Social Sciences Index Tip Sheet
Laurence McKinley Gould Library, Carleton College

Basic Search

Natural language
Designed to help novice searchers get better results, this search uses algorthymns to interpret search terms. Simply enter a phrase or sentence as it would be spoken and the system returns your results in order of relevance.

Boolean
This search offers the experienced searcher the control of searches that use Boolean logic. Enter a contructed search string using Boolean operators (and, or, not, in), proximity, relational, or concept operators, or field codes (see online help for details on these and other advanced search options).

Example Searches
incentives for pollution abatement in California
(pollution<near>abate*) and (py >=2001)

Tip:
The Help button in SSI is the place to go for detailed information about searching.

Advanced Search

Use the dropdown menus to determine how entered terms are searched.

Keyword searches the following fields for your terms and displays results in date order:
subject, title, abstract, author, journal name
All - Smart Search (the default) searches the same fields plus the Thesaurus “use for” entries and displays in relevance order.

Thesaurus

Items in SSI are described with terms from a controlled vocabulary (not unlike LC Subject Headings in the library catalog). Search the thesaurus to identify terms, which will be displayed in a hierarchy of broader and narrower terms.

Browse

When uncertain of a spelling, Browsing allows you to search from an alphabetical list for fields like Subject, Journal Name, or Author.

Q: “Why did my search for public transit retrieve a record about publicity in transition?”

A: Terms entered in the Basic and Advanced search screens are automatically stemmed. This means that the database retrieves all records that include the specific term plus terms that use said term as a stem. For example:

employ retrieves employment, employee, employer, employed

To search a term exactly as entered, enclose it in quote marks.
Social Sciences Index from WilsonWeb:
Interpreting the Search Results Page

This box displays your search terms. To revise this search, use the button in the lower left corner.

This button presents various options for output of search results or marked items.

Results are displayed in order of relevancy by default. Customize the display to sort by other factors.

This number indicates which page of results you are viewing. By default, 10 hits are shown per page. See upper right corner for number of search results.

# of search results or hits

Legend of icons used on page.

Search terms are bolded in results.

Change features of the display such as how many records appear per page, or the order in which records are sorted.