



Wichita State University Libraries

FirstSearch Help Guide

Introduction

FirstSearch is a program produced by OCLC covering many functions. Traditionally, this program has provided listings and searchability for books and journals at libraries around the world in addition to journal article abstracts. With the most recent release, FirstSearch has added several new full-text journal, electronic collection databases, and subject citational functions to maximize the user's research capabilities. To learn more about this product, follow the outlined procedures below.

Accessing FirstSearch

From the main library page (<http://library.wichita.edu>), scroll down to the FirstSearch icon on the left side of the screen below the library's picture. Click on it to access the service.

Using FirstSearch I: The "Home Screen" and Frames Menu

The computer should now be at the "Home" screen. This display has two main parts: the "Basic Search" option (which will be discussed below) and the Frames menu listing the options contained within FirstSearch. These options include:

Home: Returns to the "Home Screen" from anywhere in the program

Databases:

- **"List All":** Lists every database and their descriptions
- **"List By Topic":** Lists databases relevant to topic areas
- **"Suggest Best":** Function which will pick the best database for a search

Searching:

- **"Basic":** The basic search (very general)
- **"Advanced":** The intermediate level search (specific)
- **"Expert":** The top-level search (very precise)

Exit: Allows the user to exit the database.

Due to the frames setup, one can access these features from anywhere in the FirstSearch program.

Using FirstSearch II: Selecting a Database

To select a database, use any of these three options:

- **“List All” Function:** Click on the name of the database. FirstSearch will produce that item.
- **“List by Topic” Function:** Click on the down arrow next to the “Show Databases Related to” box and a drop down menu appears. Scroll down to the desired subject area and click on it. Then click on the “Show Databases” button beneath it. When the list of databases appears, click on the desired link and the database will appear.
- **“Suggest Best” Function:** This function allows the user to search for an author, keyword, or topic within a specified subject area. To use, follow these steps:
 - Type in an author, subject or keyword in the “Must Contain” box and select the appropriate search type.
 - Then, in the “limit to topic” box, click on the arrow to the right of the box and select a subject area.
 - Click the “list” button.
 - FirstSearch will perform the search and the estimated results for your words will appear next to each database. Select the appropriate link(s) to see your results.

Using FirstSearch III: Performing the Search

Once the database is selected, the user can do his or her search. To use the three searching tools in this program, follow these steps:

Basic Search:

1. Check the “Search In” box. It should have the selected database in it. If not, click on the arrow to the right of the box and pick the correct database from the drop-down menu.
2. Click in the “Search For” box. Type your search terms. Then, click either the author, title or keyword options. (**Note:** If no box is checked, a keyword search will be performed.)
3. (For WorldCat) The “Limit to WSU” option should only be used if you want to find items here at WSU. (**Tip:** Unless time is too short to do an Interlibrary Loan, this option is not suggested in most cases.)

(For Article Databases) The “Full-Text” option limits hits to those having full text.

4. Use the “Rank By” box if you wish to sort by Date or Relevance.
5. Click on the “Search” button to perform the search. Click on the “Clear” button to clear out the information and start over.

Advanced Search

1. Check the “Search In” box. It should have the selected database in it. If not, click on the arrow to the right of the box and pick the correct database from the drop-down menu.
2. Click in the top box next to the “Search For” section. Type in your search terms. Then, click on the arrow to the right of the next box (marked “author”) initially. Choose the appropriate term from the drop-down menu and click on it. If necessary, repeat these steps for either of the rows beneath these items.
3. Year: If you know the year (or years) of publication, enter the information here.
4. Media: If you want a specific media type (book, journal, sound recording, etc.), click on the arrow to the right of this box and click on the appropriate menu item.
5. Language Phrase: If you want a specific language (English, Spanish, German, Chinese, Russian, etc.), click on the arrow to the right of this box and click on the appropriate menu item.
6. (For WorldCat) The “Limit to WSU” option should only be used if you want to find items here at WSU. (**Tip:** Unless time is too short to do an Interlibrary Loan, this option is not suggested in most cases.)

(For Article Databases) The “Full-Text” option limits hits to those having full text.

7. Use the “Rank By” box if you wish to sort by Date or Relevance.
8. Click on the “Search” button to perform the search. Click on the “Clear” button to clear out the information and start over.

Expert Search

1. Check the “Search In” box. It should have the selected database in it. If not, click on the arrow to the right of the box and pick the correct database from the drop-down menu.
2. Click in the top box next to the “Search For” section. Type in your search terms. Then, click on the arrow to the right of the next box (marked “author”) initially. Choose the appropriate term from the drop-down menu and click on it. If necessary, repeat these steps for either of the rows beneath these items.
3. Year: If you know the year (or years) of publication, enter the information here.
4. Media: If you want a specific media type (book, journal, sound recording, etc.), click on the arrow to the right of this box and click on the appropriate menu item.
5. Language Phrase: If you want a specific language (English, Spanish, German, Chinese, Russian, etc.), click on the arrow to the right of this box and click on the appropriate menu item.

6. (For WorldCat) The “Limit to WSU” option should only be used if you want to find items here at WSU. (**Tip:** Unless time is too short to do an Interlibrary Loan, this option is not suggested in most cases.)

(For Article Databases) The “Full-Text” option limits hits to those having full text.

7. Use the “Rank By” box if you wish to sort by Date or Relevance.
8. Click on the “Search” button to perform the search. Click on the “Clear” button to clear out the information and start over.

Using FirstSearch IV: Results Lists

Results List

1. **Maneuvering within the Results List:** After FirstSearch performs the search, it will provide a list of search results. Usually, the total number of citations is indicated at the top of the page. Twenty citations are listed per screen. To look at the list, use the scroll bar along the right side of your browser’s screen to move up and down that screen. At the bottom of the screen, one will find two blue and white buttons “<” and “>”. The “<” arrow will bring up the previous screen while the “>” arrow will send the user to the next screen of results.
2. **Looking at Records:** To see a useful citation, click on the hyperlink and the full record appears.
3. **Detailed Record:** To use this function, check the box to the left of the desired citation. Then, click on the “Detailed Record” link in the frame menu. The full record appears. (There will be more on this feature below.)
4. **Previous Searches:** Clicking on this link allows the user to look at previously performed searches.
5. **Marked Records:** This link allows the user to review those citations pertinent to his or her search. To use this feature, click on the check box next to the item(s) of interest. Then, use the “Marked Records” link. A list appears giving only those items that the searcher asked for. To see a useful citation, click on the hyperlink and the full record appears.

Using FirstSearch V: Using the Full Record

The full record in FirstSearch contains a great deal of useful information for the user about a particular work including the author, editor, title, series, publication information, ISBN number and related subject areas. (**Tip:** The Accession number (last line of the record) is very important. Putting this information on your Interlibrary Loan request does assist our staff in processing your request.)

In addition, the following groups of links are also helpful.

1. Top row of icons:

- **Subjects:** Lets the user see related subject fields
- **Libraries** (same as the “**Libraries that Own Item**” link): Allows the user to see which libraries own the book.
- **E-Mail:** Allows the user to email a record to an email account.
- **Print:** Allows the user to print a record.

2. Useful Links in Record:

- **Libraries that Own Item:** Allows the user to see which libraries have an item. (Tip: There may be more than one record for each book. Check the complete listing of other records on that work!)
- **Author(s):** Performs an author search to find other works by the same author or authors.
- **Descriptor:** Allows the user to do a subject search for related books in a given field.

Using FirstSearch VI: Printing/Emailing/Downloading Records

Printing or emailing records in FirstSearch is not very difficult. To do so, follow these steps.

Printing: From the Record Screen:

1. Click on the “File” option in the upper left corner of the screen.
2. When the drop down menu appears, click on “Print”.
3. Inside of the dialogue box, click the “**OK**” button. For further directions, please refer to the “**Printing Instructions**” handout available at the reference desk.

Emailing: From the Record Screen:

1. Click on the “EMail” icon.
2. When the “Email Records” screen appears, click in the “Email Address” box and enter the desired address.
3. Click the “Send Button”.

(**Tip:** Leave the Subject line and Notes field blank. (FirstSearch will provide that information in the email message. Also, by leaving the other settings as they are set, FirstSearch will send a plain text version of the Detailed Record to your account.)

Downloading: From the Record screen:

1. Insert a floppy disk into the computer's disk drive
2. Click on the "File" option. At the next drop-down menu, select "Save As".
3. Then, click in the "File Name" box and type a name for the file.
4. Finally, click the save button to send the entry to your disk.

FirstSearch VII: Exiting FirstSearch

When you wish to exit FirstSearch, click on the "**Exit**" link in the left-hand frames menu. FirstSearch will then ask if you want to exit. Click "**Yes**" and the computer will log out of FirstSearch.