SCIENCE DIRECT (ELSEVIER)

The database can be used in numerous ways the most important of which are as a source for full-text articles and as a search-tool for articles on specific topics. In the first case, you must have a full or partial citation with at least some of the following information: the title of the article, the author’s name, the title of the publication, the volume, issue, and page numbers. In the second case, you need only to have a topic in mind, preferably expressed in scientific terms: not “Stroke” but rather “Cerebrovascular Disorders.” In what is presented below, information about “Smoking” and “Lung Cancer” will be researched. “Cancer,” by the way, is often given the term “Neoplasms.”

DATABASE AS REPOSITORY OF FULL-TEXT ARTICLES

Let us suppose that you have a citation for an article on the topics given above, and you need to see the entire contents of the article immediately. From the citation, you know that the article was published in the *Annals of Epidemiology*, that its title is “Presenting Manifestations, Cigarette Smoking, and Detection Bias in Age at Diagnosis of Lung Cancer.” You know also that one of the authors is Carolyn K. Wells, and that the article was published in May of 2001. You may or may not know in which volume and issue to look in order to find the article. Some citations are complete, others scanty.

ACCESS TO THE DATABASE

Assuming that *Science Direct* has the journal you need (it has about a thousand titles), the first step that you take is to access the database. To get there, you go to the Health Profession Division’s homepage and click on the text “NSU Electronic Databases.” See the arrow in the illustration below.
The screen that is brought up allows you two options: (1) to view a list of the databases that NSU leases. Each database is provided with descriptions of the contents. If you do not know the names of the providers of these databases and little about the contents or strengths of each of them, you will need to click on the box with the words “Medical & Health.” (2) On the other hand, after you become acquainted with the various databases and their providers, you will want to select the second option of “All Databases,” because it is quicker and more convenient: all providers are listed in one small grid. You will thus avoid having to go down a rather long list of names.

Let us assume that you have used the system for a while, and that you are familiar with the databases. Let us assume further that you know which provider leases the university a specific database. For example, you will soon find out that Ovid Technologies, Inc. supplies NSU with, among others, *Medline*, *CINAHL*, and *HealthSTAR*, three very popular databases for research in the medical sciences. Knowing this fact, you would then look for “Ovid” in the grid that appears when you click on “All Databases.”

Below you can see the grid with the names of the providers. The top arrow is pointing to Ovid. *Science Direct* is leased to the school by Elsevier, another publisher/provider with excellent information resources. Elsevier databases are listed under the name of the database, namely “*Science Direct*” and not under the provider’s name. Keep in mind, however, that while Ovid’s databases do not contain many articles in full-text, Elsevier’s databases are all in full-text. Obviously, because you need full-text, you will want to go to *Science Direct*. The second arrow points to the latter database.
If you have trouble finding what you need in *Science Direct*, for example, if the citation were not complete, it would be a good idea to first use Ovid’s *Medline* to locate the article and the full citation. Ovid’s databases are furnished with an unequalled search engine. If the article has been published within the past forty years, most of the time you will be able to find it in Ovid. Once you obtained the missing information, you could then return to *Science Direct* and find the article with greater ease, that is, if the journal in which the article has been published is in *Science Direct*’s list of journals.

Clicking on *Science Direct* in the grid brings up a list of databases on the NSU’s Electronic Library menu: the access point will be at the very top. See the arrow in the illustration below.

**SEARCHING THE DATABASE**

Click on the database’s name again to bring up its search page with access to the search engine. First, you want to ascertain whether the database provides *Annals of Epidemiology*. To get to the list of journals supplied in *Science Direct*, you need to click on the box with the word “Publications” that is located on the top task bar. See the arrow below.
On the screen that appears, you can locate immediately the name of the journal by scrolling down the list of magazines under “A.” On the list shown below, you can see the name of the journal under question. See the arrow.

To get to the journal’s list of volumes online, all that you need to do is to click on its name on the list. If you know the volume number, you can easily click on the appropriate volume. If you do not know, you will have to use simple logic. If volume 12 represents materials already published or to be published later in 2002, then it stands to reason that an article published in 2001 must be in the previous volume, that is, volume 11.

Clicking on the appropriate volume number will produce that volume’s table of contents. You can see a list of the issues in volume 11 below.
You can see right away that May, the month the article appeared, is contained in issue 4. Just click on the pertinent issue to see the list of articles that were published that month. Then, you scroll down to find the article. It is article number 4.

To view the abstract and references cited in the article, you must click on “SummaryPlus.” To get to the full-text, you need to click on “Article.” Finally, for you to see the article in PDF format, you will want to click on the final option “Journal Format-PDF.” The size of the article is indicated in the parentheses at the end. You can see that it consumes 146K of space.
Below, using SummaryPlus, you can see the top section of the article: information about the authors and the beginning of the abstract.

Presenting Manifestations, Cigarette Smoking, and Detection Bias in Age at Diagnosis of Lung Cancer

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Abstract

PURPOSE: To examine the possible role of detection bias in the association between amount of cigarette smoking and age at diagnosis of lung cancer. The bias can occur because primary lung cancer can often escape detection during life and will be found (if at all) as a “necropsy surprise” unless a diagnostic workup is provoked by such presenting manifestations as hemoptysis and a localized chest lesion. The necropsy surprises will be reduced and the reported rates of pre-mortem incidence will be raised if a cigarette smoking history also acts as a diagnostic incentive.

If you scroll down further, you will find an outline of the article and access points to the various charts included in the publication.

Article Outline

\begin{itemize}
  \item Introduction
  \item Materials and methods
  \item Results
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Anatomic State and Effects of Smoking
      \item Indicator Stimul and Effects of Smoking
      \item Additional Analyses
      \item Effect of Sex and Cell Types
      \item Results in Additional Subsets and Subsequent Case Series
    \end{itemize}
  \item Discussion
  \item Acknowledgements
  \item References
\end{itemize}

Table 1. Demographic, clinical and histological characteristics in 1266 patients with lung cancer

Table 2. Distribution of TNM and Clinical Stages of Severity and corresponding age at diagnosis of lung cancer
Scrolling down even further, you can find a list of the references used by the authors. At the top and bottom of SummaryPlus, you will find access points to the full text with or without PDF format.

Here is the top part of the reference list. Notice that you can go to either MEDLINE or EMBASE the retrieve the abstract. Articles are often placed in several databases.

References


And here are the access points to the full-text: regular text or PDF format.

PRINTING

The last step in the process is to save the article. In order to print the article, you will need to use the print function under the “File” menu. Below, the arrows are pointing to the appropriate spots in the File menu. If the print function is available on the browser’s tool bar, you might want to use this mechanism instead.
THE DATABASE AS A SEARCH ENGINE

Because *Science Direct* is a full-text database, it might be more convenient to locate pertinent articles in one or more of the journals that Elsevier provides, especially if you become acquainted with the journals offered in the database. Remember, you can always check to see the journals held in the database by clicking on the box with the word “Publications” in it. Below, you can see the search page with the topics already entered into the appropriate boxes and some of the limiters selected. You can see that “Medicine” has been selected in the “Subjects” box; “Abstract, Title, and Keyword” have been selected as the places in which to do the search; and the time period “2000 to present” has been chosen. The search will proceed on the topics within the limits you have just imposed. Of course, the search will need to be conducted in the “Journals” section of the database. To execute the search, you will need to click on the “Search” box now out of sight at the very bottom of the image. See the arrows to locate the various boxes and buttons. In case the words are illegible when you look at this guide, the highlighted choices are “Abstract, Title, Keywords” in the box to the right and “Medicine” in the box to the left at the bottom of the screen.
We need to call attention to two other features. First, the search is being conducted in the “Basic” mode. If you are familiar with Boolean operators and know how to use them, you can use an alternative search mode, namely control-line searching in the “Advanced” mode. The access points to the two options are located on the right side of the image and appear as labels. See the double arrow above. The second feature that needs to be mentioned involves the “Boolean” operators to which we just referred. Notice the capitalized “AND” between the two topics selected for the search. The thick arrow on the left is pointing to this “Boolean” operator. “AND” functions to force the search engine to find articles that have both of the topics: “Smoking” as well as “Lung Cancer.” You need to understand that articles having just one topic alone will not be retrieved by a search engine that has been programmed to do an “AND” search.

The “AND” operator is one of three offered by Science Direct. In the illustration below, you will see all of them displayed. The “OR” operator requires the database search engine to find articles with either of the topics typed into the search box. This operator is best used when two search topics are or are almost synonymous, and you need to search both so as not to lose potentially valuable materials.

The “AND NOT” operator helps you to eliminate unwanted topics or materials that might appear together in one search. For example, in searches involving heart surgery, you might not want to see any articles that cover “Stents.” You would then have to place “Heart Surgery” in the top search box, invoke the “AND NOT” operator and type in “Stents.” That operation would then remove all unwanted articles, those containing information about “Stents.”

Below, you can see that the search engine has located seventy articles on the topics for which you were searching. The articles are sorted by way of date, but you can also sort by relevance. The sort options are located to the right above the article titles. To select articles that you might want to go over carefully later, you must click in the boxes to the left of the article titles to save them.
Here are some more of the articles retrieved. Notice that numbers 8 and 9 have a message added. This message is printed in a different color so that you will be sure to see it. The added information means that the articles are so new that they are still in the process of being published and have not as yet been read through for mistakes. These are on the web, however. If you are in a hurry, you can still retrieve the articles, hoping that the errors are typological and not factual.

SAVING THE SELECTED ARTICLES

After you have selected the articles that you find useful, you will need to go to the bottom of the list where you can make the necessary choices to keep the articles for use later on.
In order to save the articles or to email them to yourself, you will need to register. To register, you must click on the “Save Query” box. See the arrow above.

Below, you can see the registration box that appears. Click on the underlined text on the right side of the box.
Then, fill out the form that you see below.

Enter and check your password by typing it again in the second box and then submit the form by clicking on the appropriate button on the bottom.

From this point on, you will then only have to confirm your name and password on the screen on which you began the registration process. Just fill in your name as you did on the long registration form and add the password. Then, submit the login request.
If you do not wish to go through the saving process just outlined above, you can print each article that you find interesting individually. As you did when you used the database to find the full-text of a desired article, click on the “SummaryPlus” text or go directly to the article and use the browser’s print function to get a hard copy of it.

OTHER FEATURES OF THE DATABASE

There are so many features offered by the creators of Science Direct, it would take many more pages to describe and explain how to use them. Suffice it to say, you can use the database to generate an “Alert” service system. To do so, first create a profile of your interests in the “My Profile” section, and then have the search engine alert you if new articles on your research interests have just been published in the “My Alerts” section.

If this guide does not answer all of your questions, use the database’s help function or talk to one of the reference librarians.