

Searching Databases in EBSCOhost

Advanced Search Techniques

Searchable Fields and Field Codes

in Select a Field (optional) ▼
 AND ▼ in Select a Field (optional) ▼
 AND ▼ in Select a Field (optional) ▼

Find the searchable fields and field codes here. For a description of each field see the table below.

Field Code	Field	Description	Example
There is no code. This is called an 'unqualified search.'	Select a Field (Optional)	Performs a search for every word in the following fields only: author, subject, keywords, title (including source title) and abstract, NOT FULL TEXT.	
TX	All Text	Performs a search of all the database's searchable fields including every document's full text.	TX global warming
AU	Author	Performs a search for all names (and words) in every document's author field.	AU McKibben
TI	Title	Performs a search of all words in every document's title field.	TI Kyoto
SU	Subject Terms	Performs a search of all words in every document's subject headings field.	SU climatic changes
SO	Source	Performs a search of all words in every publication's title field.	SO Nature
AB	Abstract	Performs a search for words in a document's abstract summary.	AB glacial ice
IS	ISSN	Performs an exact search for a publication's ISSN number.	IS 00280836

Most documents in EBSCO databases do not have keywords!

Boolean Operators

This is where you find the Boolean operators. For a definition of each, see below.

in Select a Field (optional) ▼
 AND ▼ in Select a Field (optional) ▼
 AND ▼ in Select a Field (optional) ▼

AND – combines search terms so that each search result contains all of the terms. For example, "global warming" AND "glacial ice" finds articles that contain *both terms*.

OR – combines search terms so that each search result contains at least one of the terms. For example, "global warming" OR "climate change" finds results that contain *either term*.

NOT – excludes terms so that each search result does not contain any of the terms that follow it. For example, "global warming" NOT economics finds results that contain the term *global warming* but NOT the term *economics*.

Boolean Operators and Parentheses

Parentheses are important and help to control a search. Parentheses are recommended when using more than two operators. *Without* parentheses, a search is executed using the following two rules simultaneously:

**AND AND NOT HAVE PRIORITY OVER OR.
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT**

Therefore a search without parentheses that uses **and** and **or** such as:

dog OR cat AND show OR parade

will actually search:

((dog OR cat) AND show) OR parade

You will get results that have the word DOG and the word SHOW (not necessarily together) or the word CAT and the word SHOW (not necessarily together), but you will also get all documents that contain the word PARADE alone. This is not a very accurate or relevant search!

So, there is another important, two-part rule:

ELEMENTS THAT ARE ENCLOSED IN PARENTHESES ARE EXECUTED FIRST, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT. ELEMENTS INSIDE INNER PARENTHESES ARE EXECUTED FIRST.

In EBSCOhost databases, each line is like an implied set of parentheses.

(<input type="text"/>)	in	Select a Field (optional)	▼
AND	▼	<input type="text"/>	in	Select a Field (optional)	▼
AND	▼	<input type="text"/>	in	Select a Field (optional)	▼

This Ominfile search, therefore:

Notice that only words in the abstract fields are being searched.

Notice the AND operator has been typed in manually. The operator does not have to be capitalized but doing so may help keep things straight.

wetlands AND estuaries	AB Abstract	▼
AND ▼	global warming OR climate change	AB Abstract
AND ▼	<input type="text"/>	Select a Field (opti... ▼

is the same as:

(wetlands AND estuaries) AND (global warming OR climate change)

The result of this search will be documents that have **both** the word 'wetlands' **and** the word 'estuaries' **and** the phrase 'global warming' **or** the phrase 'climate change' somewhere in the abstract. This is a very precise search and only 2 documents were found; however, both were very RELEVANT.

You could also do this search this way:

Type everything on one line with parentheses.

Searching: **OmniFile Full Text Mega (H.W. Wilson)** | [Choose Databases](#)

(wetlands AND estuaries) AND (global warming OR climate change)	AB Abstract	▼	Search
AND	<input type="text"/>	Select a Field (opti... ▼	

When using Boolean OR, avoid doing your search like this:

Searching: **OmniFile Full Text Mega (H.W. Wilson)** | [Choose Databases](#)

wetlands	AB Abstract	Search	
AND	estuaries		AB Abstract
AND	global warming		AB Abstract
OR	climate change		AB Abstract

+ -

(wetlands) AND (estuaries) AND (global warming) **OR** (climate change)

Because it is really the same as:

((wetlands AND estuaries) AND global warming) OR climate change

You'll find over 20,000 results, but only a few will be relevant. (This happens because of the rules previously mentioned.) *All* documents with the word 'climate change' anywhere in the abstract are retrieved. That is a lot of records and most will not be relevant.

Phrase Searching

When words are enclosed by double quotation marks, the exact phrase is searched.

Wildcards

? – Use the ? symbol to represent *each* unknown character. For example:

1. Type **wom?n** to find **woman** or **women**.
2. Type **theat??** to find all documents containing **theatre** or **theater**.

- Use the # symbol to represent *each* or *no* character. For example:

1. Type **colo#r** to find all documents containing **color** or **colour**.

Truncations

***** - Use the * symbol at the *end* of a word root to find all ending variants. For example:

1. Type **immigra*** to get **immigrant** or **immigrants** or **immigration**