

# Information Literacy Lesson of the Month

## Accessing Information Navigating Databases



After students gain some experience effectively [navigating the Internet](#), the next step is to locate information via databases. Although databases are accessible through the Internet, one part of this lesson is to emphasize the two are very different. Moreover, most databases come at a fee, often too expensive for the individual consumer to purchase. For this reason, libraries, universities, and other public and private organizations usually foot the bill for databases that their patrons or employees can use free of charge.

Some highlights of this lesson include:

- Database nuts and bolts
  - What is a database?
  - Where are databases found?
  - Why use them?
- Database coverage
- Database composition
  - Records
  - Fields
- Strategies for searching databases
  - Boolean operators
  - Truncations and wildcards
  - Nesting
- Cool “tricks” for searching more effectively

Click below  
to visit  
Tye  
Library's  
very own  
**DATABASES!**

Hand-outs include a detailed chart featuring Boolean operators and highlighting the most commonly used truncations and wildcards used for more effective searching.

Toward the end of this lesson I spend a bit of time demonstrating (I do wish we had the capability to have students on the computers simultaneous to my instruction, but that isn't possible with our current technology) helpful features databases offer, followed by some discussion on how many “hits” (record finds) are “enough” for any serious search.

Most, if not all, databases allow users to save items and will often provide bibliographical citations in several formats including MLA, APA, Turbian and Chicago. Databases such as ProQuest even have mechanisms available for e-mailing entire articles or their bibliographic information, or creating a webpage containing links to saved materials. These are all features students will hopefully appreciate as they do more sophisticated research.

I cannot stress enough the advantages gained by using databases as an essential part of any research. They are by far more reliable and consistent than the Internet, and house fathomless amounts of information just ripe for the picking. [Try one!](#)

**Tyee Complex Library**  
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"The library is the place in the school that serves all students. You don't have to try out, as you do for sports. You don't have to buy an instrument, as you do for music. You just have to walk in the door."

*Ellie Goldstein- Erickson, vice president in charge of legislation for the California School Library Association*

[WWW.HSD401.ORG/TYEE](http://WWW.HSD401.ORG/TYEE)