Searching WorldCat in FirstSearch

Introduction

FirstSearch offers a precise way to search WorldCat and other databases. It is used mostly by library staff, researchers and other experts. FirstSearch supports the need for details such as editions, formats, languages. With FirstSearch you may use filters to screen out unwanted materials either before the search is performed or from the search results. This enables you to locate the exact item being sought, whether it is in your library collection or available from libraries worldwide.

This session presents an overview of the search techniques used to search WorldCat in FirstSearch, explores the filters and other tools that can be used to manage results from the basic, advanced and expert search screens and demonstrates how result sets can be shared or saved.

Basic Search

The Basic Search enables you to search a few of the main indexes in a database. Use the Basic Search if you need quick results using a simple search statement. The BOOLEAN operator “And” is understood between these indexes.

Advanced Search

The Advanced Search enables you to construct more complex search statements. Up to three search strings and three indexes can be combined using the BOOLEAN operators, (AND, OR, NOT) selected from drop-down lists. Several search limits are available here.
Expert Search

The Expert Search is designed for experienced searchers who prefer to enter logical search statements. A list of indexes and labels is provided in a single drop-down list.

For example, to search for items by Barbara Kingsolver that do not include the term “vegetable” in the title, enter the index label for Name (au:) and then enter the term “vegetable” with no index label. Instead, select the title index from the drop-down list. The title index label will apply only to the unlabeled term “vegetable”.

Reference information for constructing searches displays at the bottom of this screen.
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WorldCat Search Limits

FirstSearch has no limit on the number of records returned from search. Setting search limits is a good way to narrow these results. Some recommended limits include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>1999-2010-2014;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>Frequently used languages display in drop-down list; less frequently used languages display in link “Show all languages”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Libraries</td>
<td>Identify how many library holdings are on the item. The higher the number, the more widely held the item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Document Type Limits

Document types classify items by format. These may be used to limit search results to a specific document type (bibliographic format). Hover over the type name to see what is included in that type. Some document type limits include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Books, pamphlets, technical reports, manuscripts and other written works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Files</td>
<td>Computer software, numeric data, interactive multimedia, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Resources</td>
<td>Websites with online documents, graphics, systems or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>Maps, map manuscripts, globes, and other cartographic material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial Publications</td>
<td>Periodicals, newspapers, annuals, journals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Scores</td>
<td>Printed music materials, including full score, choirs score, close score, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Recordings</td>
<td>Both musical and non-musical sound recordings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Materials</td>
<td>Projected media, Two-dimensional non-projected graphics, artifacts or kits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-type Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Juvenile or Not-juvenile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Fiction, non-fiction, biography, thesis, Biography, music, non-music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Subtypes of document types, such as DVD, VHS, Large print, Braille, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Limit by Library Holdings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limit</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Items in my library</td>
<td>(Self-explanatory) limits to items held by my library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A specific library</td>
<td>Limit by another library’s OCLC symbol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My favorite libraries</td>
<td>Sub-group of library symbols created in Admin Module</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Search Features

- Browse indexes to verify the correct spelling or format for search terms.
- To access the Browse index feature, click the arrows to the right of the index list.
- Use ranking to organize the results of your search.
- The default is Number of Libraries; other choices are Relevance, Date or Accession Number.
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Search Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To search for</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General information</td>
<td>Word or words in keyword index</td>
<td>frost</td>
<td>Many results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sangfroid</td>
<td>Fewer results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific information</td>
<td>Word Index labels</td>
<td>su:sleep</td>
<td>Word in subject fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ti:once</td>
<td>Word in title fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exact phrase</td>
<td>Phrase index labels</td>
<td>ti=to kill a mockingbird</td>
<td>Phrase in exact order in title fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quotes “ “</td>
<td>“tunnel vision”</td>
<td>Phrase in exact order in several fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plurals</td>
<td>Plus sign (+)</td>
<td>zebu*</td>
<td>zebu, zebulon, zebutte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variations</td>
<td>Wildcard (*) , # , ?</td>
<td>zebu*</td>
<td>zebu, zebulon, zebutte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words near each</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>common w2 cold</td>
<td>common within 2 words of cold in exact order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other in exact order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words near each</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>cold n2 common</td>
<td>common and cold within 2 words in any order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other in any order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Index labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use index label with</th>
<th>When search includes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colon ( : )</td>
<td>words or fragments of phrases</td>
<td>su:airline security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>search operators (w or n)</td>
<td>su:airline w2 security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>special symbols for plurals or truncation</td>
<td>ti:ocean+ or sea+ and pollut*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal sign (=)</td>
<td>Exact phrase as in names or titles</td>
<td>ti=alice in wonderland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Search Examples

- Author phrase index: patchett, ann AND title phrase index: bel canto
  - au=patchett, ann AND ti=bel canto
- Subject index: social work NOT subject index: social services
  - su:social work NOT su:social services
- Keyword index: physical geography AND subject index: ocean* OR subject index: sea levels
  - kw:physical geography AND su:ocean* OR su:sea levels
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Search Results

- **View a detailed record**: To view an item from the List of Records, click the record title.
- To return to the List of Records, click the List of Records link on the Results tab.

- **Sorting results**: Click Options and then choose the Sort criteria for the result set. The default order is number of libraries. Other sort options include: title, author, date, number of libraries. Sort order can be set and saved or set for the active session only. This can also be set on the advanced search screen.

- Other tools:
  - To find related Subjects or Authors, click the respective button.
  - The subjects or authors from the result set are displayed; mark selections from the list and click Search; this new search uses the OR operator between selected terms which often can result is a larger set of citations.
  - Limit results: click the Limit button and select from the database-specific limits for a more focused result set; or, return to the search screen to add more terms and limits there.

Documentation

- **OCLC FirstSearch: The Basics**
  This offers tips on navigating, searching, selecting databases, and sharing search results.
  https://help.oclc.org/Discovery_and_Reference/FirstSearch/Reference/Handouts/OCLC_FirstSearch_The_basics

- **WorldCat Services Administrative Module direct links**
  Link directly into specific control panels within the FirstSearch Administrative Module by task.
  https://help.oclc.org/Discovery_and_Reference/FirstSearch/WorldCat_Admin/Administrative_module_direct_links

- **Searching WorldCat Indexes**
  Provides details about query syntax and index labels for searching many OCLC services.
  https://help.oclc.org/Librarian_Toolbox/Searching_WorldCat_Indexes

OCLC Customer Support:  [https://oc.lc/support-regions](https://oc.lc/support-regions)
Email:  _support@oclc.org_  Phone:  800.848.5800 (US)

OCLC Community Center:  [https://oc.lc/community](https://oc.lc/community)
Test your knowledge

1. What search screen would you use if you need quick results using a simple search statement such as an ISBN?
   a. Basic search screen
   b. Advanced search screen
   c. Expert search screen

2. What search screen would you use if you are seeking records with a specific author and title?
   a. Basic search screen
   b. Advanced search screen
   c. Expert search screen

3. What search screen would you use if you need guidance constructing a complex search using BOOLEAN operators, specific indexes and limits?
   a. Basic search screen
   b. Advanced search screen
   c. Expert search screen

4. **More Like This…Advanced Options** shows you access points from the entire result set to use for a new search.
   a. True
   b. False

5. The browse feature enables you to
   a. Verify the spelling of a key search term
   b. Check the number of records that contain a key search term
   c. Identify the best index to use with a key search term
   d. Verify the format of a personal name, corporate name or title phrase
   e. All the above

6. What limits would you use to locate records for *The Zookeeper’s Wife by Diane Ackerman* as a DVD?
   a. Material type: Visual materials
   b. Material subtype: DVD video
   c. Either of the above
   d. None of the above

7. Use **Related Subjects** to create a new and broader search based on subjects in a current result set.
   a. True
   b. False

Check your answers on the next page
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Answers

1. What search screen would you use if you need quick results using a simple search statement such as an ISBN?
   a. **Basic search screen**
   b. Advanced search screen
   c. Expert search screen

2. What search screen would you use if you are seeking records with a specific author and title?
   a. Basic search screen
   b. **Advanced search screen**
   c. Expert search screen

3. What search screen would you use if you need guidance constructing a complex search using BOOLEAN operators, specific indexes and limits?
   a. Basic search screen
   b. **Advanced search screen**
   c. Expert search screen

4. **More Like This…Advanced Options** shows you access points from the entire result set to use for a new search.
   a. True
   b. **False**

5. The browse feature enables you to
   a. Verify the spelling of a key search term
   b. Check the number of records that contain a key search term
   c. Identify the best index to use with a key search term
   d. Verify the format of a personal name, corporate name or title phrase
   e. **All the above**

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   a. Material type: Visual materials
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   c. **Either of the above**
   d. None of the above

7. Use Related Subjects to create a new broader search based on subjects in a current result set.
   a. **True**
   b. False