you find your choice.

How do I search FirstSearch?

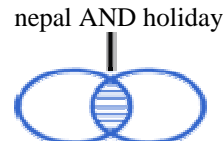
1. Choose the database that best meets your research needs.
2. Enter search terms or keywords inside the search box.
3. Click search.

*****SEARCH TIPS*****

BOOLEAN OPERATORS

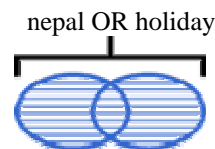
AND operator

AND retrieves only records that contain all search terms. Use this operator to narrow or limit a search.



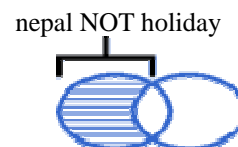
OR operator

OR retrieves all records that contain one or both of the search terms. Use this operator to expand a search.



NOT operator

NOT eliminates records that include a search term or group of search terms. Use this operator carefully to limit a search, as you may unintentionally eliminate relevant records.



Parentheses (nesting)

Group terms in parentheses to specify the order in which they will be combined. Without parentheses, terms will be combined in left-to-right order. For example, baseball and brewers or twins can be combined with parentheses to give you two distinctly different sets of results.

Plurals

To search for a word and its plural form, add a plus sign + to the singular form. The plus + will search for any plural formed with either -s or -es. For example, giraffe+ retrieves all records that contain giraffe and giraffes.

To search for the plural of words that change form, such as mouse or story, search for both forms and combine them with the Boolean operator OR. For example, to retrieve mouse and its plural, search for mouse OR mice.

Truncation

Truncation allows you to search for a term and its variations by entering a minimum of the first three letters of the term followed by an asterisk *. For example, econ* retrieves records that contain econometrics, economics, economist, etc. Be careful when using truncation to search for plurals. A search for arch* will retrieve records containing not only arch and arches, but many other unrelated terms such as archdiocese, Archimedes, and archive.

Note: Truncation can only be used after the third character. Also, truncation is currently set to read a limit of 50 index entries; this limit was devised to achieve better performance by the FirstSearch system and will result in an error message if the user enters a truncation query that is too general.

Wildcards

Wildcards are used to represent from zero to nine additional characters in a search term. They are useful when you are unsure of spelling, when there are alternate spellings, or when you only know part of a term. FirstSearch recognizes two wildcards.

A pound sign # represents a single character.


A question mark ?, alone or with a number, represents from zero to nine additional characters. Include a number if you know the maximum number of characters the wildcard will replace. Otherwise, use the question mark ? alone to represent any number of characters within a single term, including no additional characters.

Note: Wildcards cannot be used at the beginning of a term.

How do I display the articles I find?

Unfortunately, the articles available through FirstSearch are **NOT** available full-text. You can, however display the full citation for the article by clicking on the article title.

How can I tell if U of L has the item?

If the item is marked with a  U of L owns a subscription to the periodical the article is found in. **YOU STILL NEED TO CHECK MINERVA** (the Library Catalog) to determine the call number for the periodical and to make sure that the library has the issue that you need.

What if U of L does not own the item?

If the item you need from one of the FirstSearch databases is not owned by U of L, you can use Interlibrary loan to obtain it. Please ask at a Circulation or Reference Desk for information about this.

How do I print a citation or a marked list of citations?

Display the citation that you are interested in and then click the small "Print" icon that is located in the gray bar right above the citation.

To print a marked list, mark the items you are interested in by clicking in the small checkbox beside the item number. Then click the "Marked Records" link located on the top of the screen. Once your marked list appears, you can either click the "Print" icon if you only need the brief citations or you can click the "Detailed" link if you want to print the full citation.

How do I export my marked citations?

FirstSearch will export citations into EndNote or RefWorks. To do this, click on the Export icon located in the gray bar at the top of the screen.

Who should I call if I have problems or questions?

- For more information on searching FirstSearch, use the online **Help Guide** or ask a reference librarian.
- Contact a reference librarian at one of the six UofL Libraries: Ekstrom Library (852-6747); Health Sciences Library (852-5771); Kersey Library (Speed School, 852-6297); Music Library (852-5659); Art Library (852-6741); and the Law Library (852-6393).

