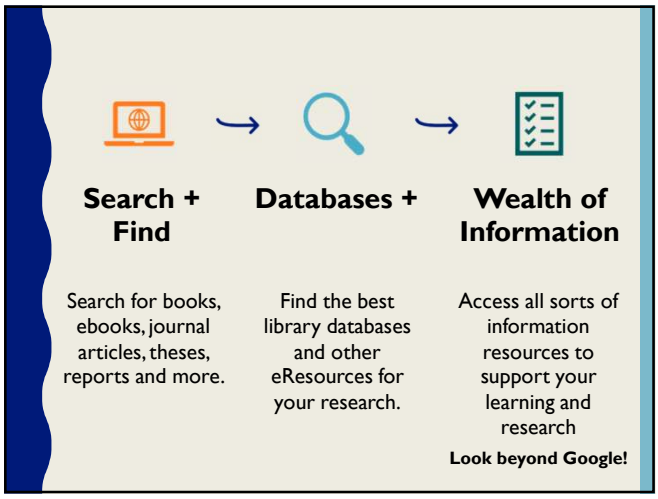
atu.ie/library
Online anytime, anyplace, anywhere
Databases
&
eResources

1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Find the best library databases and other eResources for your research.
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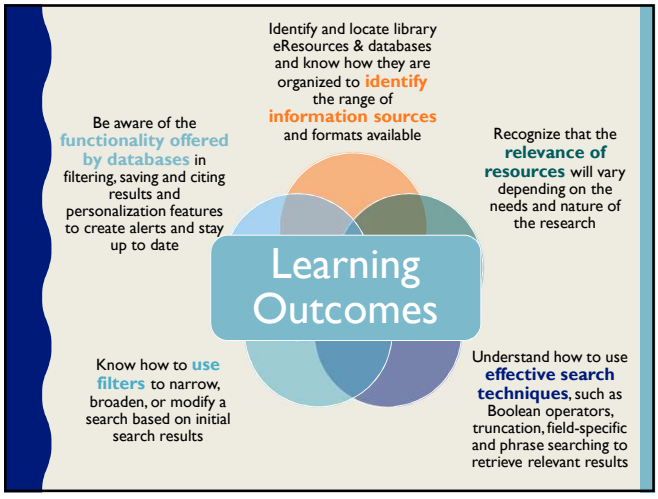
2


Identify and locate library eResources & databases and know how they are organized to identify the range of information sources and formats available
Be aware of the functionality offered by databases in filtering, saving and citing results and personalization features to create alerts and stay up to date
Recognize that the relevance of resources will vary depending on the needs and nature of the research
Learning Outcomes
Know how to use filters to narrow, broaden, or modify a search based on initial search results
Understand how to use effective search techniques, such as Boolean operators, truncation, field-specific and phrase searching to retrieve relevant results

3

WHAT IS A LIBRARY DATABASE?

A library database is an electronic collection of information, organized to allow users to get that information by searching in various ways.

Examples of Database information

- Articles from magazines, newspapers, peer-reviewed journals and more. More unusual information such as medical images, and instruction video can be found in databases as well.
- General reference information such as that found in an encyclopaedia. Both very broad topic information is available as well as very specific.
- Books. Online versions, eBooks, are the same as print versions with some enhancements at times, such as an online glossary.

4

A Library Database …

Is a collection of information **organised** for simple access.

Is **always available** anytime, anyplace, anywhere!

Offers **abstracts**, **citations** and **full text**.

Information in a database has been **tagged** with all sorts of **data**, allowing you to search much more effectively and efficiently. (author, source, subject).

Contains **scholarly and peer-reviewed articles** written by credible authors, researchers and experts in their field.

Provide **access to information** that is accurate, current, validated, copyright – clear, and organized.

5

BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. **Define your topic** and break it down into component concepts.
2. Choose **keywords**, think of synonyms, abbreviations, alternative spelling.
3. Combine keywords - using **Boolean operators** to structure the search.
4. Use **truncation**.
5. Use **advanced techniques** such as field searching and controlled vocabulary.
6. **Refine** search results.
7. **Reflect** on the results you find. Make sure they are **relevant**, look at subject terms

6

Phrase Searching

Useful for increasing the relevance of a search, phrase searching offers the ability to look for words together in a phrase.

"Social Media"
"Human Resource Management"

Boolean Operators

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

PTSD **OR** Post Traumatic Stress Disorder **AND** soldiers **NOT** Navy.

Truncation

Broadens your search to include various word endings and spellings.

genetic* = genetic, genetics, genetically

interact* = interact, interact*ing*, interact*ion*, interactivity.

7

REFINING YOUR SEARCH RESULTS

- Filters + Limiters allow you to narrow a search by year, content type, etc.
- If you retrieve **too many** records, you may need to narrow the focus to increase the precision of the search
- If you get **too few** articles or no articles you need to increase the sensitivity of the search to include all possible keywords/terms

SNOWBALLING

- Once you have identified some, even one, useful references these can be used as tools to help you identify other similar references.
- Check the references cited.
- Check the subject headings used to describe the subject content and rerun the search using these terms.

8

What if I Can't Access the Full text?

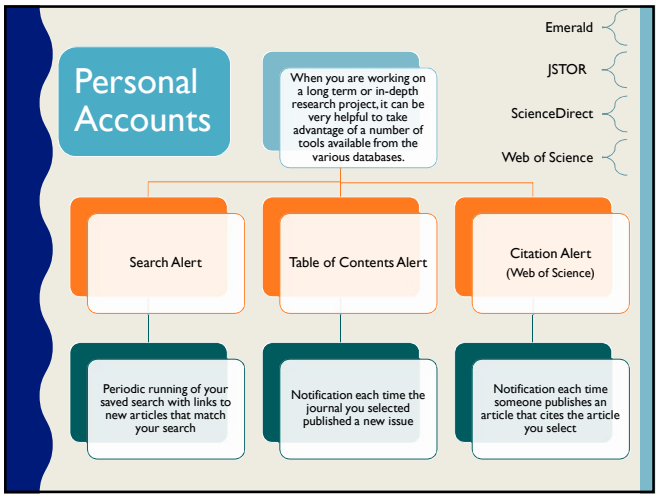
- Don't discount a database just because it doesn't have full text articles. The citation provides all the information you need to locate the article, and all the information is important.
- You can obtain the full text by one of the following means:

Check to see if the library subscribes to the print version of the journal.

Check to see if the full text of your article is available in another database.

Submit a Document Supply request for the complete article.

9



10

Google Scholar

OPEN ACCESS

- You can use Google Scholar to find scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books and technical reports from broad areas of research from a wide variety of academic publishers, professional societies, as well as grey literature on the web.
- Keep in mind that Google Scholar does NOT search all of ATU's subscribed resources.

Email Alerts
Google Scholar Citations
Citation Export

- Open Access (OA) resources are free of most copyright and licensing restrictions.
- OA research articles, unlike those in conventional subscription journals, are free at the point of use to anyone with internet access without any cost or the need for institutional login or passwords.

11

Evaluate Information

Currency
- When was it published/posted or last updated?
- Do you need current information, or are older sources acceptable?

Relevance
- Does it relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Is the information at an appropriate level? Too advanced? Too easy?

Authority
- Who is the author, publisher, source, or sponsor?
- What are their credentials or organizational affiliations?

Accuracy
- Where does the information come from?
- Has it been reviewed or refereed?

Purpose
- What is the purpose of the information? To inform, teach, sell, entertain, or persuade?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial, free of emotion, and unbiased?

12

Managing Information

It makes sense to keep track of the information sources you find, read, or intend to read.

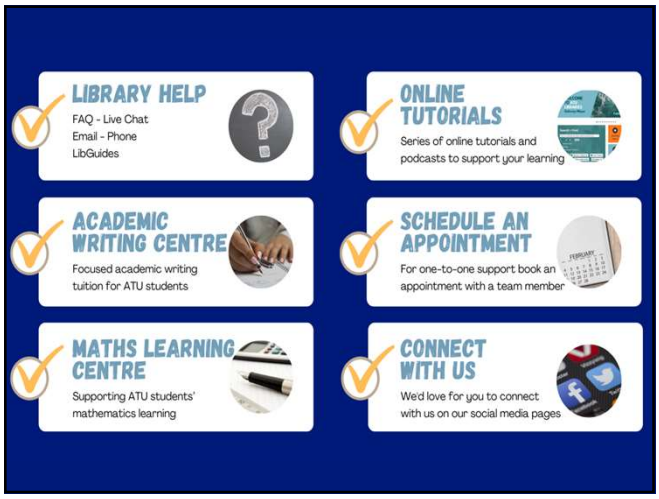
Having an organised way of doing this will enable you to spend more time on your research and less time on the basics of managing your information; such as storing and retrieving. It will also make it easier for you to create bibliographies when you need to.

EndNote Online
An online bibliographic service which will help you to store & organise your references and automatically format citations, reference lists and bibliographies in Microsoft Word.

Zotero
Enables you to capture references from web pages. There is also a plug in for Word to enable you to insert references into your papers. You must use Firefox to use this free plug-in.

Mendeley
Make your own searchable library, cite as you write, and read and annotate your PDFs with this free reference manager & academic social network.

13



14

15