ZU Libraries Workshop

Process of Choosing Your Databases:

The Good and Bad of Quickfind:
- It searches across a lot of our databases
- Quick and easy to find answers to the “Just need a couple of articles” question
- Good for current newspapers
- Does not search across all of our databases
- Will not find every article that we have access to
- Isn’t working from off-campus through the Extranet

My Recommendation: Search using an Aggregator in addition to your Subject Databases.

Aggregators -vs- Subject Databases -vs- Journal Collections -vs- Primary Source Databases

Aggregators are large interdisciplinary combinations of full text journals and journal abstracts, but ARE NOT COMPREHENSIVE in any one discipline. Think Lulu or Carrefour: they are big, have lots of variety, and all disciplines are represented, and have a good amount of fulltext articles. But they do not have everything that you will need.

Examples: EBSCO’s Academic Search Complete and Proquest Central

Subject Databases are indexes and abstracts that compile all of the journal literature in a given discipline. Think of these as boutique stores in the mall, like a shop that only sells video games or kitchen supplies. They focus on one area and that is all they do…but they do it very well. In addition to being comprehensive in their discipline, many include fulltext articles. Ask your librarian for recommended databases.

Examples: PsycINFO, Political Science Complete, Middle Eastern & Central Asian Studies, and Linguistic and Language Behavior Abstracts.

Journal Collections are databases that feature exclusively journals by a specific publisher (Sage) or by whatever contracts they have signed (JSTOR). This like a Patchi chocolate shop or an Apple store. They have their brand, and that is all you will find there. The good thing is that they are likely to be all fulltext. However, searching within these databases is not going to search across an entire discipline.

Examples: JSTOR, Sage, Taylor and Francis, and Emerald.

Primary Source Databases are a wide array of databases that are specialized in things like Historical Newspapers, Archives, Manuscripts, Government Documents, and Data. These can be extremely useful for interested researchers, though your research interests may or may not be covered in the primary source databases that we have access to. It is important to speak with your subject librarian to learn about which of these databases are relevant to your needs.