![Library Special Collections and Museums logo]

Using the EBSCO databases
Information Skills Practical Workshop

This worksheet will take you through the process of planning and carrying out an online search in databases hosted on the EBSCO platform. You may not have enough time to complete the whole worksheet but it will act as a guide for later work that you may need to do involving literature/online searching. We recommend that you use the example provided rather than a specific assignment that you may be working on at the moment. The aim of the workshop is to learn how to use EBSCO – we believe that by following the exercise as given you are less likely to become involved in the intricacies of the results and instead learn about the EBSCO features that you can apply later to your specific subject areas.

Please ask for help at any time if you need it.

1. Logging in for extra database services

EBSCO is the just one of many database platforms (or hosts) that we have access to. It is used to supply 8+ databases across many subject areas. Each database contains information on research published in selected journals and conferences. Some of the databases contain information related to books. EBSCO offers a variety of advanced facilities including the ability to save items to "My Folder", saving search strategies and setting up alerts. The alerting feature is particularly useful if you are carrying out research over an extended period of time. EBSCO provides an unusual Visual Search option which is worth having a look at provided you are aware of its limitations.

To take advantage of the advanced options you must create a personal account – you should only need to do this once.

1. Logon to the PC and open up Internet Explorer.

2. Go to **http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=shib** (This link is included in Primo records for the EBSCO databases but for this workshop it will be quicker to type in the address than to navigate to Primo and go through the process required to link through to EBSCO). Bookmark the link in your browser if you think you will want to use the database in the future.

3. Use the drop down box and select **UK Higher Education**. Click on **University of Aberdeen** in the list of blue links. Click **Yes** on the Security Information pop up window. Type in your University computer username and password and then click on **Login.** (The EBSCO platform will use this authentication route to determine whether or not you are allowed to use the database. You will generally always go through these steps to get into the database collection).

4. Click on **Sign in** (top of the page) then select **Create a new account**. Complete and submit the form. (You should only need to complete the form once).

5. You will now have an account (once you move into a database your first name will appear at the top of the page, somewhere near the middle)

6. When you use EBSCO in the future, remember to click on **Sign in** to get access to the advanced features and any folders that you have created.

7. When you have finished using any EBSCO database click on **Sign Out** before moving off to another website or shutting down the PC.

2. Carrying out your search: main features

Search rules for EBSCO databases:

- **Boolean operators**: and, or, not, (they are not case sensitive)

- **Exact phrase:** can be in quotation marks e.g. "passive smoking" or not e.g. passive smoking. (This is very unusual!)

- **Truncation symbol:** * (to pick up the different endings to words e.g. comput* to pick up computer, computers, computing, computation). The truncation symbol can be used in an exact phrase search e.g. "passive smok*"

- **Automatic stemming:** a basic form of automatic stemming is carried out by EBSCO. If you type in the singular form of a word e.g. *image* the search will find both *image* or *images*. However, a search using the word *child* would not look for the word *children.* I would recommend the correct use of the truncation symbol to ensure that you retrieve all relevant items rather than relying on the stemming feature.

IMPORTANT: The following step-by-step instructions apply to the search as outlined in the Appendix. If you choose to carry out a different search in a different EBSCO database the instructions will not work as given.

1. If you are not already there go to **http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=shib** (You may find it useful to add this to your Favorites in your internet browser).

2. Select the **PsycINFO** database and click on **Continue.**

3. Click on **Sign in** and login using the username and password you created in Section 1 above.

4. Click on the blue **Advanced Search** link (to the right of the rather large circular EBSCO logo) - you now have a search screen with 3 search boxes.

5. Remove the tick from the **Suggest Search Terms** checkbox (just above the search boxes) and type in the following exactly as given:

   "risk assessment" or "risk perception"

   In the second search box type

   offshore or oil or gas

   Click on **Search**

6. Look at the results display. How many records have been found?

7. Look at your results list. You should now have a paper co-authored by **Prof Rona Flin** of Aberdeen University in 1996 at the top of your list.

8. Click on the title of the paper to view the record. In the left hand display panel the column entitled **Find Similar Results** uses EBSCO advanced features which look for other references that are related to the original paper through the thesaurus terms used to describe them. If you were struggling to find relevant papers through keywords this additional facility may be useful.

9. Click on **Result List** (or use the browser **Back** button) to navigate back to your original list of results.

10. For the Prof Flin's paper In the **Detailed Record** in the left hand pane click on the **Cited References** link to jump backwards in time from the 1996 paper and the **Times Cited in This Database** link to jump forwards in time from the paper.

11. Click on **Result list,** then on the ⊘S·F·X link to navigate through to full text of the Flin paper which is available on the **NESLI2 Elsevier ScienceDirect Freedom Collection**.

12. Look at some other records. If no full text is available from the ⟨S·F·X⟩ link use the **Go** link to move through to the library catalogue to check our (print) holdings for the journal in which this paper was published. Do we have the reference that you were interested in?

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13. Close down any SFX related windows and navigate back to your search screen and results page.

14. Look at the left hand panel under **Refine Your Results**. The display in this panel is database and result dependent. In PsycINFO you have the option to narrow by Source Type, Subject, Subject: Main Heading, Age and Publication Type. Try using the one of the options given under Source Type other than the default All Results e.g. All Journals, Peer reviewed Journals, Books/Monographs, Dissertation Abstracts. You can view the results of any of these source types by clicking on the type, then **Update**.

15. Click on **All Results** in the left hand panel you amended to return to your original set of results.

16. Use any of the terms provided by the (Narrow Results by) **Subject** option (in panel at the left of the screen) to refine your search in a different way. This refining option uses key terms as identified by the database as being relevant to your subject search.

17. Click on **All Results** in the left hand panel to return to your original set of results.

18. Remove the tick from the **Suggest Search Terms** box and type the following into the third search box: **safe***

19. Click on **Search**.

20. Compare the list of sources in the **All Results** display for this set of references with the display in your original search. Is there anything different in the document types found?

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21. Select 5 references by clicking on the **Add** to folder link provided underneath each of the references. This marks and identifies the records as items on which you want to take further action. If you wanted a full page of references this is done by clicking on the **Add 1-10** link given at the top and the bottom of the results display. (If you change your preferences so that more results are displayed per page then Add 1-10 will read Add 1-20 or whatever number you selected).

22. Look in the right hand panel – you now have a section entitled **Folder has items.** Click on **Folder View** to navigate to the items you selected in step 20 above.

23. You are now presented with the contents of your personal **Folder**. The sub-folders within *Folder* allow you to save Articles (which actually means references), Searches and Alerts. You can name and create folders for your own use features in the left hand panel.

    - Within **My Custom** click on **New**
    - Against **Folder name:** type in **test1**
    - Make no changes to **Move Folder to:**
    - In **Notes:** type in the following **Created as test during workshop**
    - Click on **SAVE**
    - In the main panel click on the checkboxes for the items you want to move into the newly created folder. Click on **Move to:** and use the drop-down menu to select the **test1** folder. Records are moved from your Articles folder (in the main display panel) to your named folder **test1**.

24. Click on **Back** (just above the green Folder tab) to navigate back to your results display.

25. Click on the blue **Search History** link at the top of the results list to view the searches carried out in this session.

26. From this screen you can carry out a range of functions including **Save Searches/Alerts** and retrieving any previously saved searches or alerts. Delete any search steps that are not required and then use the **Save Searches/Alerts** option to save the resultant search strategy. In the Save Search/Alert form that you must complete use radio buttons to select whether you want to save the search as a **Permanent Search** (you can come in and run it whenever you like), **Temporary Search** (24 hours - why bother?) or as an **Alert**. If you complete the form multiple times you can save in all of the formats!

27. Click on **Save** and navigate back to the Advanced Search screen via the blue **Back** located to the right of the large EBSCOHost icon at the top of the page.

Well done! You have now covered the main features of the EBSCO database collection. However, there are many other facilities available to you and these are best experienced by exploring the databases that are most relevant to you. Options vary across the databases and you should find out what you can do within the database that is best suited to your subject area.

3. Carrying out your search in your EBSCO database: further features

28. Click on **Choose Databases** link (top of the page near the circular EBSCO logo).

29. Use the tick box to select the database you want to use and then click on **Continue**.

30. Within your selected database try any or all of the following:

   - Apply your new found skills and search for information relevant to your research area. Remember to take care with your keywords and apply the search rules correctly.
   - Type in your search terms (using the EBSCO search rules) and refine/limit your search using the given additional search terms.
   - Type in your search terms (using the EBSCO search rules) and refine/limit your search using the options provided in the **Refine Results** panels to the left hand side of the results list.
   - Use the **Visual Search** option (located underneath the search boxes at the top of the page) and one line search box to use a completely different approach to searching and display of results! (Note: maximum number of hits/references that will be displayed using this search is 250 so it is not recommended as the primary search mechanism to use within EBSCO).
   - Explore the additional search tools provided at the very top of the screen e.g. **Thesaurus**, **Indexes**. Some users love these, others are a little frightened by them! Note - they can be extremely useful if you are building up your expertise and knowledge of terminology within a subject area.
   - Try a more flexible searching strategy. Build up your searches in individual steps using just the top box on the Basic or Advanced Search screen and then use the Combine option that is given in the Search History/Alerts link. (This is similar to the Combine option in Web of Knowledge/Science).
   - Try changing your **Preferences**.

31. If you have a working RefWorks account you can export records to it for use later.
   - Select records by clicking on **Add to folder**
   - Click on the **Folder** icon
   - Use the **Select/deselect all** option, or individually tick records, to select those that you want to transfer into RefWorks
   - Click on **Export**
   - You are now in the **Export manager** screen. Remove the green tick from the checkbox in the left hand panel. (I do this as a safety feature in case the Export does not work first time – you can always remove the records later). In the right hand panel entitled **Save citations to a file formatted for:** select the radio button (at the bottom) for **Direct Export to RefWorks**
   - After you have decided whether or not you want these records retained in your folder Click on the **Save** button

32. When you have finished searching in your EBSCO database click on **Sign out** (top of the screen) to finish.

Please refer to the EBSCO Help screens for more detailed information on any aspect of the EBSCO search features. The search screens are not laid out in as helpful a format as those provided by

some other databases but do contain extremely useful information if you plan on carrying out very detailed or complex searches.

4. General information

We have an increasing number of databases on the EBSCO platform with the main subscription databases (2009/10) being:

- ATLA - religion
- CINAHL – nursing and related health areas
- EconLit - economics
- GeoRef – geology
- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) – social sciences
- Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts – as described
- PsycARTICLES – psychology (full text of 40+ APA journal titles)
- PsycINFO - psychology
- RILM Abstracts of Music – music
- SportDiscus – sports science

A number of others are provided free of charge e.g. GreenFILE, Teacher Reference Center and there may be some database available on a trial basis e.g. Philospher's Index.

5. Help and advice

If you have any problems with accessing the EBSCO collection or using any of the features, please contact the IT Help Desk or Susan or Elaine (details below). The Information Consultants can help with any difficulties you encounter with subject specific topics.

IT Service Desk servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk tel. 01224–273636 Use the phone number for the out of hours service – leave a message including your name, your computer username, telephone number and a brief description of the problem. A member of the out of hours service team will call you back as quickly as possible. **Information Consultants:** Life and Physical Sciences, Engineering Susan McCourt s.mccourt@abdn.ac.uk tel: 01224 273287	Education and Social Sciences Claire Molloy c.a.l.molloy@abdn.ac.uk tel: 01224 274813 Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Mel Bickerton m.bickerton@abdn.ac.uk tel: 01224 437876 Law & Business Studies Elaine Shallcross e.shallcross@abdn.ac.uk tel: 01224 273848 Arts & Humanities Janet MacKay j.i.mackay@abdn.ac.uk tel: 01224 272572

Appendix: Planning your search

Think about your keywords – don't just rely on the words and phrases that appear in the title of your research paper or theses

Use truncation – to catch singular and plural forms, spelling differences and word endings

Consider how to link the keywords using Boolean operators – and/or

You will rarely come up with the perfect set of keywords first time but it is worth spending a few minutes to think about the words to use in your search and how to combine them. We used the following search terms in the exercise to work through different elements of the Psychology databases in the EBSCO collection.

"Discuss the concept of risk perception on safety in the oil industry"

Concept/Idea 1	risk assessment	risk perception	
Concept/Idea 2	offshore	oil	gas
Concept/Idea 3	safe*		
Concept/Idea 4	*If I find too many references are there any extra ideas I can use, e.g. restrict results to those related to a particular region or maybe a specific aspect of the topic?* *In this case I'm interested in any work or studies related to the North Sea.*		

and (vertical, left of table)

or (horizontal, below table)