

SIRS Researcher: 5 Easy Steps to Using an Information Database

An information database is usually a fee-based, password-protected collection of information materials that can be accessed through the Internet. Databases may index all types of materials from practice standardized tests to auto repair references to newspapers and periodicals. The SIRS Researcher, a product of ProQuest Information and Learning, provides access to thousands of full-text articles that cover social, historic, political, scientific, health, business, economic, and global issues. It is a protected research environment that is provided through the AHS Library budget for research purposes.

STEP ONE: ACCESS

· Access the Internet (from anywhere!) : Go to <http://www.sirs.com>

Type in Username: CA3741

Type in Password: 91301

Click second orange box that says "SIRS Products"

Click "SIRS Knowledge Source" Link

You are now in the database!

STEP TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE MAIN PAGE

Research tools are located at the very top of the main page

Searching is done within the red box

"Leading Issues" are located directly below the red search box

Special features of the database are located to the right of the "Leading Issues" that include "Today's News," "Focus on Terrorism," "Natural Disasters," "Spotlight On", "Challenge Quest," and "World Almanacs and Maps."

STEP THREE: SEARCHING THE DATABASE

Quick Search:

- 1) Choose to search all documents, or just images, maps, news, or pro/con issues

- 2) Choose to search by Subject Heading or Keyword/Natural Language; remember that subject heading searching will provide results that are descriptors of your results, whereas keyword searching will search entire documents for your combination of keywords

- 3) Choose to sort results by relevance or date

Advanced Search

- 1) Search using Boolean (AND, OR, NOT) operators

2) Proximity search

3) Caption search for graphics

4) May limit results by Lexile (reading levels)

Results Page

1) Results are listed by relevance, date, or lexile depending on what you selected

2) Titles of articles are in blue and are underlined, the original source information is listed below, a summary is next, and additional descriptors are provided after the summary

3) Additional descriptors of the item are links that will take you to all other items that have the same descriptor. Use this area to look for additional search terms!

4) Click on the title to get to the full-text document; you may print the article using the print icon, tag the article (see below for more results), or return to search results

STEP FOUR: USING YOUR DATABASE TOOLS

My Research tool

1) Create a tagged list by checking the box next to research items you wish to keep and click "Update Tagged List" at the bottom of the page

- 2) To access your tagged list, go to "My Research" at the top of the page and select tagged list

- 3) You may e-mail and create bibliographic information using the tagged list feature

To save a research session, go to "My Research" and select "Session Save." By creating a personal username and password, you may save your tagged list and search history to access at a later time. To retrieve a research session, go to "Retrieve a Session" and supply the information needed.

Reference Toolbox

- 1) Provides links that will provide guidelines/help with research papers, mini-research papers, Powerpoints, debates, and citing sources.

- 2) Also offers a tutorial of SIRS, a searchable help system, search tips, research strategy worksheet, dictionary, and thesaurus.

- 3) Shortcut links to the dictionary, thesaurus, help system and "how to cite" link is consistently located in the upper right corner of every page for easy access

STEP FIVE: ASK QUESTIONS WHEN YOU NEED HELP

If you have any questions when using SIRS database, please ask Ms. Cope, Mrs. Thomas, or a library aid at any time!

We are here to help you with your information needs!

