## Selecting a database

FirstSearch provides three options for selecting a database on the **Databases** tab. Click a link to select an option. The **List Databases by Topic** option groups databases by topic area while the **List All Databases** option displays a merged list of all databases. If you need help selecting a database, use the **Suggest Best** option to scan databases for your key search term(s). You can then select the databases that contain the highest estimated results for your key term(s).
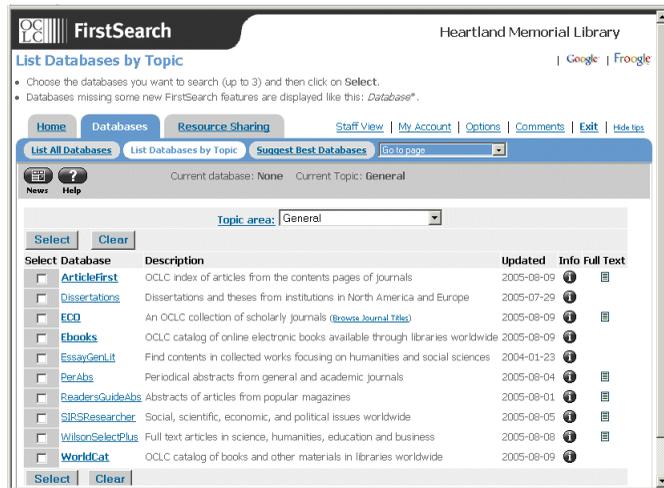
The Database list

Select—Click the checkbox in front of each database you would like to search (up to three). A default database may be pre-selected. If you do not want to include the default database in your search, click the checkbox in the first column to de-select it.

Est. Results—Displays estimated results for key terms (appears only on the **Suggest Best** screen).

Database—Displays the name of the database. Click to search in just one database.

Description—Displays a short description of the database.

Info—Click the **Info** button to view detailed information on a database.

Updated—Displays the date on which the database was last updated.

Full text—Displays the Full Text icon if online full text is available.

Using search results

Viewing a detailed record—To view a detailed record from the **List of Records** screen, click the record title. To return to the **List of Records** screen, click the **List of Records** link on the Results tab.

Viewing full text—The **Full Text** button and full text format information appear with any record for which full text is available online. Click the button or the format information to see the full text.

Sorting records—Click the **Sort** button to select sort options for a results set of 500 or fewer records. Sort options vary by database.

Related records—To find related records, click the **Related Authors** button or **Related Subjects** button .

Limiting results—To narrow your set of results, click the **Limit** button and select from the list of database-specific limits.

Marking a subset of records—Click the checkbox for each record you want in your subset. Use the **Mark All** button to mark all records on a page or the **Clear Marks** button to unmark all records on the list. Click the **Marked Records** link on the **Results** tab to view, e-mail, or save.

Printing—Click the **Print** button to reformat a page of results for printing. Use your browser's print function to print. Click the **Return** button to return to the original format.

E-mailing—Click the **E-mail** button to e-mail records, library ownership information, or full-text copy.

Exporting—Click the **Export** button to export data directly to bibliographic management programs such as EndNote® or RefWorks™. Data can also be exported as text files to ProCite® or similar programs.

Library ownership information—The My Library Owns icon and the My Library Group Owns icon are displayed with any resource that your library or library group owns. Click the **Libraries** button to view a list of libraries that hold a particular resource.


FirstSearch is a Web-based information system for searching online databases. A database is a collection of related resources on a specific topic or from a specific source. Each entry in a database is called a record.

FirstSearch screens and functions

Move through FirstSearch screens and functions using the navigation tabs. Each tab displays context-sensitive links for additional options. For example, in the figure below, the **List of Records** screen displays as the active option on the **Results** tab. The **Detailed Record** and **Marked Records** options appear as links to additional screens that are also available on the **Results** tab.

Check the control panel below the navigation tabs for status information and specialized tools such as **Sort** and **Help**.
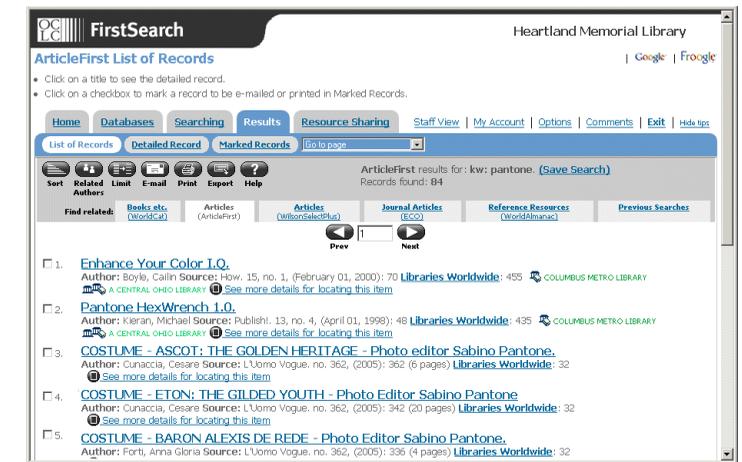
Additional tip:

- Click the **Help** button to browse the context-sensitive online help in a pop-up window.
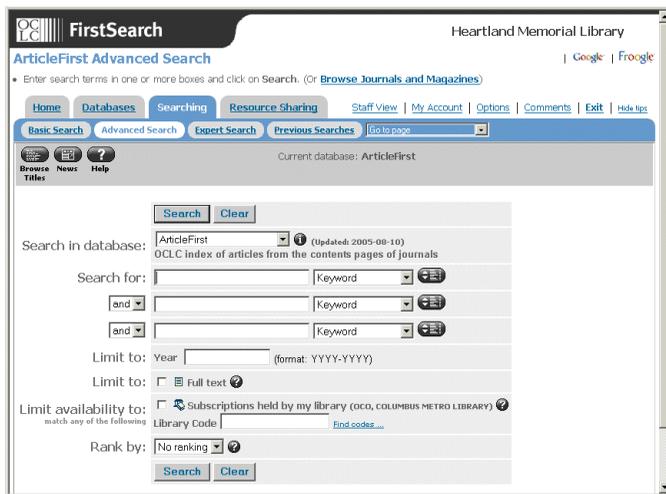
Searching

Basic Search

The **Basic Search** screen allows you to search the main indexes in a database. Use the Basic Search if you are new to online searching or if you need quick results using a simple search statement.


Advanced Search

The **Advanced Search** screen lets you construct more complex search statements. Up to three search strings and three indexes can be combined using Boolean operators (**AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**) selected from drop-down menus. More search limits are available at this level.

Expert Search

The **Expert Search** screen is designed for experienced searchers who prefer to enter logical search strings. Reference information on constructing a search is displayed at the bottom of the screen. A list of indexes and index labels is provided in a single drop-down menu. For example, to search for all resources related to *coffee* that are written by *Elizabeth Alston*, you can enter **alston elizabeth and kw:coffee** and select the author index from the drop-down menu. The author index will apply only to the unlabeled terms *alston elizabeth*.
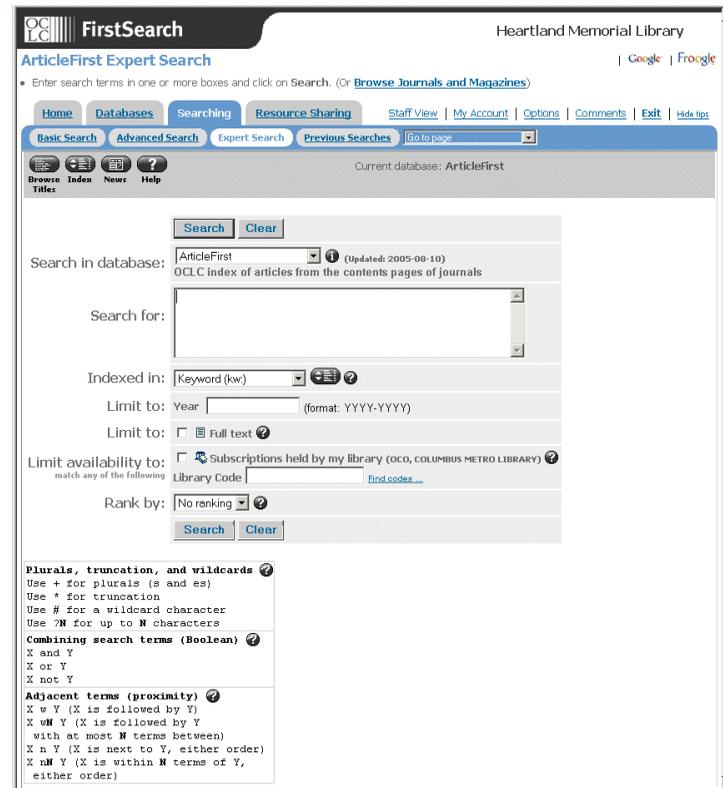
Other search features:

- Browse the indexes to verify the correct spelling or format for search terms. Click the **Index** button to access the Browse Index feature.
- Browse subject headings to find additional terms that may apply to your search. Click the **Subjects** button to access the Subject Headings list. This feature is available only in certain databases.
- Use ranking to organize the results of your search. Available options vary by database.

Search statements

Search statements are made up of search terms combined with special search characters or labels and Boolean operators.

Building search statements

To search for	Use	Example	Results
subject information	any word or words	**frost**	many results (common word)
		sangfroid	few results (rare word)
categories of information	index labels	**su:sleep** **ti:once**	subject sleep, once in titles
exact phrase	quotes " "	**"tunnel vision"**	tunnel vision
plurals	plus sign +	**plant+**	plant, plants, plants', plant's, plantes, plantes'
variants or part of a word	wildcard *, #, or ?	**zebu***	zebu, zebulon, zebutte
all words	AND	**cold AND zinc**	cold and zinc
one or all words	OR	**cold OR zinc**	cold, zinc, and cold and zinc
one word but not another	NOT	**cold NOT weather**	cold but not cold weather
words near each other, given order	w	**cold w2 common**	cold followed within 2 words by common
words near each other, any order	n	**cold n3 common**	cold and common, within 3 words of each other

Using index labels

Use an index label and	when your search includes	Examples
colon (:)	individual words or fragments of phrases	**kw:airline security**
	search operators (*w* or *n*)	**kw:alcohol w2 fetal**
	other special search characters, such as the plus sign (+) or asterisk (*)	**ti:(ocean+ or sea+) and pollut***
equal sign (=)	exact phrases as in names and titles	**ti=alice in wonderland**