Searching Web of Science Exercise  
NIH Bridges to Baccalaureate Summer Research Program,  
UC Berkeley Library

Learning objectives: (a) Search with Boolean operators (AND, OR), (b) filter to improve the relevance of search results; (c) select UC-eLinks to retrieve a copy of the article; (d) save citations to marked list; (e) conduct cited reference searching

Introduction

Web of Science contains citations across a wide range of disciplines. It offers powerful search and analysis tools to hone into the relevant articles for your research. This exercise explores these tools.

1. Visit Web of Science at http://webofknowledge.com/WOS

Formulate your search

Let’s try this research question:  *What are the health effects of fluoridated drinking water?*

The keywords for this search are **health effects** and **fluoride** and **drinking water**.

2. In the search box enter the keywords we want: **fluorid* AND drinking water AND health effects**

   *Note: the * allows for word ending variations. E.g., fluoride, fluoridated, etc.*

   *Note: It is best to enter your connector words (ie, AND, OR) in UPPER CASE*

3. Now click the **Search** button.

Filter your results

There are over 360 citations available for **fluorid* AND drinking water AND health effects**. Let’s filter these results to a smaller set of articles. Look at the left side bar to see filter options.

4. Scroll down to **Publication Dates**, and select **2011 - 2018** (You may need to click on More Options to see all the years). Click **Refine**.

5. Then, scroll down to **Languages** (You may need to click **View all** options at the bottom of the left sidebar), and select **English**. Click **Refine**.

If you still think you have too many citations to look through, you can filter the results **to review articles**. Review articles are written to summarize the current state of the research on a particular topic. They give nice introductions to a topic and discuss current lines of research in the field, but do not report original research.

6. Scroll to **Document Type**, and select **review** then click **Refine**.
Now you have a fairly small set of articles. You have seen how filters can be helpful for honing into articles that may be more relevant to your research.

Let’s explore your results.

7. Pick a search result (citation) that looks interesting to you and click the button View Abstract to read a description about the article. The abstract can provide more ideas for search terms and will help you decide if you want to read the whole article.

8. To save citations as you search, click the box to the left of the citation. Do this for any 3 articles, and click Add to Marked List above the search results.

   Note: You can do a new search, continue saving citations as you go. Then, when you are finished searching, you can email the citations to yourself or export them to a citation manager like RefWorks or Zotero.

9. Also under each citation is the UC-eLinks button, which will take you to the full text of the article, if we have it online. Try clicking it for one of the articles.

10. Close the browser UC-eLinks tab, and return to your search results in Web of Science.

Find citing articles

In all the search results, you will see the Times Cited field to the right of an article’s title. This indicates the number of newer published articles that cites the article at hand. Clicking on the number will retrieve these articles. This is a cited reference search and it helps you find more current works relevant to your topic.

11. Find an article with a Times Cited greater than 2 (you may need to go to the second page of results), and click on it to review its citing articles.