Conducting a Literature Search in Scopus

1. Go to the TAMU Libraries’ homepage (http://library.tamu.edu/index.html) and click on the Databases button.

2. Select the database Scopus. You can either use the search box at the top of the page to search for Scopus or you can select Scopus from the list of Popular Databases.
3. **Scopus** is a great multi-disciplinary database that gives you access to citations and abstracts from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference proceedings. When you do a search in Scopus, your results will give you the citation and abstract information from these sources. The full-text of these items will not be in Scopus, but **links are provided to get you to the full-text.**

I will use the example of searching for the topic “resident attitudes towards tourism” to show you how to use Scopus.

4. First, before you begin searching, **think about your topic!** You can’t put a whole sentence or long sentence fragment in the search box of a library database. You’ll get very few results, if any. Instead, you have to **break your topic down into keywords, brainstorm synonyms and related terms, and then use them with Boolean operators to create a search string.** You have to do the brainstorming because library databases will take you very literally and only look for the terms you input. So if you searched “youth,” you would miss the things that had “child,” “kids,” “teens,” “adolescents,” etc.

The **main Boolean operators you’ll use are AND and OR.** Anytime you connect two keywords with AND you are telling the database that anything that is returned from the search needs to have BOTH keywords present. If you connect two keywords with OR you are telling the database that EITHER of the keywords need to be present.

a. Break your topic into keywords: resident attitudes towards tourism

   **Keywords:** residents, attitudes, tourism

b. Brainstorm related terms and synonyms.

   residents – locals, stakeholders

   attitudes – opinions, thoughts, feelings,

   tourism – tourists, visitors, vacationers, travelers

c. Create your search string by connecting the keywords with Boolean operators (AND, OR)

   *If I started with just my original keywords I would search*

   residents AND attitudes AND tourism

   *To expand this search string to include my synonyms and related terms, I would use OR to connect the synonyms

   (residents OR locals OR stakeholders) AND (attitudes OR opinions OR thoughts OR feelings) AND (tourism OR tourists OR visitors OR vacationers OR travelers)

   This second search string yields a lot more results, and takes into account other ways researchers might be talking about this topic.
5. Now that you’ve developed a good search string, you can enter this into the search box in Scopus. Note: the default setting searches the article title, article abstract, and the article keywords. It is *not* doing a full-text search of the article, and Scopus doesn’t have that capability. However, the title, abstract, and keywords are good places to search – if your keywords don’t show up in those places most likely the article won’t be too relevant to your topic.

6. Now that you have a set of search results, you need to go through and select articles. You can use some of the tools built into Scopus to help.

Use the **Refine** categories to help you narrow by year, author, subject area, and more.

**Document Type** is particular helpful – it will allow you to limit the results to specific formats, like articles. You can exclude documents types that aren’t as useful for your search.

**Find Text @ TAMU** links will connect you to online versions of the article if we have it in our collection. If we don’t it will allow you to make a request through Get It For Me, our free interlibrary loan service.

If you use a citation management program like RefWorks, you can select articles and use the **Export** function.

Contact Sarah Bankston if you need further help!

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