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## *Searching electronic information resources; techniques and strategies*

The search process can be divided up into 5 stages, the first of these should begin on paper, the others are computer based. It is important to not rush straight to the computer and the first “search” box available – that is not effective searching.

The five stages of effective searching:

1. Define your information need
2. Decide which resource/s to use (both e-resources and search engines)
3. Find out what search options your chosen resource offers
4. Run your search
5. Review and refine your search.

### Stage 1: Define your information need

Record your search topic and outline strategy on the worksheet provided.

Completing this stage on paper is important, as even extremely experienced searchers can benefit from completing this stage away from the computer.

### Stage 2: Decide which e-resources to use

Refer to the resource descriptions sheets produced in the previous exercise or the pages relevant to your country at [www.inasp.info](http://www.inasp.info) . You will need to consider which of the e-resources available are most likely to contain content that will be relevant to your topic and searches.

You may also want to do some searching using a general Internet search tool, such as Google. That can be a useful approach to get additional leads, keywords and such that may be of use when searching the library focused e-resources. However, focus mainly on the e-resources, Google should just be used as an aid to this exercise and not be the main focus.

### Stage 3: Find out how the e-resource functions

How does the e-resource you are going to use function? Does it offer advanced search functions? Are you familiar with using it? If not then you may wish to explore the resource before you start searching it e.g. test how it functions and what the results are of your search phrases and topics. Record your results and experiences of conducting the searches using the table provided.

If there are any additional results, features or comments you think would be useful to share with others, please make a note of them too.

### Stage 4 and 5: Run your search and Review and refine your search

Using the information recorded and obtained from stages 1-3, undertake your searches using a variety of e-resources. Review and refine your search in light of the results you get as you go along. Record your experiences and findings in the table below. Be prepared to present a summary of your experiences to others in the workshop during the closing session of this exercise.

## Record the results of your search

Record the results of your searches and search topic for each of the e-resources that you have explored in detail..

### *Search skills further reading*

#### **How to search on Google**

<https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/134479?hl=en>

Google's own page on effective searching.

<https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/136861>

Search operators for a more specific search

#### **University of East London Info Skills pages**

[http://infoskills.uelconnect.org.uk/pages/finding\\_information/37/uel\\_info\\_skills.html](http://infoskills.uelconnect.org.uk/pages/finding_information/37/uel_info_skills.html)

Making the most of Google PDF handout linked from

[http://infoskills.uelconnect.org.uk/pages/finding\\_information/37/google\\_and\\_search\\_engines.html](http://infoskills.uelconnect.org.uk/pages/finding_information/37/google_and_search_engines.html)

#### **University of California online tutorial**

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html>

Online tutorial for the web searching workshops formerly offered by the University of California Berkeley Library. These documents are based on information and training resources by Joe Barker, His searching tutorials are highly recommended, even though they are now somewhat out of date.

## Recording your search results

It can be useful to keep a record so you know what has been successful (or unsuccessful) in previous searches.

Name of e-resource :	
What topic were you looking for?	
What terms did you use to describe your topics?	
What kind of results did you find? Too many results? Too few results?	
Did these results differ for this resource from others that you tried? How?	
Was your searching a success? Was this due to how you searched? Or what you searched?	
Did you try to modify your search? If so, how? Was this successful?	
Try running the same search in Google. How many results did you get? How useful are the results? How credible do they seem?	