University of
Reading

OCLC FirstSearch

a step-by-step guide

This guide will take you through the basics of searching OCLC FirstSearch and saving the useful references that you find.

OCLC FirstSearch gives access to the following databases: ArticleFirst; Ebooks; ECO; Medline; WorldCat, WorldCatDissertations

Note: The examples used in this guide are from WorldCat and FirstSearch

Background information about OCLC FirstSearch is available on the Library web site at:

www.reading.ac.uk/library/databases

Getting started

1. Open your web browser.

2. Go to the Library's home page at **www.reading.ac.uk/library**

3. Click on the **Databases a-z list** link in the 'E-resources' section on the home page.

4. Use the A-Z list to find the database **and connect to it**

You can also access these databases on OCLC FirstSearch from off-campus machines using the **Off-campus link**; a login is required using your University username and password

For more information about logging on see: **www.reading.ac.uk/library/eresources/accessing**

Searching

On all pages within the site there is a blue menu/navigation bar at the top of the screen which provides quick links to the different databases and search modes.

Basic search

The search page offers several search boxes – the boxes vary depending on which database you choose. For WorldCat they include **Keyword** (for subject searches) **Author**, **Title**, **ISBN** and **Year** (where you can search for a specific year or a range of dates)

1. Select **WorldCat** from the picklist next to the 'Search in database' box (click on the downward pointing arrow and scroll down to the bottom of the list).

2. In the 'keyword' box type in the following search: **food poisoning**

3. Click on **Search**

Search results

Your search results are automatically displayed in summary form on the **List of Records** page - showing the title, and other brief details. The first 10 records are displayed.

Displayed in the grey box towards the top of the screen are details of the database searched, the search you entered, and how many records were found, e.g.:

WorldCat results for: **kw: food and kw: poisoning. (Save Search)**
Records found: **8,270** (English: **6,951**) Rank by: **Number of Libraries**
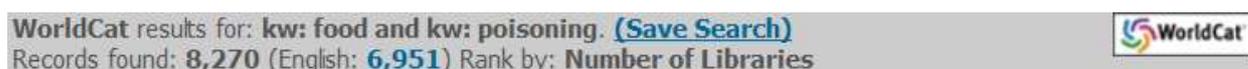
1. Use the **Prev** and **Next** buttons, which appear at the top of the display, to move through your results.

2. Click on the title of an item (which is underlined) to retrieve the detailed display.

   The detailed display of a record from WorldCat will contain similar information to that you would get in the Reading University Library catalogue: title, author, publication details, descriptors (subject headings).

   FirstSearch does not have an accurate record of books held in the University of Reading Library, so to find out if we had this item at Reading you would need to search the library catalogue using an author/title search or a title search if there was no personal author.

3. Use the **Prev** and **Next** buttons, which appear at the top and bottom of the display, to move through your results.

4. In the blue navigation bar at the top of the screen, click on the **List of Records** link to go back to the brief display.

Selecting records to keep

To save records from the database you must mark them - you can mark up to 100 records at a time.

When viewing the List of Records:

If you are viewing the list of records mark individual items by clicking on the **checkbox** to the left of the title.

☑1.   ◆ Toxin /
Author: Cook, Robin, 1940-
Publication: New York : Putnam, 1998
Document: English : Book : Fiction

Mark several records from the list

When viewing a Detailed Record:

If you are viewing an individual record click on the **Mark:** checkbox at the top of the display.

Saving your results

In the blue menu at the top of the screen click on the **Marked Records** link to see a list of all the items you have marked. From the Marked Records screen you can either email, print or export your records to reference manager software such as EndNote.

Emailing

1. Click on the **E-mail** icon near the top of the screen.

2. **Record detail** - in this section you can choose to send the records in Brief or Detailed format.

3. Select Record Format: **Send as plain text**

4. Type in your **full email address**, e.g.:   a.n.other@reading.ac.uk

5. Click on **Send**.

6. Once you have sent your records click on the **Clear Marks** button to remove those records from your Marked List.

Printing

1. The marked list will display brief information about the records you have marked by default. If you want to print the detailed information, click on the **Detailed View** link at the top of the marked list.

2. Click on the **Print** icon at the top of the screen.

3. A box detailing which printer will be used should appear. If not, use your browser's **Print** command to print the reformatted display. (In Netscape click on the print icon in the top menu bar, or select Print from the File menu).

4. Click on the **Return** icon to go back to the usual display.

Exporting your results into EndNote

Click on the Export icon


Check that the **Marked records** option and **EndNote** option is selected and click on

On the File Download screen click on **Open**

EndNote will open automatically.
NB If you have more than one EndNote 'Library' you may need to open the Library in EndNote first if it is not the last Library you used.

The following screen will open. Select the correct Import Filter (in this case WorldCat (OCLC)) and click on **Choose**
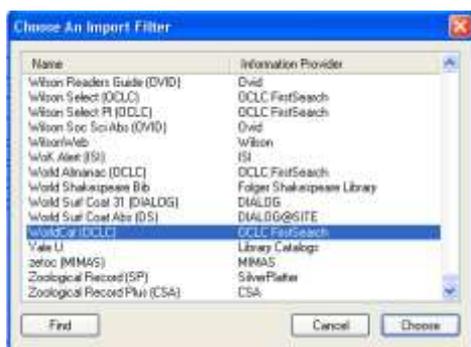
Once the records have been imported into EndNote, close EndNote.

Click on **Marked Records** and click on the **Clear Marks** button to remove the records from the Marked List.

Changing databases

1. Click on the grey **Databases** tab on the top menu bar.

2. Select **ArticleFirst** by clicking in the check box next to it.

3. Click on the **Select** button at the top of the list of databases. This should take you to the Basic Search screen

Search tips

Search terms can be single words or phrases. Use truncation to cover variant spellings or to truncate words, operators to link individual search terms, and brackets to link groups of search terms.

Search operators

There are three basic search operators - these allow you to combine your search words in different ways to narrow or broaden your search. The operators are:

> **AND** - use to combine different concepts, e.g.
>
>> **BSE *and* cattle**

> **OR** - use to include synonyms in your search, e.g.
>
>> **GM crops *or* genetically modified crops**

> **NOT** - use to exclude words from your search, e.g.
>
>> **Charles Dickens *not* Pickwick Papers**

Brackets

Brackets are used to gather together groups of search terms. Use brackets to construct more sophisticated searches. Search statements contained in brackets are carried out before those outside brackets. If you do not use brackets you will not get the right results. For example:

(petroleum or oil) and exploration

In this search statement the OR operation/search (in brackets) is performed before the AND operation.

Plurals

To search for a word and its plural form, add a plus sign + to the singular form. The plus **+** will search for any plural formed with either -s or -es. For example, **giraffe+** retrieves all records that contain giraffe and giraffes.

To search for the plural of words that change form, such as mouse or story, search for both forms and combine them with the Operator OR. For example, to retrieve mouse and its plural, search for **mouse OR mice**.

If you type:	**mammal+**	finds records containing both mammal and its plural, mammals
	wax+	finds records containing wax and its plural, waxes
	leaf OR leaves	finds records containing leaf and its plural, leaves

Truncation

Truncation allows you to search for a term and its variations by entering a minimum of the first three letters of the term followed by an asterisk *. For example, **econ*** retrieves records that contain econometrics, economics, economist, etc.

Be careful when using truncation to search for plurals. A search for **arch*** will retrieve records containing not only arch and arches, but many other unrelated terms such as archdiocese, Archimedes, and archive.

Note: Truncation can only be used after the **third character**.

If you type:	**psychi***	finds records containing psychiatric, psychiatrist, psychiatry, and psychic
	ind*	finds records containing index, indexes, and indices, as well as those containing hundreds of other words that begin with ind– such as India, induce, and indolent

Wildcards

Wildcards are used to represent from zero to any number of additional characters in a search term. They are useful when you are unsure of spelling, when there are alternate spellings, or when you only know part of a term. FirstSearch recognizes two wildcards.

A hash symbol # represents a single character.

A question mark **?**, alone or with a number, represents from zero to any number of additional characters. Include a number if you know the maximum number of characters the wildcard will replace. Otherwise, use the question mark ? alone to represent any number of characters within a single term, including no additional characters.

Note: Wildcards cannot be used at the beginning of a term.

wom#n	finds records containing woman and women
colo?r	finds records containing color, colour, colonizer, and colorimeter
colo?1r	finds records containing color, colour, but not colonizer or colorimeter

Adjacent terms - proximity searching

To find terms within a certain distance of other terms, use the proximity operators **w** or **n** followed by a number.

W (with)

Type w between two terms to search for records containing both terms, in the order typed, with no words between them. Type w and a number (1-25) between two terms to search for records containing both terms, in the order typed, with no more than that number of other words between them.

electrical w wiring	finds records containing first electrical and then wiring with no other words between them
electrical w2 wiring	finds records containing first electrical and then wiring with no more than two other words between them

N (near)

Type **n** between two terms to search for records containing both terms, in any order, with no words between them. Type n and a number (1-25) between two terms to search for records containing both terms, in any order, with no more than that number of other words between them.

overview n 2005	finds records containing overview and 2005 with either word appearing first and with no other words between them
chicken n3 egg	finds records containing chicken and egg with either word appearing first and with no more than three other words between them

You can string together multiple terms and proximity operators, such as **detection n5 art w3 forgery**, and you can use phrases with a proximity operator, such as **space shuttle n4 orbit**.

Limiting searches

Some searches will retrieve far too many records. It is possible to limit your search in a number of ways including publication date and language.

1. Search for: **global warming**

   To limit your results to the last three years do this:

2. When viewing your List of Records click on the **Limit** icon near the top of the screen.

3. Click on: **Limit your results by year**

4. Either **type in a year range** e.g. 2012-2014, or select the most recent three years by clicking in the check boxes.

5. Click on the **Search** button.

6. A summary of your search is displayed in the grey box near the top of the screen e.g.: ArticleFirst results for: yr: 2012-2014 and ((kw: global and kw: warming)).

Search history

Your search history is accessible from the blue menu bar at the top of the screen. Use this screen to recall previously searched items or to further refine your search. Your search history will be saved as you move from database to database, to save time when you choose to perform the same search in different databases.

1. Click on the **Searching** tab and then choose **Previous Searches.**

2. On the Previous Searches screen you can see a list of your searches. Each search is identified using a set number e.g. #3.

   To combine searches you can either select them from the list by clicking in the check box, or type the set numbers in the search box combining the sets with search operators e.g. **#1 and (#4 or #6).**

   Or you can combine a previous search with additional words e.g. **#2 and children.**

3. To perform a previous search in a different database, select the search you want to repeat and then select the database from the picklist.

Advanced searching

The Advanced search mode provides more on-screen search options. In an Advanced search, you may select appropriate indexes from drop-down menus, choose search limits from onscreen options and use Operators to combine searches (see above).

Note: **do not 'limit availability to' University of Reading Library** - FirstSearch does not have an accurate record of books held in the University of Reading Library - you will need to check the Library catalogue for specific titles you identify from WorldCat.

Finishing your search

Click on the **Exit** button at the top of the screen

> ***If you are using an IT Services machine remember to log out before leaving it ***

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