2025

Basic Library Research Processes
COMS 240

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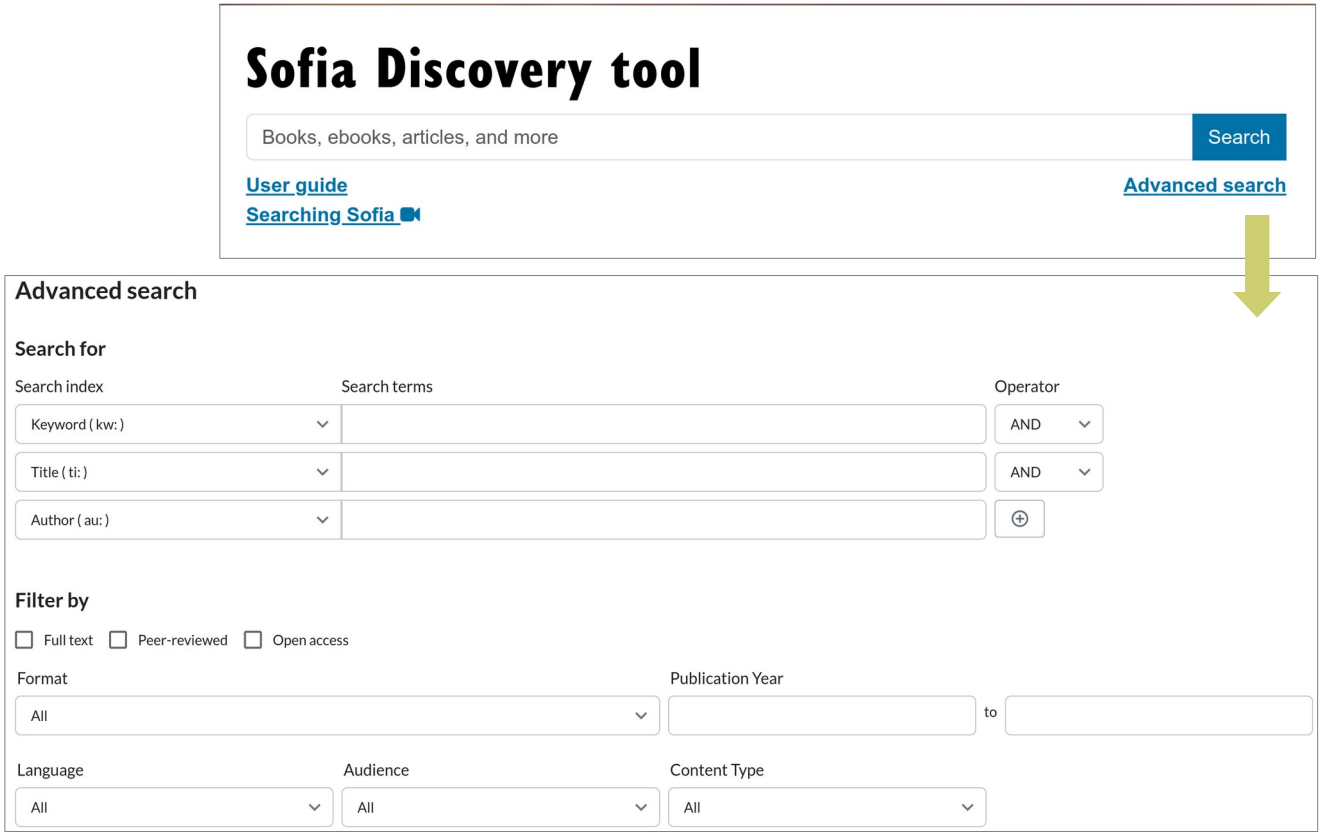
Agenda

1. Resources we'll use
2. Steps in a library research process
3. How to use the tools/resources
4. Keeping track of your sources

http://library.concordia.ca

Resources: Sofia (Catalogue)

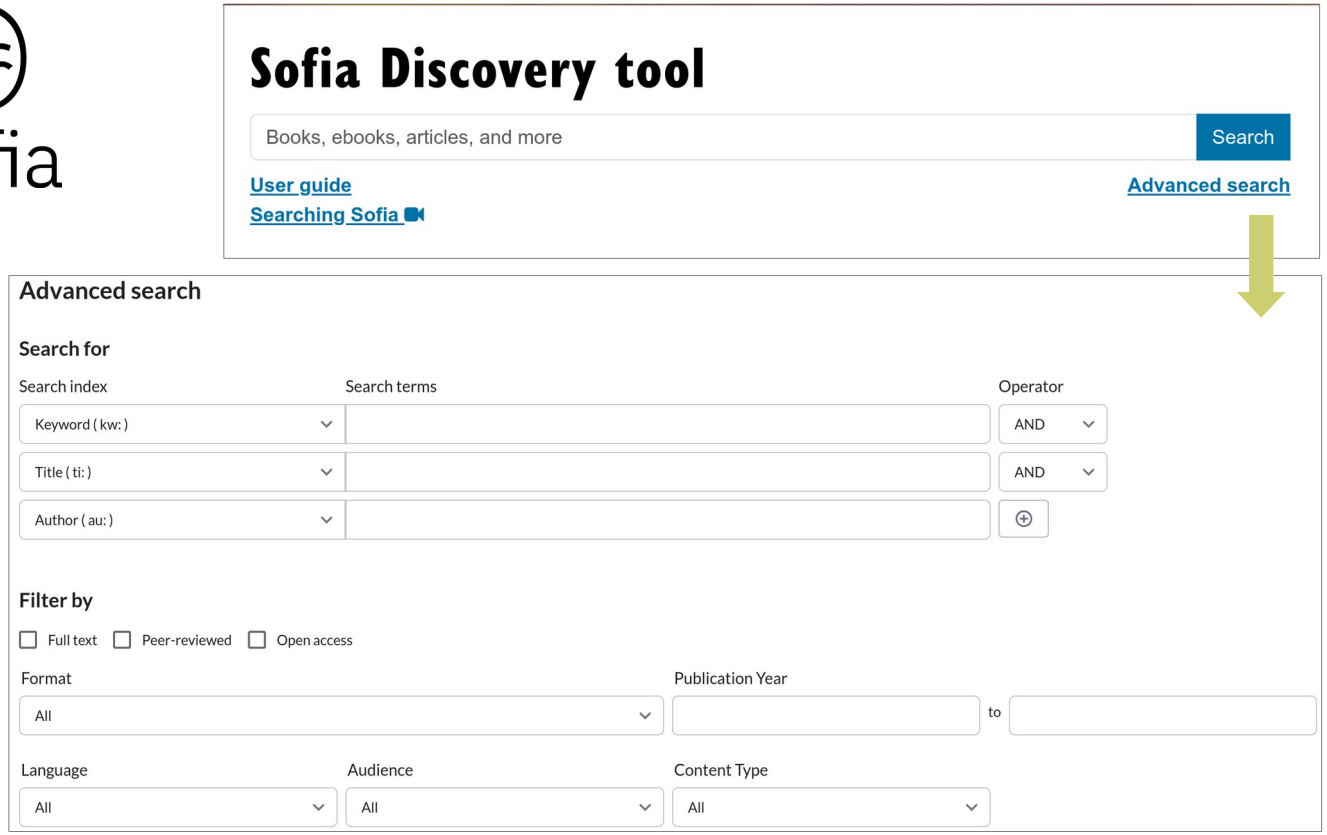
Sofia



Resources: Sofia (Catalogue)

- Books
- Film
- Music
- Journals
- Games
- Databases
- (*Articles*)

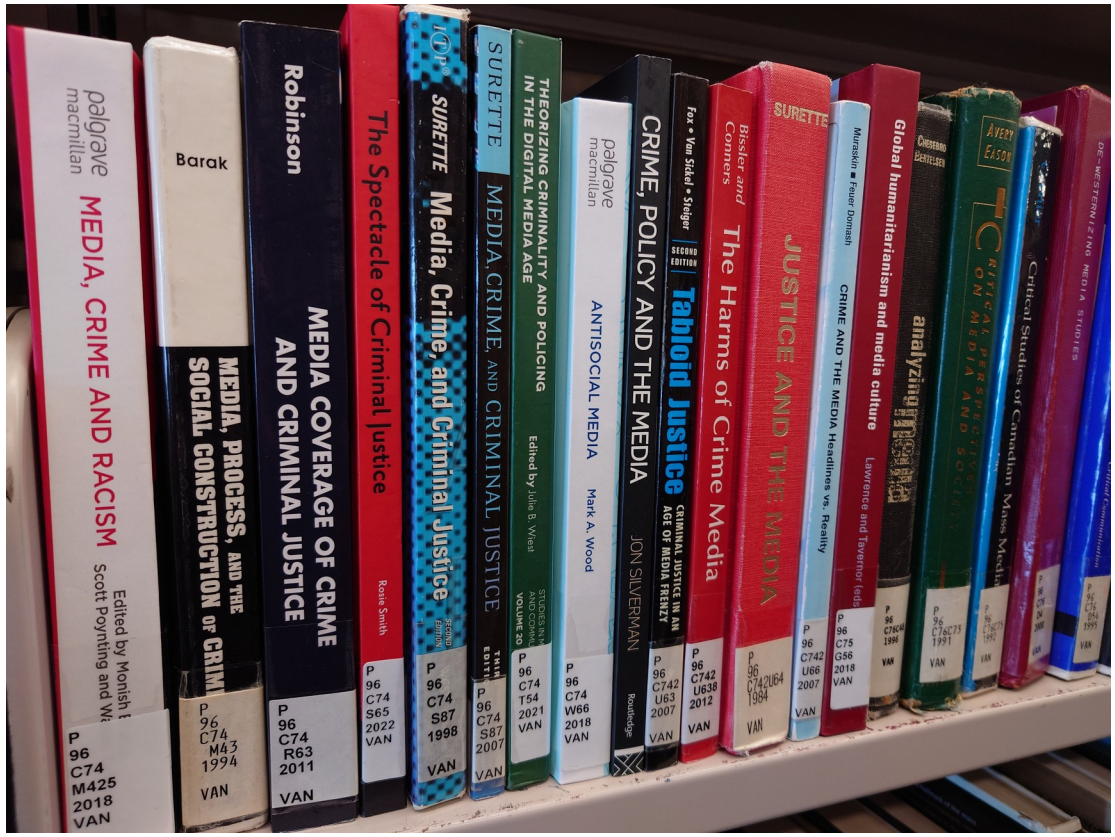
Sofia



The Sofia record shows where it is

P
96
C74
T54
2021
VAN



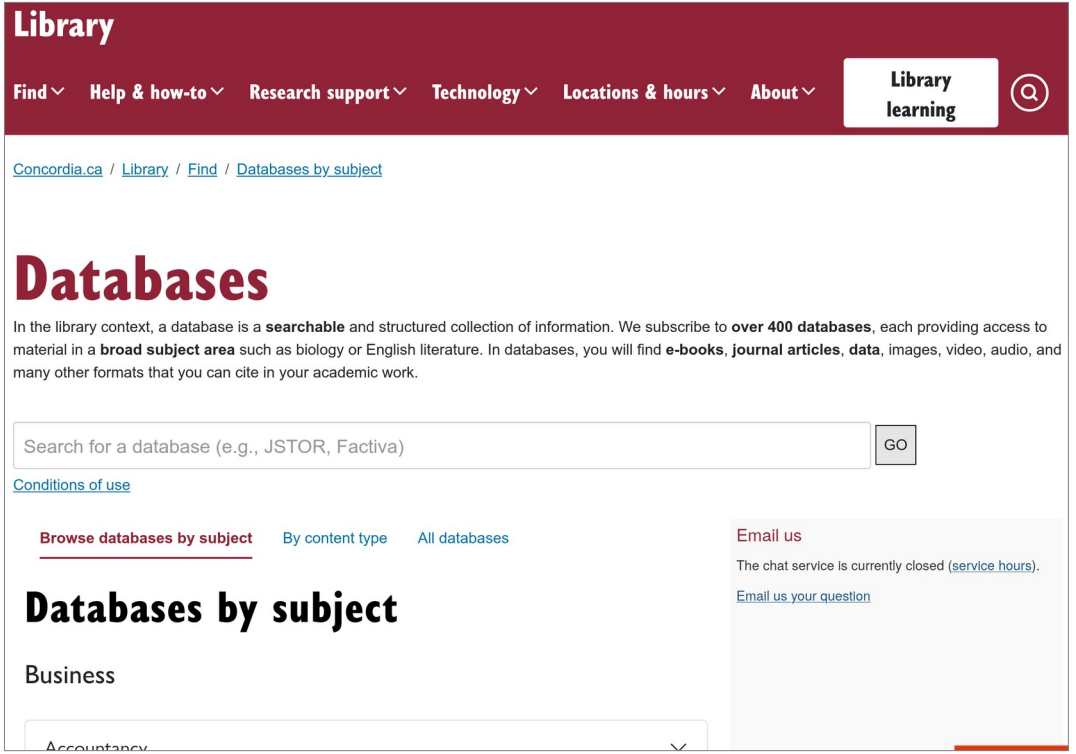


https://concordiauniversity.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1233165593

Resources: Library Databases

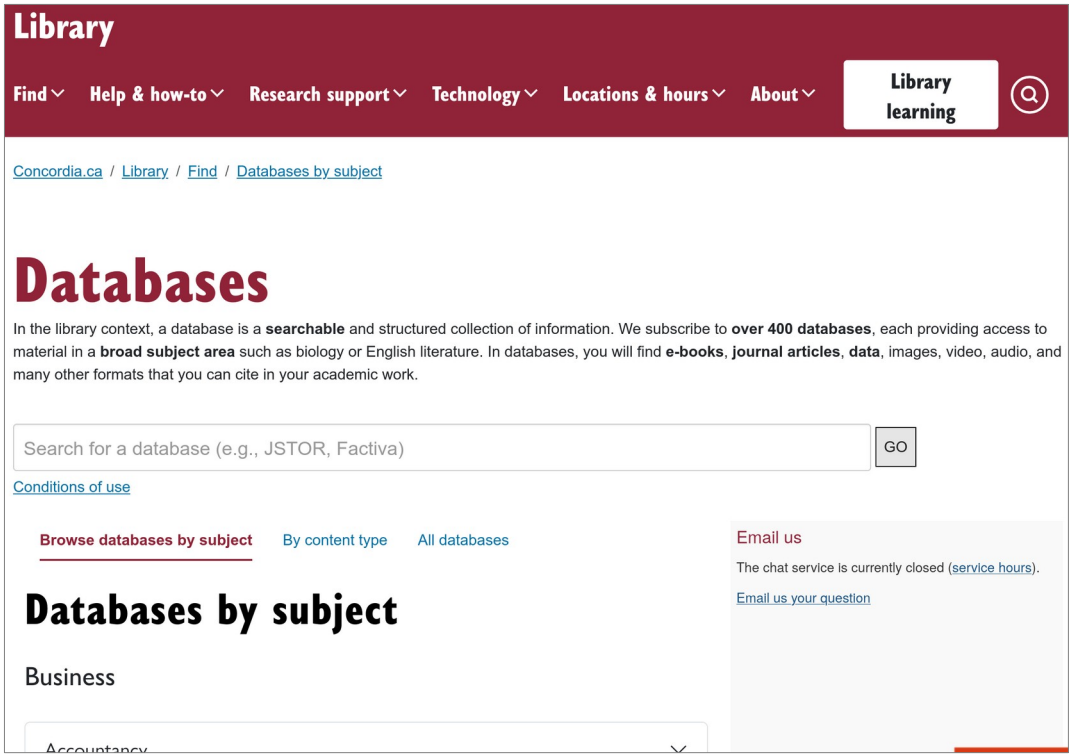
DATABASES BY SUBJECT

What kinds of sources are included in library databases?



Resources: Library Databases

- Subject oriented
- Peer reviewed articles
- Trade journals
- News
- Images
- Magazines, etc.

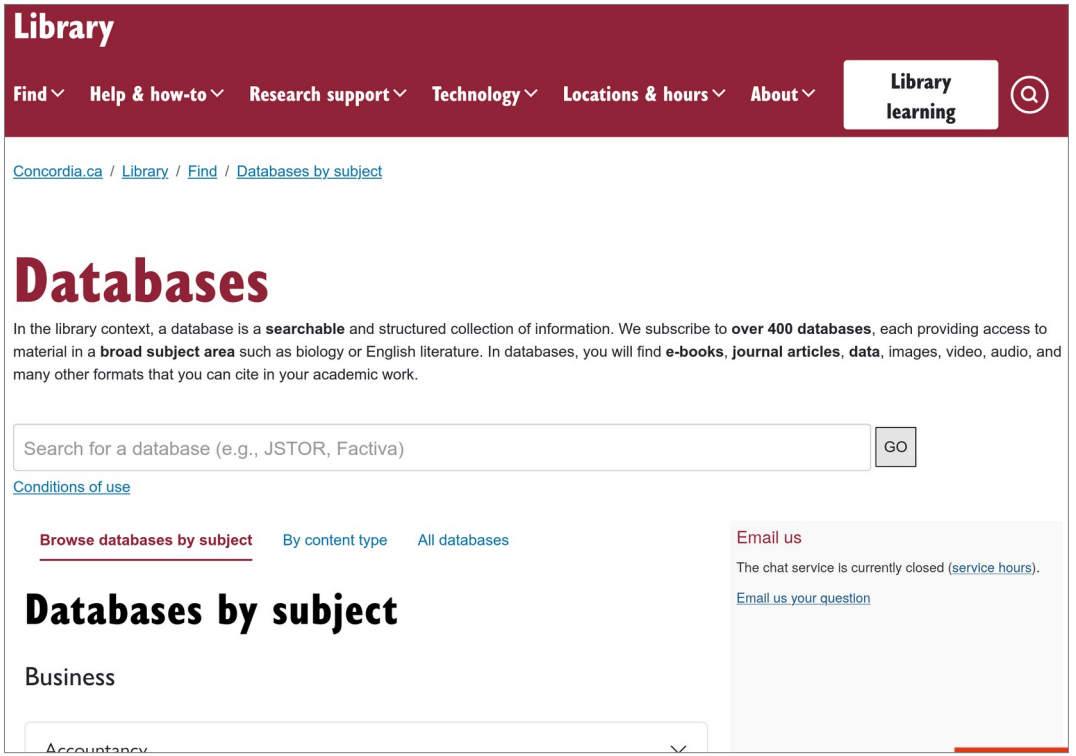


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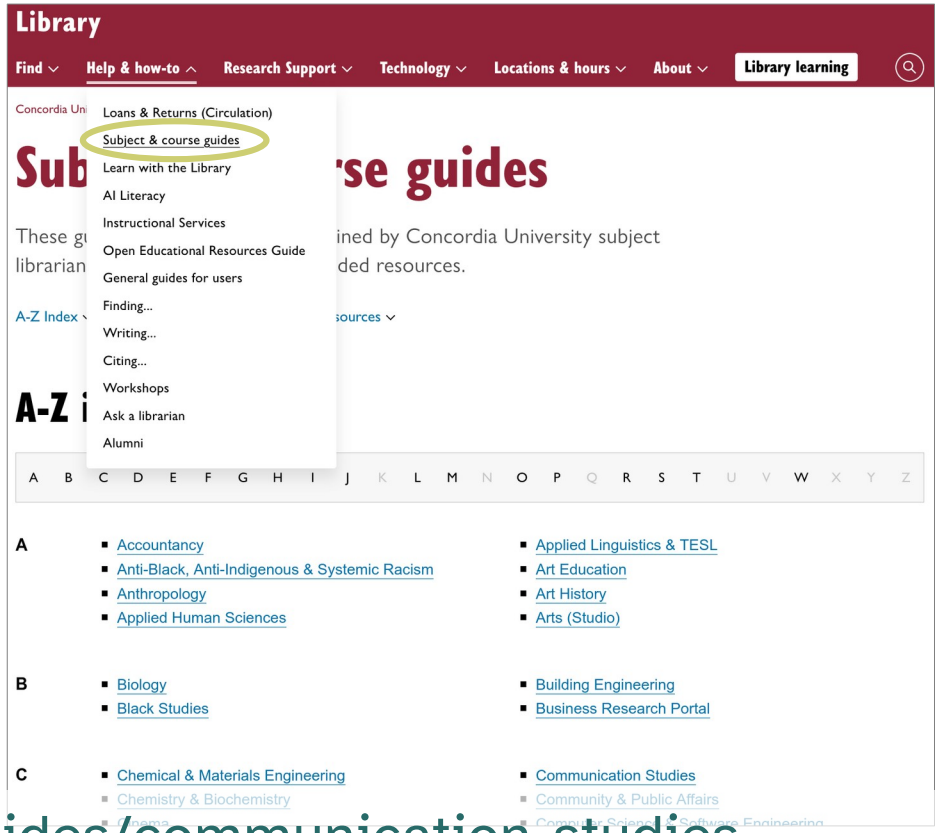
Academic search engines are different.

- scholar.archive.org
- openalex.org
- scholar.google.com
- semanticscholar.com



Resources: Subject Guides

- Quick access
- Reference sources
- Other resources
- Contact



www.concordia.ca/library/guides/communication-studies

Library Search Process

1. Getting Started

Research Question

Topic → Refine it → Form a good question to *target* your research



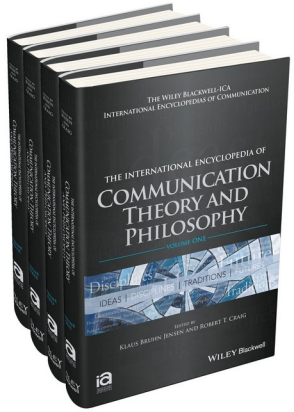
Iterate

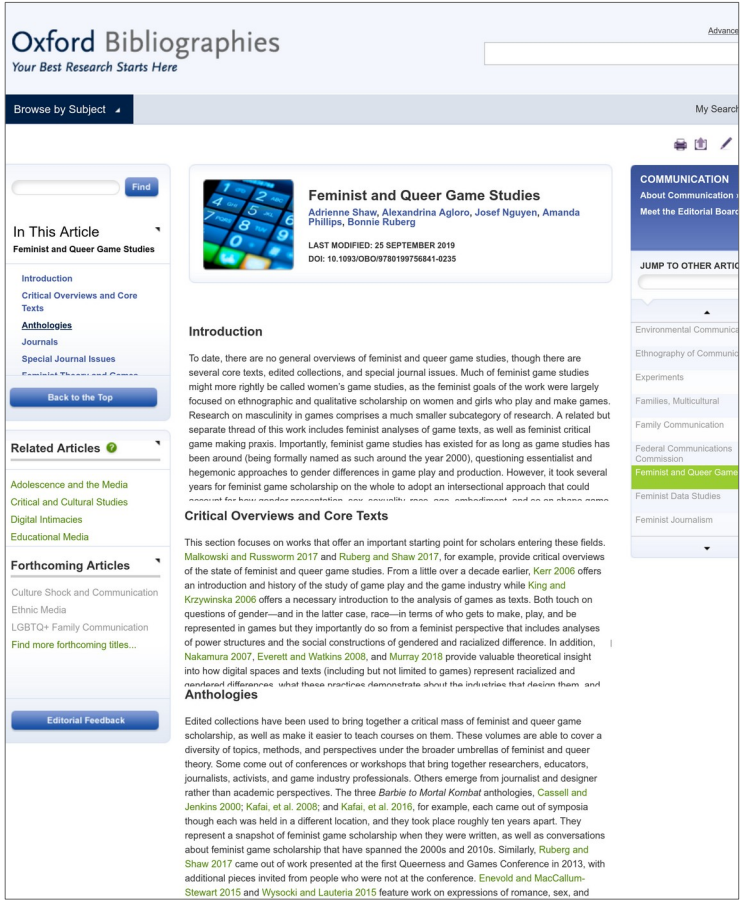
Background & Important Literature

- Your understanding of key concepts and their definitions?
- Literature central to the work in this domain?
- Who is doing research in this domain?

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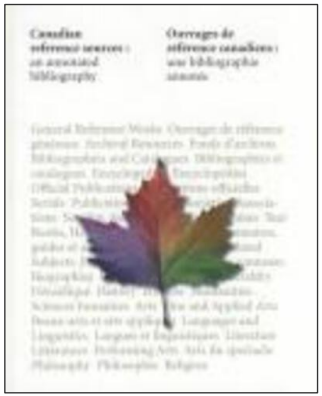




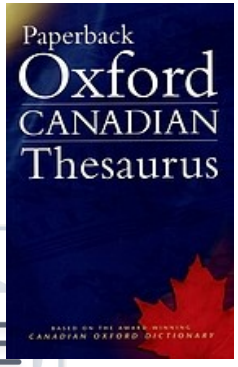
Other Reference Resources

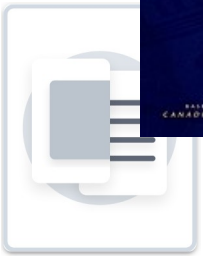
Search with subjects for reference resources. E.g.:

- su:Reference books Canada Bibliography
- su:Reference works
- su:Handbook
- su:Encyclopedia



Canadian reference sources : an annotated bibliography : general reference works, history, humanities (vast range of topics)
https://concordiauniversity.on.worldcat.org/oclc/144086205

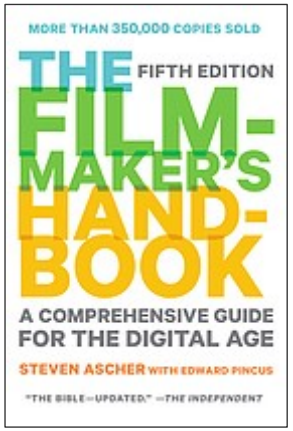




Dictionnaire technique et scientifique français-anglais



Communication yearbook
Annals of the International Communication Association

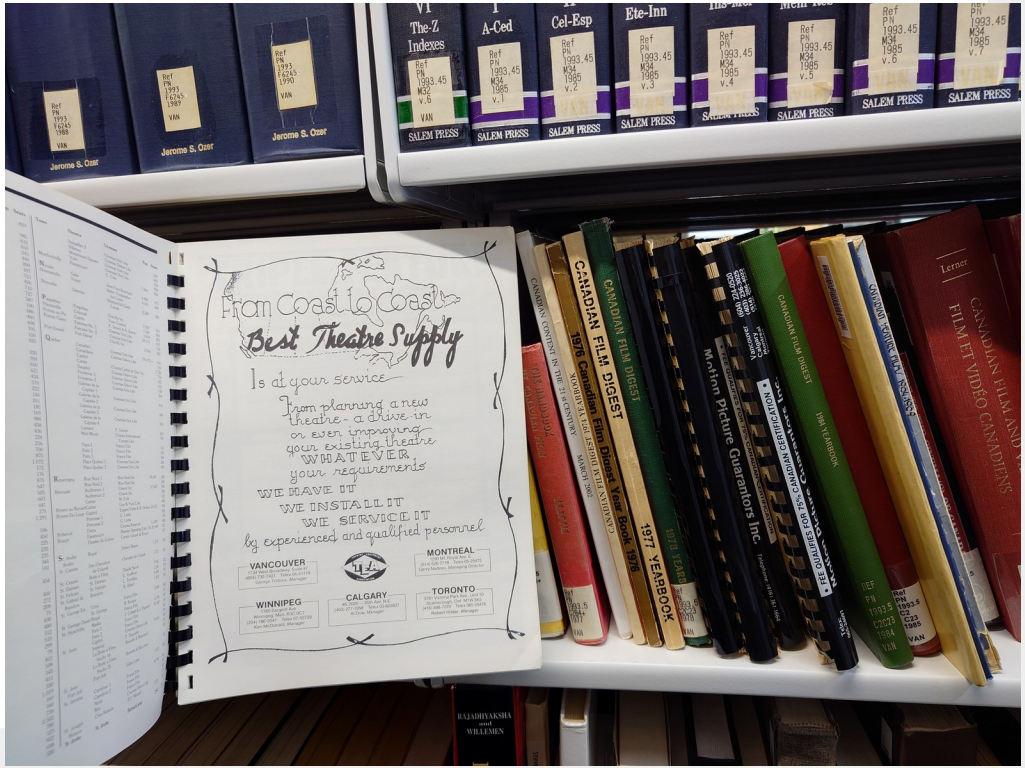


The filmmaker's handbook : a comprehensive guide for the digital age

Examples in the Library



Many years of reference materials, journals, magazines, etc. in print.



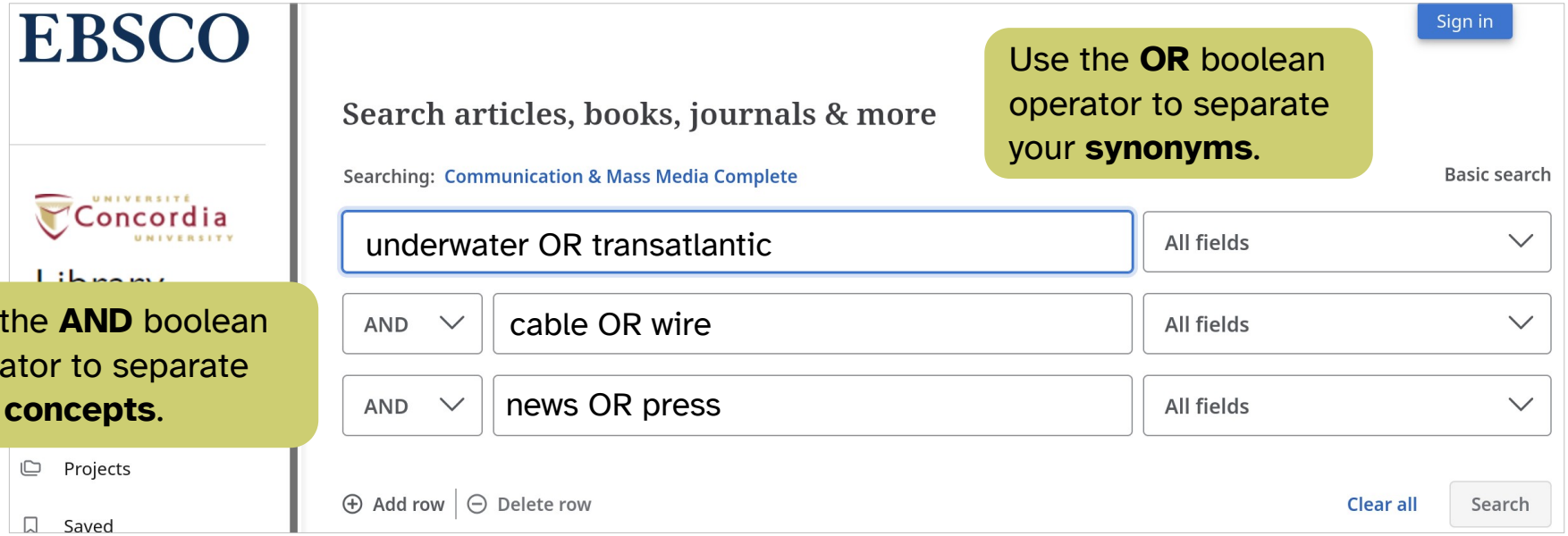
Library Search Process

2. Searching a Database

Your topics: What terms do people use?

children	colour broadcasting	TV programming
• kid • pre-teen • adolescent • youth	• color broadcasting • color television • broadcasting standards • black and white tv	• program • tv show • sitcom

Database Search Interface



The search expression:

(underwater OR transatlantic) AND (cable OR wire) AND (news OR press)

Activity: Search a database

1. Iterate your search expression
2. What kind of results does it produce?
3. How can you access them?
4. Where is the bibliographic information?

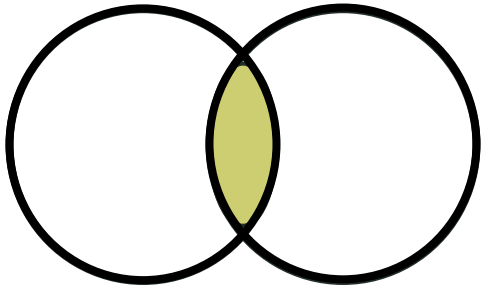
https://bit.ly/3XqE3Ol

How to Improve Search Results

1. Not enough results?
2. Too many results?
3. Irrelevant results?
4. Cannot access results?
5. Other?

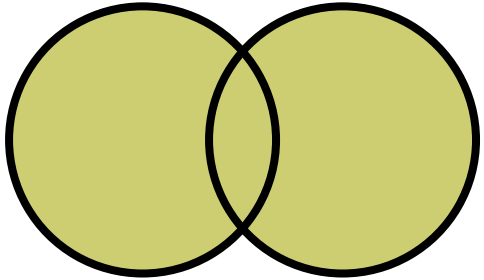
Boolean Operators

AND



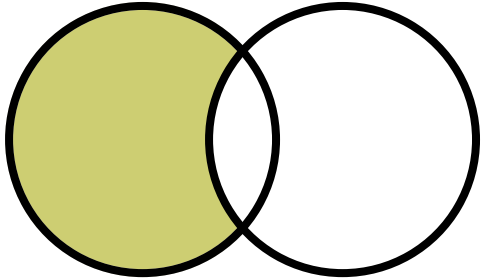
Narrows search

OR



Broadens search

NOT



Narrows search

Truncation & Phrases

Truncation *

activ* = activist OR activists OR activism

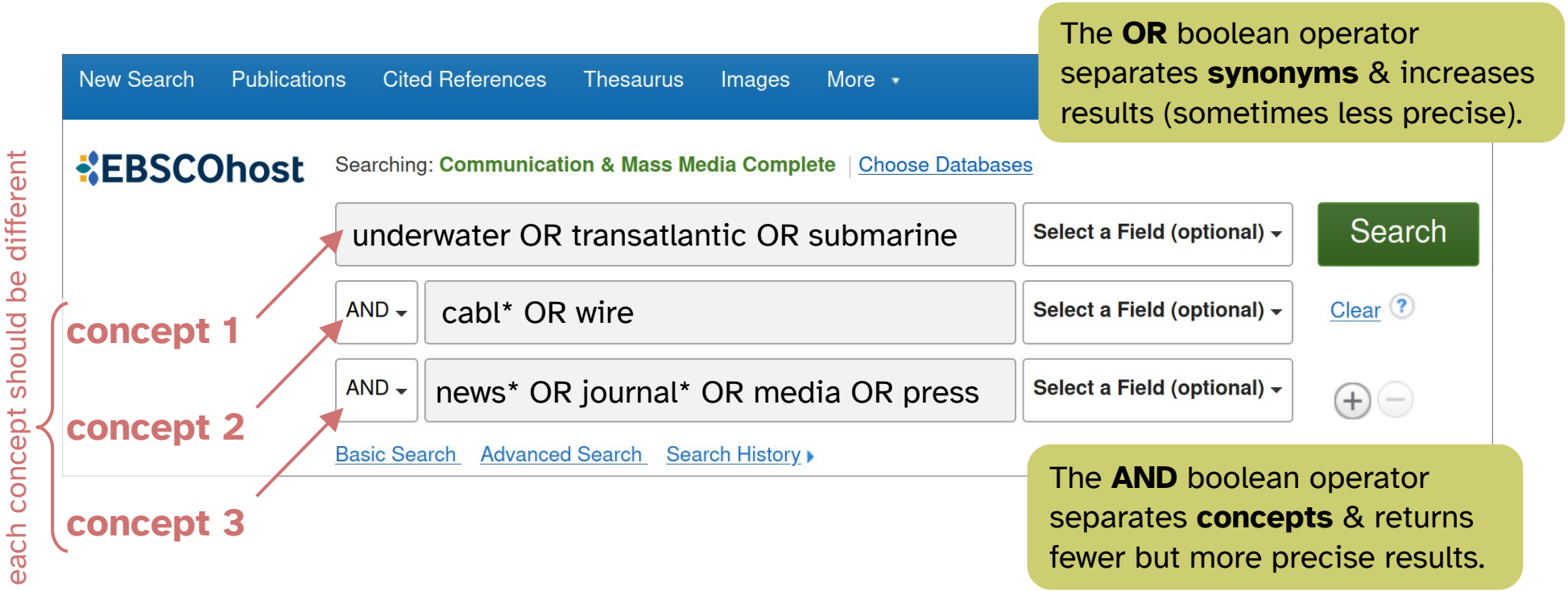
Specific phrase “ ”

“social media” = social media *(no words between)*

≠ social AND media

≠ Pride, R. A. (1995). How Activists and Media Frame Social Problems: Critical Events Versus Performance Trends for Schools. *Political Communication, 12*(1), 5–26. https://doi-org/10.1080/10584609.1995.9963052

Database Search Interface

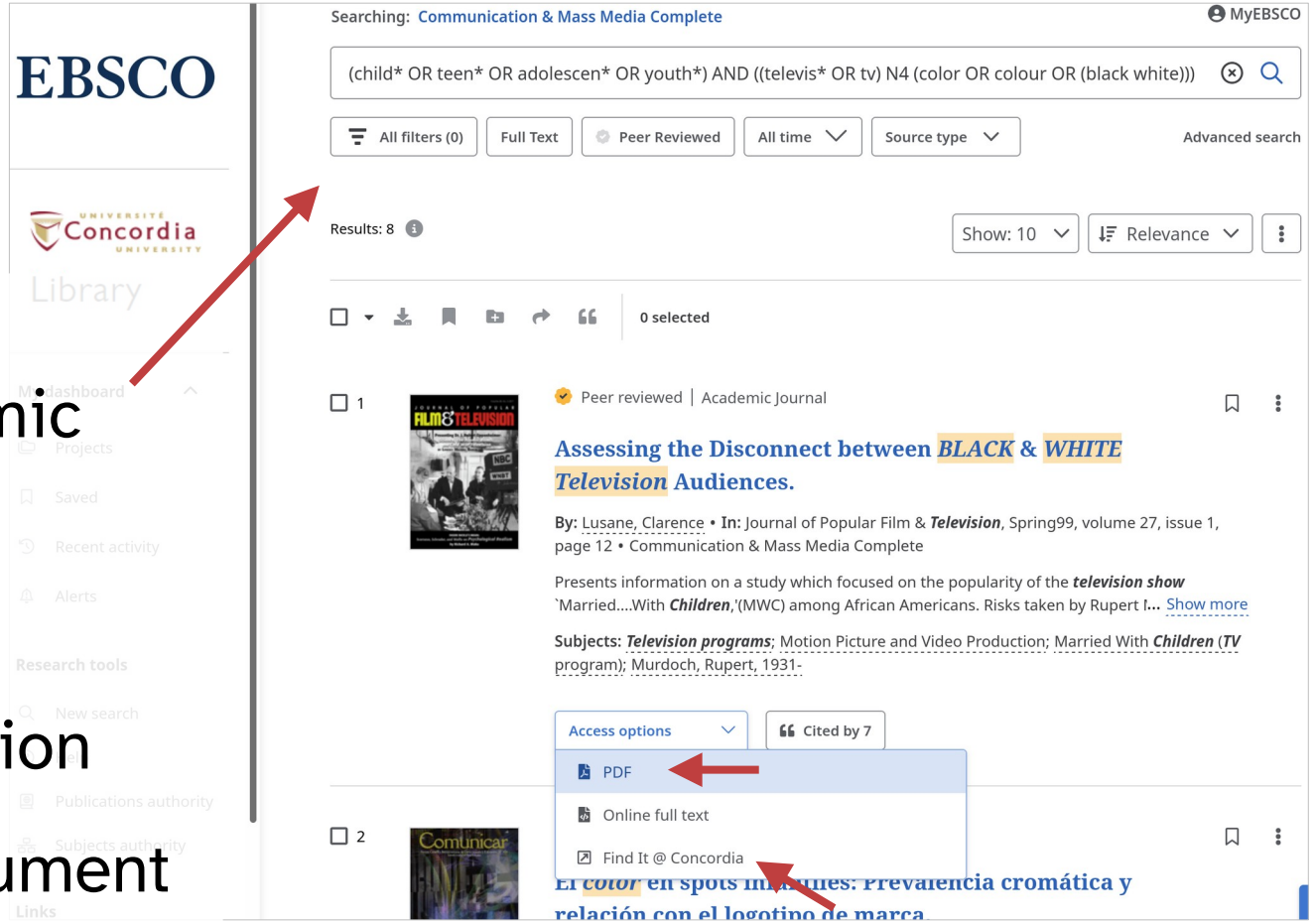


Or write the whole search expression on one line, using parentheses ( ) instead of the individual fields.

(underwater OR transatlantic OR submarine) AND (cabl* OR wire) AND (news* OR journal* OR media OR press)

DB Result Tips

1. Filter for academic results
2. Filter languages
3. Date of publication
4. Access the document



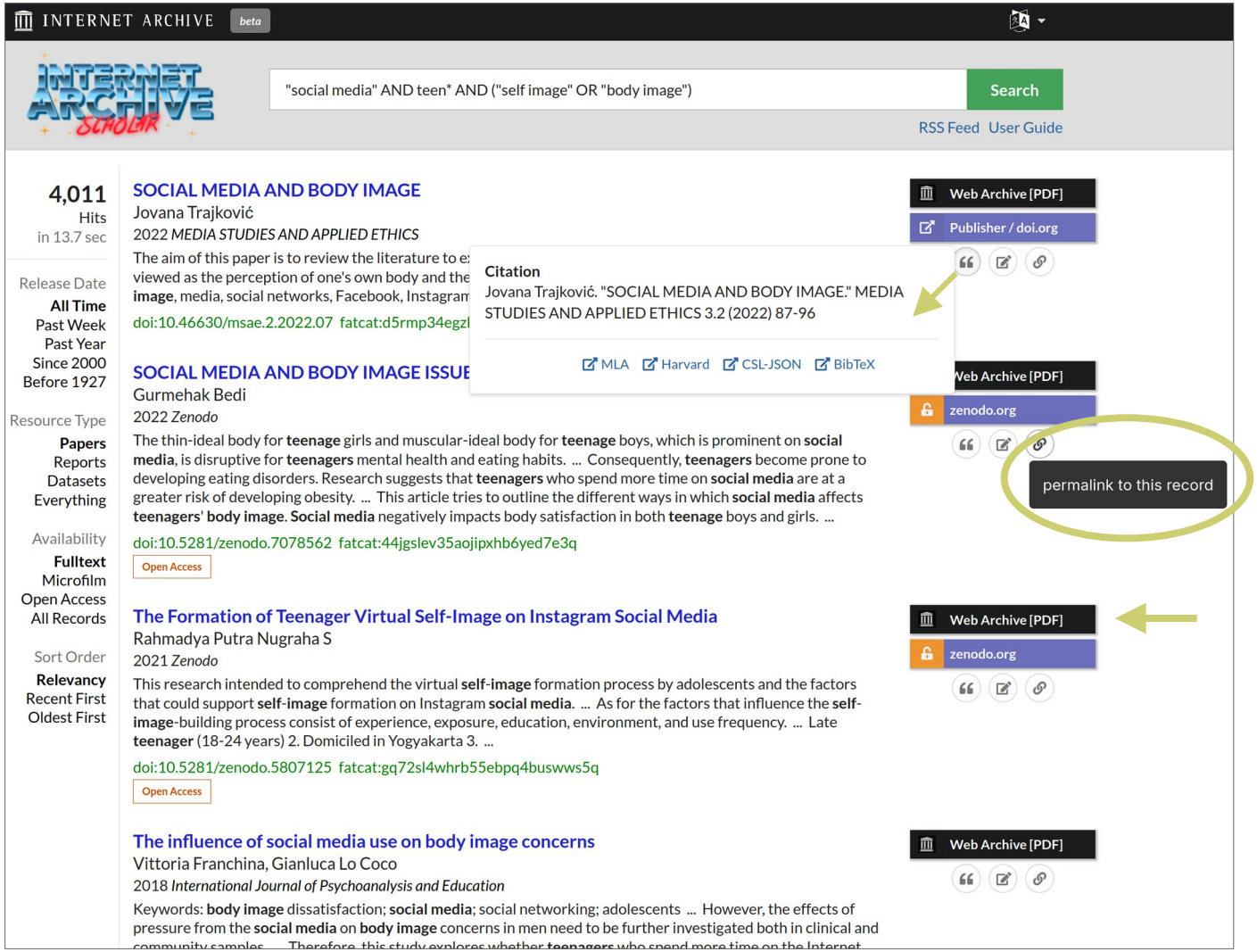
Activity: Distinguish article types



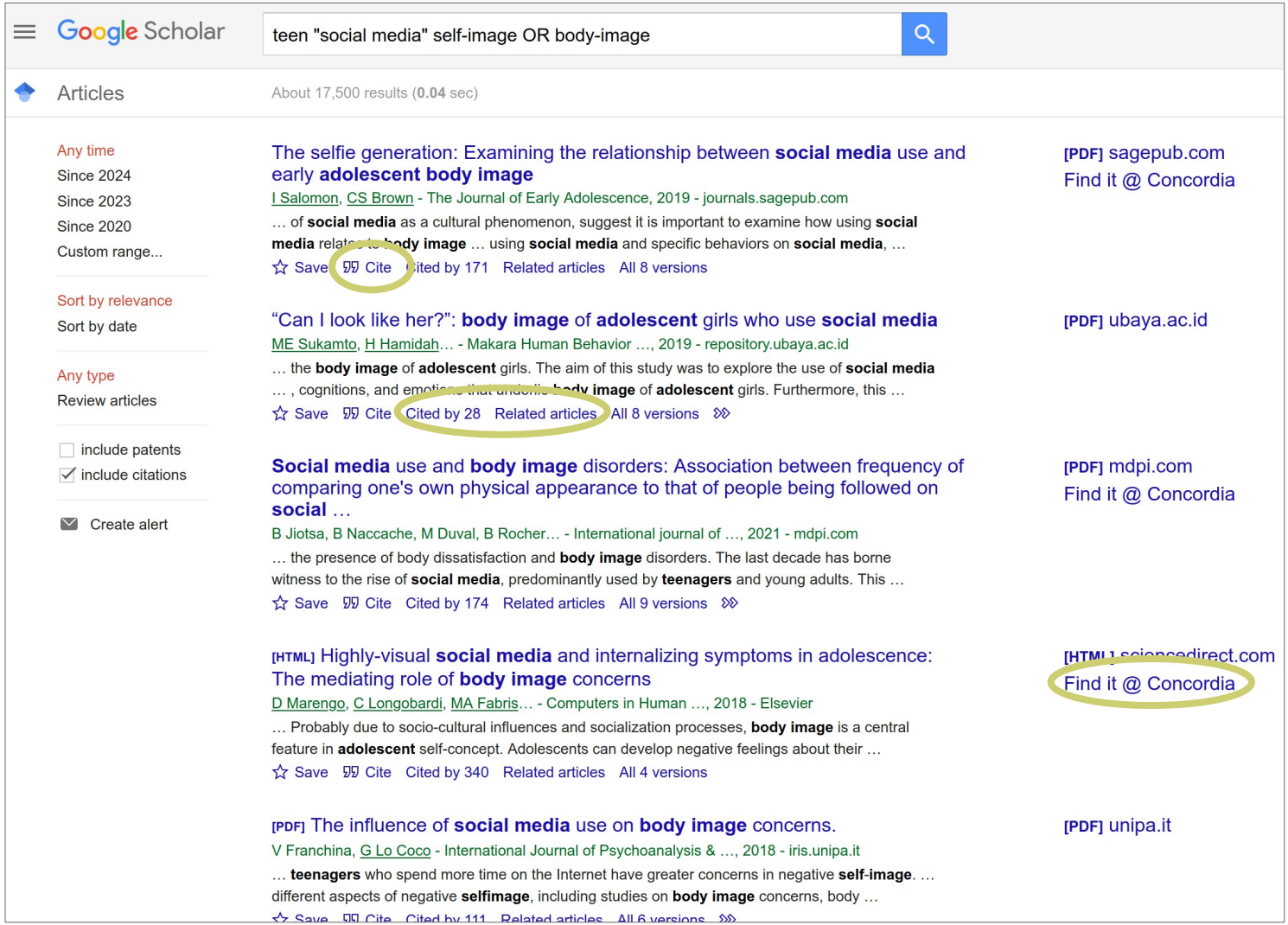
https://forms.gle/UmN9BCMDRoE5oqQs5

Additional Ways to Search

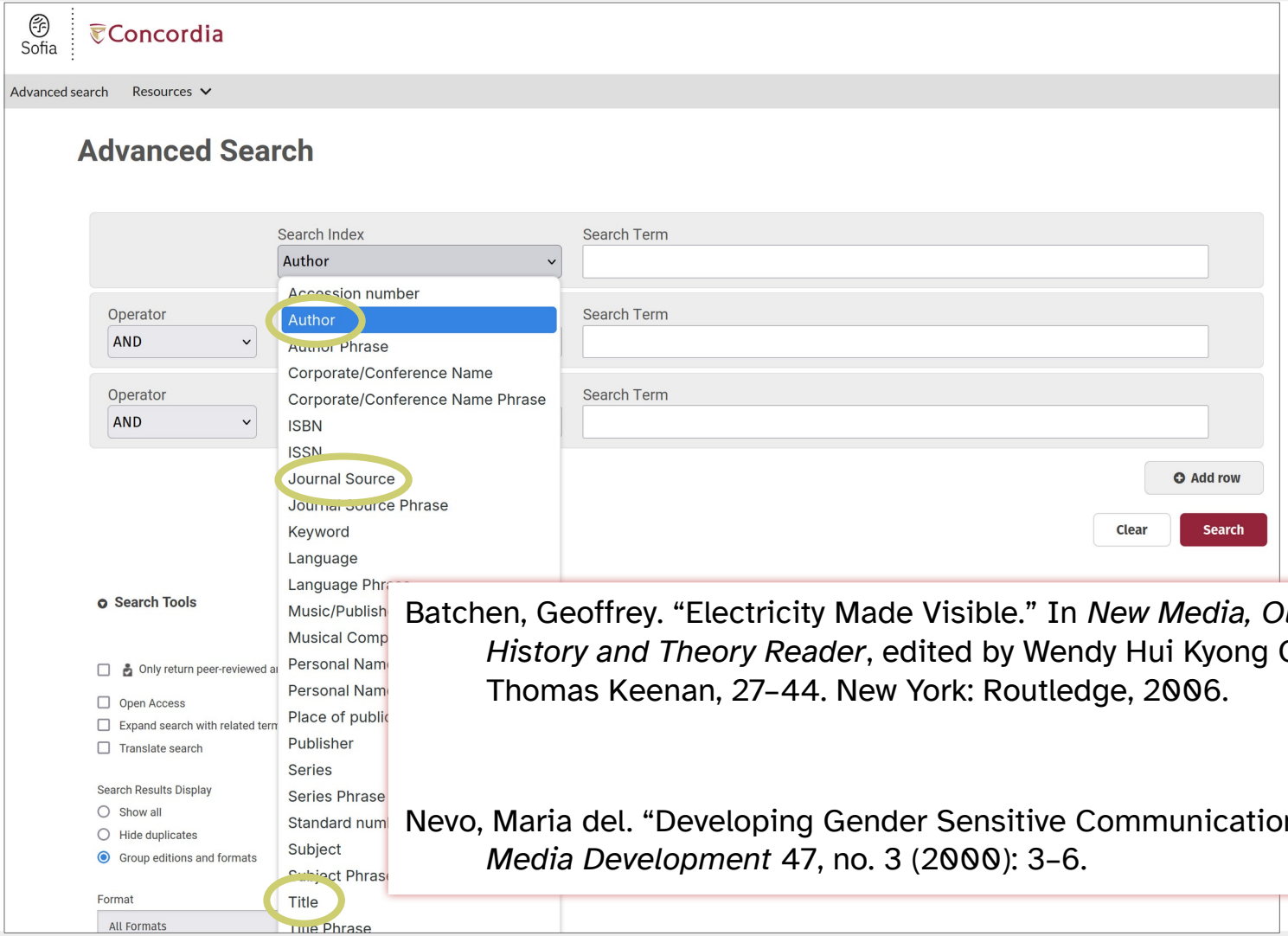
scholar.archive.org



scholar.google.com



Sofia: library.concordia.ca



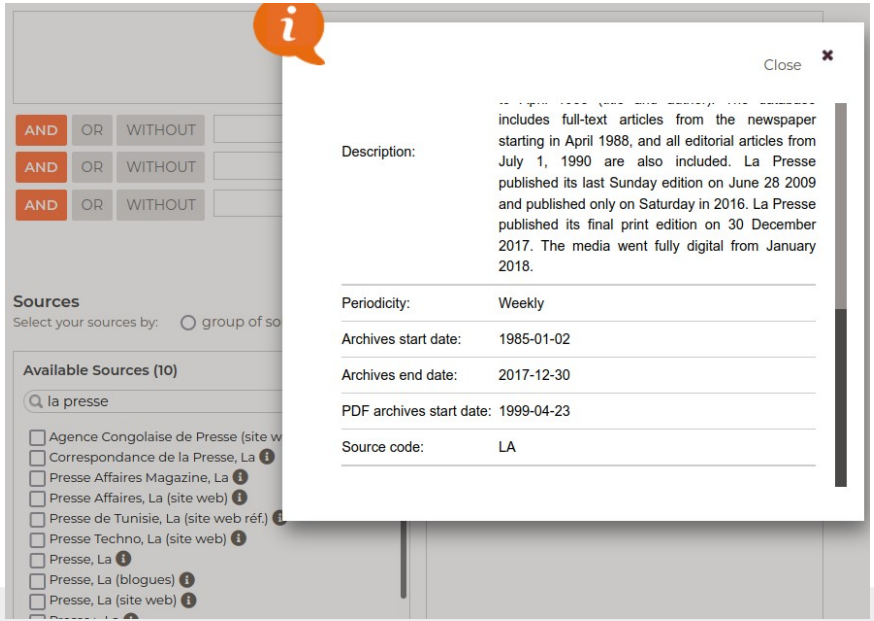
Batchen, Geoffrey. “Electricity Made Visible.” In *New Media, Old Media: A History and Theory Reader*, edited by Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan, 27–44. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Nevo, Maria del. “Developing Gender Sensitive Communication Policies.” *Media Development* 47, no. 3 (2000): 3–6.

Found something that isn’t a book?

La Presse

- Microfiche (1902 - 1987)
- Digitized (1864)
- Database (1985 - ?)





Tracking Your Sources & Bibliographic Information

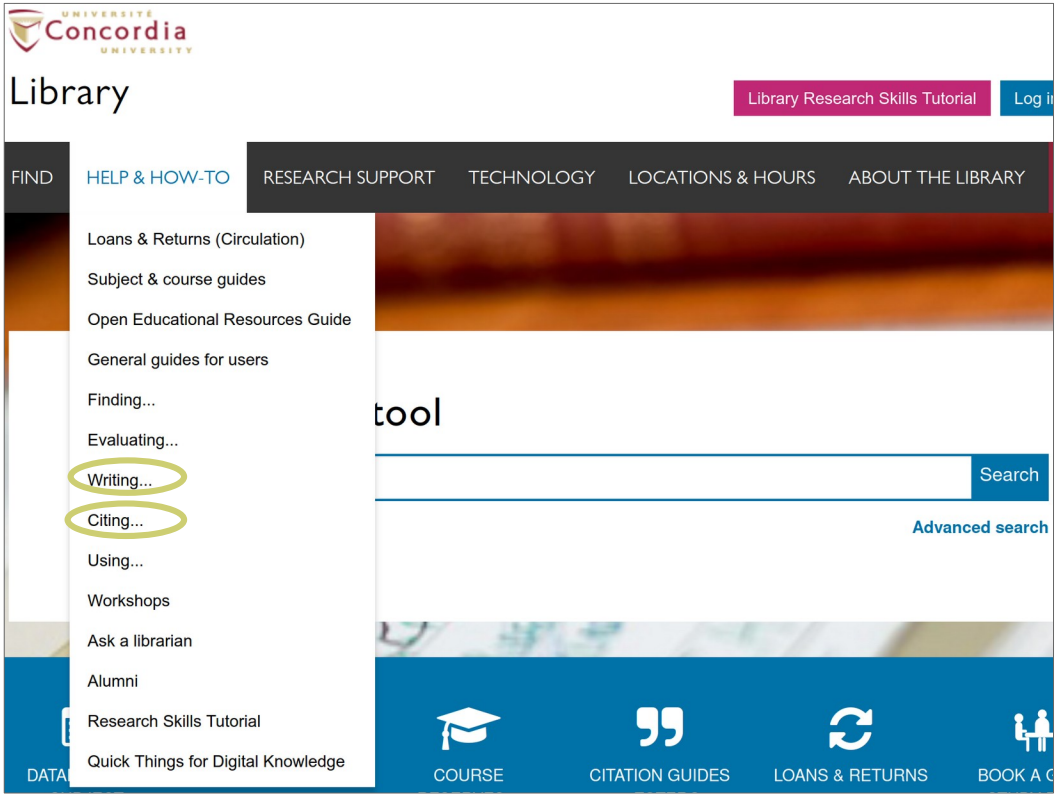
Making a bibliography

1. Style guides (MLA, Chicago, etc.)
   Library site's menu:
   Help & How to > Citing...

2. Capture bibliographic data
   DB **citation buttons**
   copy author, title, pub, date, source, etc.

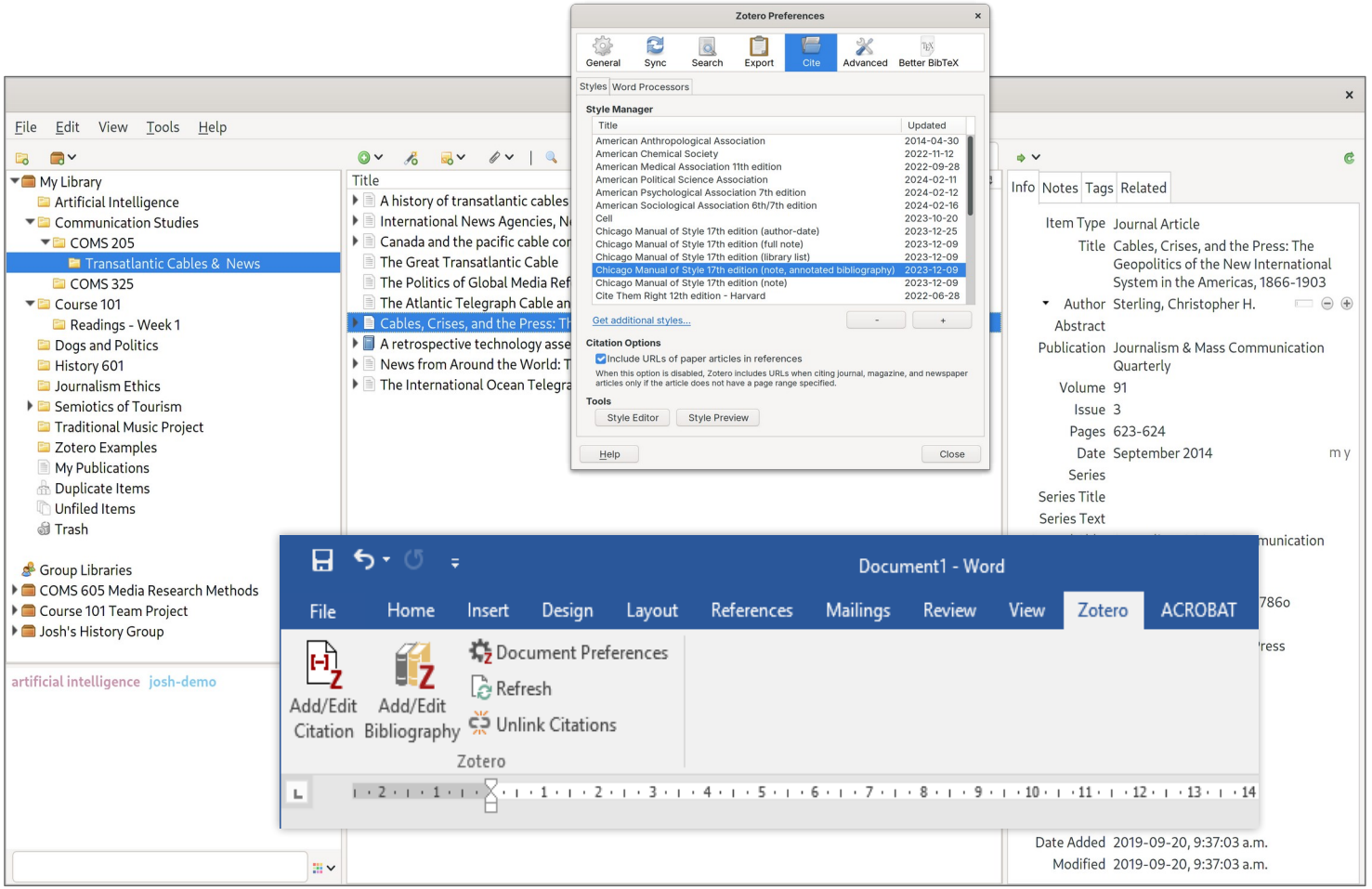
3. Writing guidance
   Library site's menu:
   Help & how-to > Writing > how to write an annotated bibliography

4. Software help
   zoterobib (**https://zbib.org**) &
   Zotero (https://zotero.org)



https://www.zotero.org

- Keep track of your sources
- Write notes about source documents
- Make bibliographies
- Cite easily while writing



Thank you. Questions?

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