



## What is a Library Research Database? – English Transcript

You may already know that most libraries subscribe to some online databases. Different databases have different functions. Some databases provide access to articles that will help you with research projects. Others are specialized and might teach you how to repair a car, learn a new language, or even how to trace your family history. Maybe your teacher has asked you to use a library research database as part of an assignment.

But what is a library research database? And how can it help you with your research? This tutorial will cover what you can expect to find in library research databases. It will go over some of the differences between what is available on the Internet, and what is available through library research databases. And it will discuss when you should use them. Please note that for the rest of this tutorial, we will use the term library databases.

For many people, searching the Internet is the first stop for conducting any sort of research. You can definitely find a lot of useful stuff by searching Google, but not everything is available on the Internet. Let's take a look at what you might expect to find on the Internet versus what you might expect to find in a library database.

Anyone can post whatever they want online. Some things on the Internet may have been reviewed by an editor, but many things have not. Materials in library databases have either been reviewed by professional editors or have gone through the peer review process, which means they were reviewed by other experts in the field. This helps add credibility to the information you'll find.

The Internet contains information on almost any topic in the whole world. So sometimes, it can be hard to find exactly what you're looking for. Library databases are often tailored toward a specific audience, or they deal with a specific subject, and this can make searching easier. On the Internet, you can find up-to-the-minute information. Since there's often no formal review process for posting on the Internet, information can be added as it happens.

Because library databases only add materials that have undergone the formal review process, they do not contain up-to-the-minute information. Current issues of newspapers and magazines may take anywhere from a few days to several months to be added to a database. Finally, while much information on the Internet is free for anyone to access, the information in library databases requires a subscription. Generally, libraries pay for these database subscriptions and provide access to their users for free.

Even though database materials cannot be found by simply searching the Internet, you can still access them online through your library's website. This means that you don't necessarily have to be in the library to do research with these databases. If you're accessing databases away from the library, you'll usually need to log in with your school username or library card number.

So, when you look at a library database, what exactly are you searching? Most databases



provide access to thousands of articles and images from magazines, scholarly journals, newspapers, and reference books, plus some audio and video content.

When you're searching for articles in a library database, generally, you will find two types of listings. The first type is a citation listing. This provides you with all of the information that you should need to go and find the article that you're looking for, but it does not provide direct access to the full text of the article. These listings will provide you with a full citation, including title and volume information for the source where the article has come from. Often, you'll also see an abstract, or a summary that can help you determine what the article is about.

The other type is a full-text listing, which provides direct access to the full text of an article. It also includes citation information and often an abstract or summary. Sometimes, the text of the article will appear below the citation information and the abstract. Other times, you'll need to look for another link that says full text, and click on it to see the full article.

Some library databases only provide citation listings. Some always provide full-text access. Many databases provide a mix of the two. Some databases cover a broad range of topics, while others are much more specific. The database Student Resources In Context, for example, covers all sorts of topics, from literature to history, and medical sciences to social issues. Health and Wellness Resource Center is a specialty database that focuses specifically on information about health and medicine.

Almost all databases have a target audience, and this can dictate the reading level and type of material that you might expect to find in them. Student Resources In Context, for example, is designed for high school students. Health and Wellness Resource Center, on the other hand, targets adults seeking health information.

So when should you use a library database for research? You should look in a library database if you're looking for articles and images from magazines, scholarly journals, newspapers, or reference books, or for audio and video content. If you're doing any sort of scholarly research or research for an assignment, chances are you'll need to use a library database. If you're looking for information on a specific topic, a library database that covers that topic can help you find what you're looking for. If you're looking for something that has been reviewed -- either through the peer review process or by a professional editor -- you should use a library database.

For specific examples, and for more information about this topic and the entire research process, explore OSLIS. Thank you to the Oregon CLIP project for allowing the OSLIS Committee to adapt their tutorials. OSLIS -- Learn to Research. Research to Learn.