

Overview of Tips & Tricks for online newspaper & magazines resources ... the “databases.”

Think about how you promote your “databases” to users! *What the heck is a database anyway?*

We in the library-world use the term all the time, but does “library database” mean anything to the average library user? What do these “databases” offer? Access to 10,000+ full-text magazine and newspaper articles for free! So while it’s more of a mouthful, promoting your databases as “on-line magazines and newspapers” may be more meaningful to users and even increase their use!

If you do come up with a catchy phrase for “databases,” let us know about it and we’ll get the word out.

Don’t ignore Google or the Wikipedia!

There is a good reason why these two websites are so popular ... they’re easy to use! And they’re not going away anytime soon; so learn to live with them! Teach yourself and your patron’s how to better use them:

Google Search Help - Great tips and examples.

<http://support.google.com/websearch/?hl=en>

Wikipedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

Teach users to look for footnotes that verify and support their articles. Since anyone can write or modify a Wikipedia article this is not a fool-proof source, but it can be a great source for pop culture, trivia, and lead users to other legitimate and respected sources

Pew Internet & American Life Project report:

<http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2007/Wikipedia-users.aspx>

NEVER give up after one try at a search!

If you tried keyword searching, try the search again as relevance. If you limited to searching just the title and abstracts, try again by expanding your search to full text.

Comparison Shop!

Don’t rely on just one full-text database for all your answers. If you regularly use *Reference Center*, try the same search in *OneFile*. While there is some overlap, each database vendor has a different contract with newspaper and magazine vendors for their content, so the speed at which a particular issue of a magazine reaches the data base as well as its thoroughness may differ. There is no one perfect, all inclusive, full-text database for every magazine and newspaper.

Don't be surprised that a patron's citation isn't correct. And don't give up, see #1 above!

This is especially when searching for newspaper articles. Keep in mind that a newspaper has many different editions and articles will often appear in different sections or on different days. Be prepared to expand your date limiters to search for a few days before and after the citation given.

Know what journals and newspapers your databases contain!

While seemingly an impossible task, with practice you do get the hang of which database is good for which titles. The database vendors are helpful by offering websites and down-loadable files that list their title and date coverage.

Practice, Practice, Practice!

Do you have a burning question? Well, try to find the answer yourself. This also gives you the chance to compare results between different databases (*OneFile* vs. *Reference Center* vs. *In Context*).

Database Access & Resources Links

*The following is a list of web sites devoted to accessing the databases sponsored by MLS & the MBLC.
If you are having a **problem** with any of these databases, contact the MLS at: 1-866-627-7228.*

MLS Online Databases website - <http://www.masslibsystem.org/databases/>

MBLC Gale Location ID / geo-location URLs - <http://mblc.state.ma.us/grants/licenses/links/index.php>

For quick access to state-wide databases via geo-location - <http://libraries.state.ma.us/catalog/geo>

MLS & MBLC Database set-up & authentication Contacts:

Scott Kehoe, MLS / scott@masslibsystem.org / 1-866-627-7228 x308

Rick Levine, MLS / rlevine@masslibsystem.org / 1-866-627-7228 x306

Marlene Heroux, MLBC / Marlene.Heroux@state.ma.us / 1-800-952-7403 x250