# KEYWORDS, OPERATORS & FILTERS

Literature Search: a librarian's handout to introduce *tools,* *terms* and *techniques*

BRAINSTORM
keywords

These are the main ideas of your research question/topic sentence.

EXPAND
your keywords

Look at the subject headings of the materials you find and use those terms as applicable.

Or look up your keywords in a subject-specific database thesaurus to find predefined terms (called *"controlled vocabulary"*).
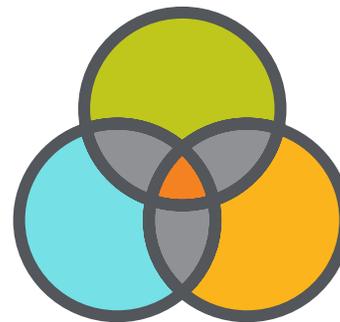
USE
Boolean operators

Insert **AND, OR,** and **NOT** into your search to broaden or narrow it.

For example: PTSD OR Post Traumatic Stress Disorder AND soldiers NOT Navy.

REFINE
your search results

Filters in the database allow you to narrow a search by year, content type, etc.

At the library:
Consult a liaison librarian or subject specialist.

1
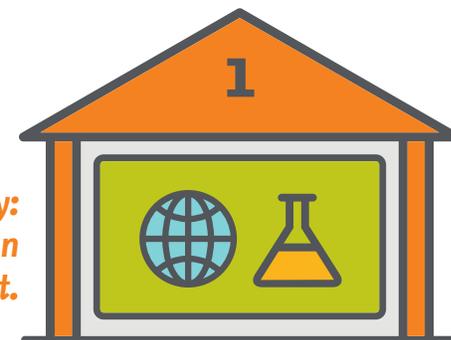
SEARCH TOOLS

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SELECT the best tools:

Abstract and citation database provides short descriptions (abstracts) of and pointers to research material from a range of sources.

The full text of materials is **NOT included,** but abstracts help you determine whether to read the full text. You may be able to link through to the item in a full-text database or request the item via interlibrary loan.

Example:
Scopus

Full-text database is a searchable collection of research literature that includes the entire text of an article or book, reproduced as a webpage and/or in PDF format, and other related resources.

These databases may be multidisciplinary (covering a range of subjects) or subject-specific (for one subject only).

Multidisciplinary example:
ScienceDirect

Search box on library homepage often searches multiple databases and the library's catalog at once.

It can find a lot of research on a topic quickly, but it may bring back too many results from many different fields of study on a particular topic.

Certain databases may not be included, so it is still important to check the other databases.

Library catalog is an online tool in libraries usually used to find items housed physically in the library; it may also include electronic items.

You can find journal titles, but not articles by subject or article title in the catalog.

Web search engine returns high quantity of results from the full range of sources available on the web. Results are determined by some formula involving popularity and relevancy.

Though temptingly familiar, it is usually not recommended as the best place to start for scholarly research.

*At the library:
Find research/subject
guides online.*

TYPES OF LITERATURE

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You should find:

ARTICLES

Journal
Written by a researcher or scholar for a specific field, reviewed by peer scholars before publication

Magazine
Written by a journalist for a mass-market audience

Newspaper
Written by a journalist to inform the public about happenings in the world

BOOKS

Monograph
A book on a specialized topic

Ebook
Any book accessible in full text online

Reference work
A collection of research, e.g., encyclopedia

GREY LITERATURE a name for other research material such as:

Conference proceeding
Panels, presentations and poster sessions at a conference

Whitepaper
Document that often contains legislation, outlines future trends, or is a call for action on a topic

Dissertation or thesis
Student research papers often culminating in a master's degree or PhD

Patent
Rights to an invention granted by an official government agency

Other publication
Document not published in scholarly channels, such as a government document

Published report or dataset

*At the library:
Get help via email
and online chat.*
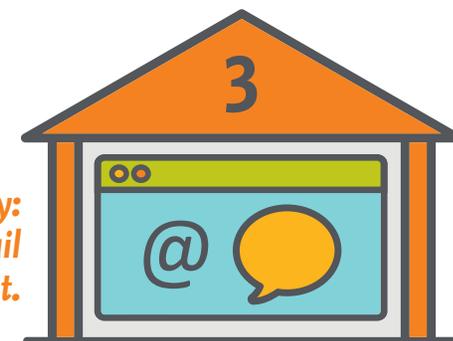
EVALUATE INFORMATION

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To determine trustworthiness of the material,
try the **CRAAP test** developed by the *Meriam Library*
at California State University, Chico[1]

CURRENCY

When was the information published and is that important to know?

RELEVANCE

How important is the information to your needs?

AUTHORITY

Who is the author and what are their credentials?
Do they work for a reputable institution?
Was the information published in a peer-reviewed journal?

ACCURACY

How reliable is the information? Does it lack citations?
Are there spelling errors?

PURPOSE

Is it a well-balanced independent piece of research, or intended
to sell a product or idea?

1. http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf
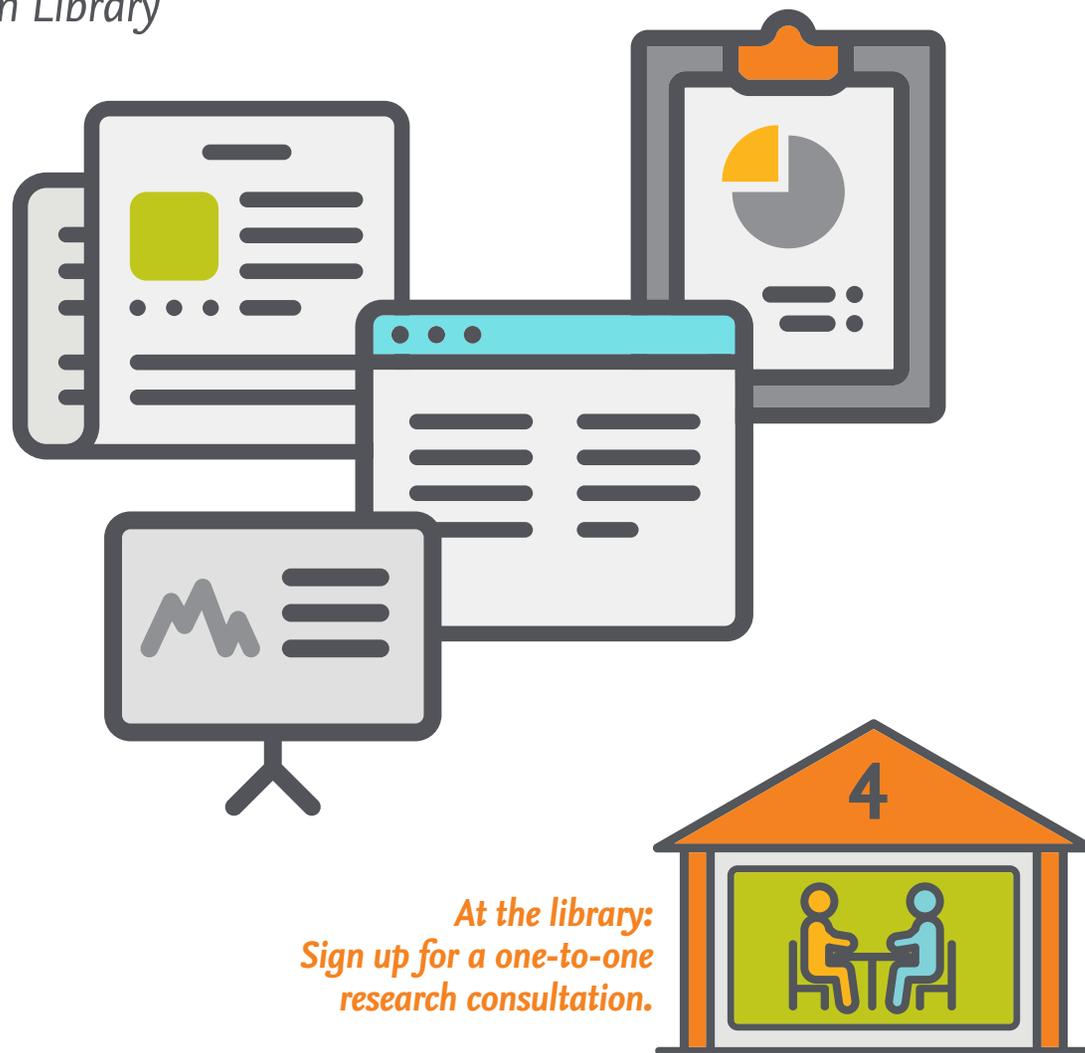
At the library:
Sign up for a one-to-one
research consultation.

ORGANIZE RESEARCH

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Save materials such as article PDFs into a document library and/or download the citation information.

CITATION MANAGER / REFERENCE MANAGER / DOCUMENT LIBRARY

An online tool or desktop software used to organize and store citations and full-text articles or other documents, create bibliographies, insert in-text citations into a paper, and share references with research partners.

Example:

MENDELEY
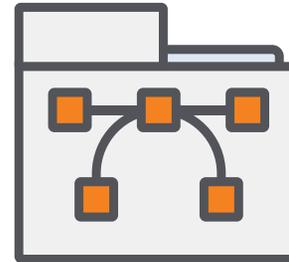
CITATION

The act of explaining the source of the information found during the course of your research. Citation is a mandatory scholarly practice that gives credit and helps prevent plagiarism. Citations may be used in bibliographies, footnotes and within the body of your text. Common citation formats are APA, MLA and Chicago style.

Example:

> Crystal Renfro, The Use of Visual Tools in the Academic Research Process: A Literature Review, *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Volume 43, Issue 2, March 2017, Pages 95-99, ISSN 0099-1333, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2017.02.004.
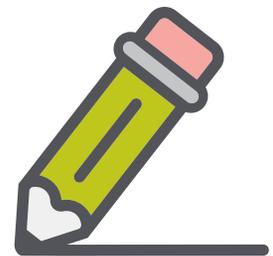
At the library: Take an information skills workshop.