# Finding Articles in Museum Studies

## Purpose of this Research Guide

This handout will help you to:

- Get to journals in paper or electronic formats
- Select appropriate article databases in which to search for articles on museology topics
- Find articles in the area of museum studies in an efficient and effective way
- Develop good search strategies to find articles on a topic
- Identify peer-reviewed articles and journals

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Getting to books & journals & articles from the UTL homepage

www.library.utoronto.ca

**LIBRARY HOMEPAGE START-YOUR-SEARCH**

A mega-search that searches the following **ALL AT ONCE:**

- UTL catalogue, with its millions of books & journals
- Over 1200 licensed article databases in all areas of study
- UTL collection of hundreds of Research Guides (aka LibGuides)
- The UTL website, which includes things like the UTL staff directory, and the UTL FAQ collection

While this kind of search is great for a quick view of what exists, it is not the best way to do a literature review, or to search for articles on a topic.

To be an efficient searcher, look in the right container for what you want e.g. books in the CATALOGUE, articles in ARTICLE DATABASES, newspapers in NEWSPAPER DATABASES, etc.

**ONLINE & PAPER BOOKS — CATALOGUE SEARCH**

**ONLINE & PAPER JOURNALS — CATALOGUE SEARCH**

**JOURNAL ARTICLES**

- **ARTICLES SEARCH**
  Find known articles, or articles on a topic from over 1200 databases searched all at once. This is the Summon search. You’ll get huge #s of results when searching for articles on a topic with this search

- **DATABASE SEARCH**
  Find articles in databases, either huge interdisciplinary databases like Web of Science, or Scopus, or in hundreds of different specialized subject databases such as America History & Life, or Art Full Text

**SOME TIPS**

- Don’t use the catalogue to look for articles. The catalogue DOES NOT CONTAIN ARTICLES. It only tells you about books and journals, not about the articles contained in journals.
- When searching for items by their titles, use double quotes (””’) around the title.
- While searching 1200 databases all at once (the ARTICLES or Summon SEARCH) can be very convenient for finding a known fulltext journal article, it isn’t always the most efficient way of searching for articles on a topic.
- **Advanced search mode of ARTICLE SEARCH**, with its filters and multi-field searching can be useful for museum studies, since museology literature is scattered across different subject areas.
- Search one or a few article database(s) in the topic area, or by using the PROQUEST or EBSCO lists, where you can pick and choose the subject-specific databases most suited to your topic.
- If you don’t get any results, check your spelling!
- Searching for articles on a topic takes time. Don’t leave it to the last minute.
- Ask for help. **No question too stupid.** Really. Let us (the Inforum staff) help you save your time.
Getting to article databases from the UTL homepage

Where are the article databases?

A) Grouped by categories in Subjects A–Z.
B) Some are listed in a small subset of POPULAR DATABASES.
C) Individually listed by title in the catalogue.

A) CATALOGUE
   Databases titles are listed individually in the catalogue
   - Click on CATALOGUE.
   - Choose TITLE search.
   - Enter database title in double quotes e.g. “Art full text
   - Follow the link in catalogue record to get to the database

B) POPULAR DATABASES
   - A short list of popular databases, including popular Ebsco (~70) and Proquest (~120) subject databases
   - Also lists important interdisciplinary databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, JSTOR and Project Muse

C) SUBJECT A–Z
   - A list of hundreds of databases organized by subject area e.g. Museum Studies
   - The list also includes databases covering special formats e.g. DISSERTATIONS, ENCYCLOPEDIAS, NEWSPAPERS
Choosing appropriate databases for Museum Studies topics

- There is no one database that focuses on museology literature.
- Museum studies literature is distributed over many disciplines.
- Therefore, relevant journal articles may be found in many different article databases.
- Employ different strategies to make sure you search in appropriate databases.

➤ Search in SUBJECT-focused databases related to MUSEOLOGY

- **Art, History, & Humanities** databases are most likely to cover the museology and cultural heritage literature.
- **Library & Information Science** databases will have information on library/archive/museum convergence, collaborations, and overlapping topics, e.g. digital preservation, as well as some articles on museum studies.

➤ Search in additional SUBJECT-focused databases related to your topic

**Example topic:** Museum treatment of First Nations cultural objects
Search also in **Aboriginal Studies** databases e.g. *Bibliography of Native North Americans*

**Example topic:** Holocaust museums, or Nazi art looting
Search also in **Jewish Studies** databases e.g. *Index to Jewish Periodicals*.

➤ Search databases which cover broad, or ALL subject areas

- **JSTOR:** collection of ~1500 academic journals in humanities, social sciences, & sciences.
- **Project Muse:** full-text, peer-reviewed content in digital humanities and social sciences
- **Scopus:** excellent database covering all areas of knowledge, ~5300 journals in social sciences
- **Web of Science:** all areas of knowledge, with sections for social sciences, arts & humanities

➤ Article Search from the UTL homepage

Searches articles from ~ **1200 UTL subscription databases** i.e., millions & millions of citations from thousands of journals in all subject areas. This is the Summon federated search. **Does not include all articles. No one search container includes everything.**

**TIPS:**
- Use contextual words: repatriation museums haida
- Use the **advanced search mode:** allows multi-field searching, can use filters (e.g. scholarly journal articles only).
Selected examples of relevant subject-specific databases

Using the listing from the UTL homepage will help you to select databases in many different subject areas.

Here are some recommended databases in subject areas relevant to Museum Studies:

**ART**
Art Full Text; ARTbibliographies Modern; International Bibliography of Art; Bibliography of the History of Art, and others.

**HISTORY**
America: History & Life [North America]; Historical Abstracts [rest of the world]; History of Science, Technology & Medicine

**CANADIAN STUDIES**
CPI.Q; CBCA (Canadian Business and Current Affairs)

**ANTHROPOLOGY / ARCHAEOLOGY**
Anthropology Plus

**ARCHITECTURE**
Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals

**HUMANITIES**
British Humanities Index, JSTOR, Project Muse

**SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Social Sciences Abstracts; International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, JSTOR, Project Muse

**ABORIGINAL STUDIES**
Bibliography of Native North Americans

**WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES**
LGBT Life; Gender Studies Database; Studies on Women & Gender Abstracts

**LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE**
Library Literature & Information Science Full-text; Library & Information Science Abstracts (LISA)

**IMAGE DATABASES**
ARTstor; FADIS
### ABOUT SCHOLARLY JOURNALS & PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

#### Characteristics of scholarly journals
- Content written by academics, for a scholarly audience
- Assumes that reader is familiar with concepts and terminology in the field.
- Often contain presentation of original research: usually organized in a standard structure — abstract, intro, literature review, research methodology, findings, and results discussion
- Articles are usually lengthy, and often include charts & graphs of data (not photos)
- Always contains footnotes and/or list of references cited
- Peer-reviewed, for the most part

#### Where do scholarly journals come from?
Associations & other professional organizations; university presses; commercial publishers.

#### What does ‘scholarly journal’ mean?
- A publication that is authored by academics for a target audience that is mainly academic and that is published by a recognized society with academic goals and missions—definition: Proquest (database provider)
- A journal may be scholarly, but not peer-reviewed.

#### What does ‘peer-reviewed’ (or refereed) mean?
- A publication in which articles go through an official editorial process that involves review and approval by the author’s peers (experts in the same subject area)—definition: Proquest (database provider)
- Think of it as a type of scholarly quality-control mechanism. With peer-reviewed journals, articles are read and critiqued by experts in the same field, before being accepted for publication.

#### How can you tell if an article is from a peer-reviewed (a.k.a refereed) journal?
1. Check in Ulrichsweb, the online version of Ulrich’s Periodical Directory: Covers 300,000 journals worldwide, from 90,000 publishers, in 950 subject areas. Look up the journal title in Ulrichsweb, then check for this symbol □ which means ‘refereed’. Ulrichsweb can be found in the catalogue as shown.

   ![Link to catalogue record for Ulrichsweb](http://go.utlib.ca/cat/11688043)
   ![Click on the LINK in the catalogue record to get into Ulrichsweb. Use advanced search mode to look for journal title.](

2. Some journal repositories, e.g. Scholars Portals journals, will say so in the journal information.
3. Limit to ONLY peer-reviewed articles when you search. Many databases have this feature.
4. Look up the journal’s website to see if it says ‘peer-reviewed’ in the journal’s description.
Some subject searching strategies

- Searching for articles on a subject can be challenging, and take more time.
- Unlike author names or article titles, many synonyms exist to describe the same topic/concept.
- Words used by the database indexers to describe topics may be different than the ones you think of.
- Use the ADVANCED SEARCH mode, not the BASIC or SIMPLE mode. Advanced search allows you to do more refined and efficient searching, because of its additional functionalities.

Try some of these strategies:

1. Think of the terminology used to describe your topic:
   - Look for words used in an overview-type article e.g., article in a subject encyclopedia, or literature review articles, perhaps some articles from your course reading list.
   - Look for topic/concept words in other articles that you already have on the topic.

2. Probe for subject descriptors used by the database you are searching.
   - **Don’t start off with a SUBJECT search.** Instead, use a KEYWORD or ANYWHERE/ALL search to find an article that fits your topic, check its subject terms, then go back and use the terms in a SUBJECT search.
   - Think of words that *might* be used in an article title, and do a preliminary TITLE search. For example, an article about repatriation most like will have the word ‘repatriation’ in its title.
   - Once you have found a few on-topic articles, look at the subject terms in those articles, and then do a SUBJECT search based on what you find.

   **IF the database you are searching does NOT have subject descriptors:**
   - Use words that will contextualize your search:
     e.g. photographs museum collections preservation
   - Use any search refinement features available
     — E.g. facets that group the search results into topics.
     — E.g. limits that can narrow the results to just scholarly articles, or just English language articles, or articles from a narrow range of years.

3. Check for a thesaurus, or a list of subject terms used by the database.
   - There is a difference between a thesaurus, and a list of subject descriptors.
   - The following chart illustrates the difference.
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<th>THESAURUS ENTRY</th>
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A thesaurus is hierarchical listing of all the subject terms assigned to the articles in a single database, so that users may easily find articles by subject. It uses a **controlled vocabulary**.

A thesaurus shows the **relationship between topics** – broader concepts, and narrower concepts, as well as RELATED terms. This will give you different subject words to try, or suggest relationships you may not have considered.

A thesaurus may also **suggest the ‘right’ term to use**. The word in the above example is IMAGES. It tells you not to use ICONOGRAPHY. So, a search for SU= iconography would find very little, while a search for SU=images would get results of articles on that topic.

A thesaurus is only ONE of many tools to help with subject search. Look also for an alphabetical (or **BROWSE** list of subject descriptors). Many databases contain one or both these types of listings of subject words, but larger databases like Scopus or Web of Science have no controlled vocabulary.
4. Break down a complex topic into its components, think of synonyms, then combine the terms with Boolean operators.

**EXAMPLE TOPIC:** museum exhibitions about First Nations textiles

**CONCEPT 1:** museum exhibitions
**CONCEPT 2:** First Nations people
**CONCEPT 3:** textiles

**THINK OF SYNONYMS, OR RELATED TERMS**
- **Exhibitions:** ALSO displays, installations
- **First Nations:** ALSO Indigenous peoples, Aboriginal people, Native Americans, etc.
- **Textiles:** ALSO fabrics, cloth, clothes

**RELATED TERMS:** ALSO try clothing, garments, costumes

**SUGGESTED SEARCH STATEMENT:**

- (exhibitions or installations) and (textile or fabric or cloth\* or garments) and (native or indigenous or Aboriginal or First Nations)

5: Consider the level of specific-ness (specificity) of your topic:

- What type of museum?
  - House museum?
  - Children’s museum?
  - National museum?
  - Science museum?

- Museum in a particular geographic location?
  - Canada? Kenya?
  - Ontario? (Toronto? Hamilton?)

- In a particular environment?
  - Outdoor museums?
  - Virtual museums?

- You can try some of these more specific concepts to narrow a search if you get too many results, or need to refine your focus.

- Conversely, if specific terms retrieve too few results, search at a broader level.
6. Use truncation to catch word variations

**Examples:**

- `collect*` to find collections, collecting, collector, collectors
- `teen*` for teen, teens, teenager, teenagers
- `canad*` for Canada, Canadian, Canadians
- `catalog?ing` for cataloguing or cataloging

7. Search in more than one way – use different fields in your search

Subjects may not be consistent from article to article (due to human indexer mistakes and inconsistency), so do not rely ONLY on subject searching. Do **KEYWORD** searching as well.

Subjects are also inconsistent from database to database. Therefore think of as many synonyms as you can, and use them in Boolean searching.

Subject descriptors may NOT be used to describe MINOR topics, or even MAJOR ones in articles. You can do a search with a subject word, and add it together with a keyword (where the keyword(s) could be in an abstract, or the article title).

**Examples:**

- SU = digital reproduction of museum collections AND Anywhere = issues or trends
- SU = museum conservation methods AND Anywhere = best practices
- SU = historic house museums AND Anywhere = tours

- Always leave enough time for finding articles on topics.
- Always revise your search depending on what you find.
- Search in various databases, not just one.
- Don’t exclude the public web.

There may be very good, authoritative reports, papers, standards, guidelines, to be found on association/organization websites, in university repositories, conference sites, etc.
About *Art Full Text* article database

- Covers ~ 600 journals in art, and related topics, including museology
- Full-text articles from ~ 300 of these journals from 1995 onwards
- All articles in the database have abstracts
- Follow the [Get it UTL](#) link to find full-text articles available from other UTL full-text sources
- Covers related journals *e.g., Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, Costume: Journal of the Costume Society; Huntington Library Quarterly, Wintherthur Portfolio, Material Culture, Visual Resources*
- Covers some journals and bulletins from specific museums, *e.g. Journal of the Walters Art Museum*
- Has a THESAURUS to help you discover subject terms.
- **List of journals covered:** Available from the Ebsco’s (the database provider) website at [http://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/aft-coverage.pdf](http://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/aft-coverage.pdf)

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**USEFUL FIELDS TO SEARCH IN:**

- **Select a field (optional)** = this is the keyword field
  - searches title, author, subject, abstract, journal name.
- **TI** = article title
- **AU** = individual author
- **CA** = an organization as author
- **SU** = subject term (e.g. subject tag)
- **SO** = journal name

**LIMITS YOU CAN APPLY:**

- **Full text** results only
- **Peer-reviewed** journals only
- **Dates:** specific year or a range of years
- **Publication type:** *e.g.* academic journal, trade publication, book
- **Document type:** *e.g.* article, book review, etc.
Some database features & functions to help you search better

1. Relevance vs date sort
Switch back and forth between these two ways of displaying your search results to get a sense of BOTH current articles as well as relevant articles. If searching by SUBJECT, all your results will be relevant, so switch it up to DATE sort.

2. Show more results
Switch your display to show more than the default 10 or 20 results. This makes it easier to quickly scroll through a set of results, rather than clicking through pages of results. Most databases have an option to do this near the top or the bottom of the screen.

3. Facets (or filters) that cluster your results
Use the boxes (facets, or filters) on the left that cluster your search results into categories, e.g. SUBJECT, DOCUMENT TYPE (e.g. article, conference paper, review). This lets you work with more manageable and focused subsets of your search results, especially if you get too many results.

4. Art Full Text has a THESAURUS and a way to browse a list subject terms (see INDEXES)

Use these tools to help you discover BROADER or NARROWER or RELATED subject terms to use.

5. Include other Ebsco*-supplied databases in your search
Click on the CHOOSE DATABASES link to get a list of other Ebsco databases e.g. Library Literature & Information Science, America History & Life, Anthropology Plus, etc. depending on your topic’s scope.
Select the ones you want by checking them off and clicking on OK to search in the selected databases all at once.
Be aware that the SUBJECTS will be different from database to database. One database may use the term ‘senior citizen’, while another may use the term ‘old people’.
Therefore, remember to use synonyms combined with OR, when searching in multiple databases.

* You can do the same for Proquest databases
For more help

- Individual consultations:
  Nalini K. Singh, Inforum reference librarian
  416-978-7069
  nalini.singh@utoronto.ca

- Any of the Inforum librarians will be happy to assist you, at the Inforum Information Desk, or just ask for us if we are not on the desk.

- Inforum email:
  help.ischool@utoronto.ca