

More than a google search – Thematic and systematic literature research

Objectives:

- Breaking down your topic into useful search terms (under consideration of synonyms, umbrella terms and subordinate terms, ...)
- Creating and maintaining a list of search terms or a search matrix with your acquired search terms
- Using linking options / using placeholders correctly
- Applying useful search queries and researching databases

Creating a search matrix

Topic example: "Social media and its impact on teenagers"

Aspects	Social media	Teenagers	Impact
Synonyms	social networks social platforms social web	adolescents	effect
Umbrella terms	internet, web 2.0	youth young person young people	socialization development
Subordinate terms	WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, X, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok	girls boys students	behaviour negative habits
Related terms	digital world online content influencers	puberty child children	media usage social psychology
Other languages	Soziales Netzwerk Soziale Medien	Kinder Jugendliche Heranwachsende	Auswirkung Einfluss Folgen

Useful tools for creating and expanding your search matrix:

- First try searching in the Katalog plus
- Keywords from individual search results or the keywords on the right in the filter options bar provide new search terms
- Use indices of catalogues and databases / thesauri of databases
- The search matrix also serves as documentation of your research

More than a google search – Thematic and systematic literature research

Linking search terms:

Using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT):

- **AND**
Search terms are linked using “AND”. Both search terms need to appear. Normally, leaving a space between the search terms should suffice. (e.g. Katalog plus: „*biology chemistry*“)
- **OR**
Search terms are linked using “OR”. The search results will contain either one of or both search terms. Therefore, the number of results is expanded.
(e.g. Katalog plus: „*biology | chemistry*“)
- **NOT**
Search terms are excluded from the search using “NOT”. The search is limited to a more specific field.
(e.g. Katalog plus: „*biology - chemistry*“)

Especially when researching in “Articles & more” or directly within a database you will receive a large number of results as not only books but also articles from journals and other contents are listed. In these cases, it will be useful to link search terms in the best way possible. Please note the specific logical operators when accessing a database. For the Katalog plus see the examples above.

Using placeholders (truncation / masking)

By using a placeholder, you can replace multiple characters of a search term. This is called truncation.

- **Right truncation:** a predetermined symbol replaces the end of the word:
Example: “*environ**” finds “environment, environmental, ...” and other words beginning with “environ” but ending differently.
- **Left truncation:** a predetermined symbol replaces the beginning of the word:
Example: “**sophy*” finds “philosophy, anthroposophy, ...” and other words ending with “sophy” but starting differently.
- **Internal truncation:** a predetermined symbol replaces multiple characters within a word.
Example: “*b*t*” finds “boot, boat, ...” and other words with your predetermined beginning and ending but differing middle parts.
- **Special feature: masking (not offered by every database):**
Besides truncation there is also the option to replace just a single character.
This is called **masking**.
Example: “*t?ne*” finds “tune, tone, ...” etc.

Please note: The symbols used for truncation and masking are not the same for every database. Try using the help function of the database to find the correct placeholder. In the Katalog plus the right truncation is done using an asterisk (*).

More than a google search – Thematic and systematic literature research

Advice for your research:

- Expand abbreviations (even common abbreviations like “ADHD”)
- Find singular and plural forms of search terms (by using truncation)
- Be aware of possible variations in the spelling of search terms (“organisation“ / “organization“)
- Use indices / thesauri in databases to find further search terms
- Research in the catalogue:
 - Search results will offer new search terms
 - Keywords attached to titles you found or the list of keywords (on the right-hand side in the filtering options) can offer further search terms
 - When searching by notation, you can find thematically related literature in the library collection

Using optimal research tools:

What do I need?

- Specific books or specific journals (which you already know the title of):
Catalogue search (under “Catalogue“ in the Katalog plus)
- Academic literature in the form of articles, books, e-resources – regardless of it being in the library collection:
Database search (under “Articles & more“ in the Katalog plus or directly in a database)

Where do I find ...

...references of books and dissertations?

- in catalogues
- in databases (either interdisciplinary or specialized)
- dissertations can also be found on university publication servers (OPUS in the case of Siegen University)

...references of articles?

- in interdisciplinary or specialized databases (use “Articles & more“ or search in a specific database)

... full texts online?

- in the catalogue for electronic journals (“Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek“ (EZB))
- in specialized databases with full text collections (full-text databases)
- in the Katalog plus (under “Catalogue“ to view our collection)

What is a catalogue? What is a database?

Catalogue:

A catalogue lists the existing stock of one or multiple libraries. It will display the appropriate call numbers and show the literature a library has on a specific topic. It usually won't provide information about articles!

A catalogue answers the question „Who has this book/journal (in their collection)?“

Database:

A database lists everything that has been published in the field it covers. There are interdisciplinary and specialized databases. Some only include bibliographic details, others can include full texts. A database does not include inventory details; it just answers the question: *„What has been published?“*