

What is a Keyword?

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Keywords & Subjects are different ways to search databases (indexes), online library catalogues or World Wide Web search engines

Keyword Searching

Searches for occurrences of a word in online text, but will not look for SUBJECTS. General keywords will search all text in an online document (title, author, table of contents, etc.), but often keyword searches can be limited to occurrences of a word in individual fields (e.g.: words in a title only).

PROS:	CONS:
Keywords allow you to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ make up your own terms ▪ enter topics, artists' names, titles of books or articles, a publishers' name, dates ▪ join more than one together with Booleans 	Keyword searches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ do not look up topics! So you often get False Hits

Modifying Keywords

1. Joining Keywords (Booleans)

	Effects on search terms:	Used to:
AND	retrieves items with all keyword terms	LIMIT search
OR	retrieves any combination of keyword terms (functions as and/or)	EXPAND search
NOT	any keyword after this Boolean will not be searched	LIMIT search

EXAMPLE: searching the Database Art Full Text:

▪ ontario and college and art and design	retrieves 13 items
▪ ontario or college or art or design	retrieves 321,544 items

2. Truncating Keywords

	Effects on search terms:	Used to:
*	searches any number of letters after a root word EXAMPLE: art* retrieves art, arts, artists, artisan	EXPAND search
?	searches for any number of letters within a root word EXAMPLE: wom?n retrieves women, woman, womyn, etc.	EXPAND search

Using Keywords

1. OCAD Library catalogue:

- **General:** searches for any word in all fields, including title, subject and author
- **Subject:** search for one or more word (in any order) from the Library of Congress subjects used to **describe what a book is about**. See other guides: “What is a Subject?” or “Library of Congress Call Numbers” for more information
- **Title:** search for one or more word (in any order) from the title of a book, video, DVD
- **Name:** search first or last name

(in any order) of an author or artist. NOTE: artists or designers can be listed as “authors” of an exhibition

2. Databases: have a default keyword search, but look for **Advance Search** screens that can offer more searching options, then look for:

- **drop down lists** OR
- words like: **all fields** or **full text** OR
- **buttons** OR **radio boxes**

Revising a Keyword Search

If you have **too many** records:

- **add** new terms to search box
- use AND to connect terms
- search using Subject Words (not Keywords)
- use less general terms

EXAMPLE: instead of “modernist and architecture” try specific styles like “brutalism” “international” etc.

If you have **too few**:

- **delete** one or more terms
- use OR to connect terms
- check spelling of artist names using the Grove Dictionary of Art (in print or online)
- think of other terms that may be more appropriate

EXAMPLE: the term “dwellings” is often used only for pre-historic abodes and/or working class homes