Introduction to PsycINFO (Ovid Platform)
Brown Bag Workshops – 2014
USU Learning Resource Center
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Who can I contact for Help?
The LRC can answer most questions at lrc.ref@usuhs.edu, 301-319-4039.
What Is PsycINFO?

PsycINFO, indexed by the American Psychological Association (APA), includes over 3 million records for psychology-related publications from the 1800s to the present.

80% of PsycINFO’s content comes from a collection of 2,450+ journals, 99% of which are peer-reviewed. Citation for books, book chapters, dissertations, and other secondary publications comprised the remainder of the database.

You can access PsycINFO via the LRC homepage, which provides full-text access to articles in electronic journals available at USUHS through a Link-Out feature.

The PsycINFO database is offered at USU on the Ovid platform. Other institutions may use EBSCO, Dialog, ProQuest, APA PsycNet, or other platforms.

Accessing PsycINFO

You can access PsycINFO from the LRC’s homepage: www.lrc.usuhs.edu.

- Click on Resources, go to Browse by Category and select Indexes/Databases. Next, select resources beginning with “P” and click PsycINFO.

  OR

- Type psycinfo in the Search Our Collections search box and click Search. Note: For quick access, click Save to Favorites.

Advanced Ovid Search Feature

When you open PsycINFO you will be brought to the Advanced Ovid Search page with the Map Term to Subject Heading option selected.

- To begin searching, enter a term (keywords or phrases). You may use vernacular or layman’s language. PsycINFO will interpret your terms using Ovid’s Natural Language Query algorithm.

**Note:** When searching PsycINFO using the Advanced Search feature, you may prefer to identify each concept and search for them separately. You may combine your topics afterwards using the search history feature.

Identifying Search Terms

Type your first concept into the search box and hit Search. PsycINFO will automatically match your phrase to a list of Subject Headings. Subject Headings are a controlled vocabulary that makes searches more consistent and efficient.

- Once you click Search, PsycINFO will provide a list of the best matches to your term from its list of Subject Headings.

**Subject Headings Notes:**

1) PsycINFO utilizes the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms®, which was developed and is maintained by the American Psychological Association (APA).

2) The thesaurus contains more than 8,400 terms and cross-references specific to psychology. Users will find more precise subject terms compared to PubMed’s MeSH or EMABSE’s Emtree controlled vocabularies.

3) The listing of terms and cross-references are specific to If you would prefer to search without subject headings you may uncheck the default Map Term to Subject Heading box and PsycINFO will perform a keyword search rather than use its controlled vocabulary.

- Click on one of the resulting terms to view entry in the thesaurus.
- You may wish to view the Scope Note icon to learn more about the term.
- Broader and narrower terms (if available) are listed. Click on the Explode checkbox to include all narrower terms.
• Click on the **Focus** checkbox to refine your results to where the term is a major concept.

![Focus checkbox]

• Select the term(s) of interest using the checkboxes on the left-hand side of the page.

  ⇒ Combine your terms using the **OR/AND** drop-down box. Click **Continue** to search for more terms.

![OR/AND drop-down box]

**Notes:**
1) In general, you will wish to combine your terms with the OR connector when your initial search consists of only one concept.
2) When using PsycINFO avoid clicking the browser’s **Back** button. It can cause erratic results.

**Search History**

Use the **Search History** to combine searches or to return to previous search results you wish to print or save. The search history is a great way to combine multiple concepts to narrow your results.

• Click to expand the Search History box. As you view your results, check the boxes beside the searches you want. Use the gray **And** or **Or** buttons at the bottom of the screen to combine your searches.

![Search History box]
Notes:
1) Selecting the And will result in a smaller number of hits than either category on its own.
2) Selecting the Or will give you more results than either single category.

To remove an item from the Search History:
⇒ Hover over More>> and select Delete.
OR
⇒ Select using the checkboxes and click Remove Selected.

Note: To move the Search History bar to a more convenient position on the screen, click and hold the “textured” section on the right side of the bar and drag it to the desired location.

Viewing and Working with Results

Refining Results

The Search Information box, located on each search results screen, shows how PsycINFO’s algorithm interpreted your search terms and offers options for narrowing the search.

• Use the Sort By drop-down menu to sort your results by year of publication or author.
• The Limits tool appears under the search box, click to expand.
⇒ You may restrict results to full text, studies in humans, or a particular date range.
⇒ Click on Additional Limits for more options such as Languages, Star Ranking, and Intended Audience.
⇒ A parenthetical notation near the number of results on the results page indicates when limits are in effect.

**Note:** Limits are not “sticky.” You must re-apply them if you wish to use them for a new search.

**Abstracts**
- To view abstracts, click the prompt under the citation of interest.
- OR
- Check the View All Abstract box located next to Sort by feature.

**Full Text**
- When full-text is available, articles will have a PDF icon. Click on the icon to view.
- You can also click the Check USU Availability icon to check for the article in the USU collection.

**Find Similar Results**
- The Find Similar button at the bottom of each citation runs a new search to retrieve similar articles. Results are ordered by relevance, not date.
- The Find Citing Articles button at the bottom of each citation runs a search to retrieve articles that have cited your article of interest.
  ⇒ This feature can help you determine the impact of your article on subsequent research and allows you to discover articles written after your current article on the same topic.

**Actions (Print, Email, Export or Save)**
- You may preserve your PsycINFO results through several methods: display, print, email, or save.
  ⇒ First, check the box to the left of the item. Then click the button at the top of the page that corresponds to the desired action.
Basic Search

The **Basic Search** in PsycINFO provides fast access to results but bypasses the Subject Heading Term mapping provided in the Advanced Search.

- To conduct a basic search, enter concepts (keywords or phrases) in the search box.

  ⇒ The connector **AND** is assumed if no other connecting word is used. If you wish to use connectors (AND, NOT, OR), they must be in upper case.

**Truncation & Wildcards:**

1) To truncate on a string of characters, use the dollar sign ($) or the asterisk (*). For example, *physic*$ will retrieve *physician*, *physicians* and *physical*.

2) The question mark (?) can serve as a wildcard character. For example, wom?n will retrieve woman and women.

- On basic searches, results are ranked with one to five stars. These indicate Ovid PsycINFO’s rating of the record’s relevance to the search terms.
Searching using Fields

Search Fields
• Click on Search Fields tab and enter your terms in the box. Select the fields you wish to search.
• Hover over a field on the list to use the + and x signs to add or remove them from My Fields.

Multi-Field Search
• Enter your search term in the box, and then select the field to be searched from the drop-down menu.
  ⇒ Use the left-hand drop-down menu to combine your terms using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT).
  ⇒ Use the Add New Row button if you wish to search additional fields.

Find Citation (Searching for Single Articles)
The Find Citation matcher requires only a few elements of a citation to retrieve a complete PsycINFO record. This tool is very useful when you have only a partial citation (i.e. from a conference presentation or a peer’s recommendation).
• This feature is listed among the search options.
• Enter the journal title, year volume, issue, first page, or author’s name. Any of these items may be omitted or truncated.
My Account

The My Account feature allows you to save search strategies and results, create result filters, and set-up AutoAlerts. Your customized settings will follow you to any computer simply by logging in to your Personal Account.

- The My Account link is located in the upper-right corner of the PsycINFO screen.
- First time users must register. Click on Create a new Personal Account.
- If you've already registered for a personal account, you can simply log in to the service.
- PsycINFO recognizes when you are logged into your account.

Saving Searches

To save a PsycINFO search strategy, you must be logged in to My Account.

- Go to Search History. Click on the title to expand the box if necessary.
- Click the More link on your search line and select Save.

- You will be prompted to name the search and select a type from the drop-down menu.
- The available types are Permanent (default), Temporary (24 hours), or AutoAlert.

AutoAlerts

The AutoAlert feature saves your search and provides automatic email updates when new matches are found.

- To set up an AutoAlert, select the option on the drop-down menu, as described above, or by hovering over the More>> link on the Search History page.

⇒ You can set a delivery schedule, “dedupe” (remove duplicate results), and format alerts.