



USING THE SCOPUS DATABASE TO FIND INFORMATION ON A TOPIC/SUBJECT

Hi my name's Susan. This is one of a series of library vodcasts on how to find reliable information to support assignments and theses work. In this vodcast we are going to show you how to use the Scopus database to find published research papers and journal articles.

We have recorded this vodcast using **Windows** and the browser **Internet Explorer** – if you are using a Mac your screen may look slightly different.

Before carrying out a search in Scopus, or any other large database, we strongly recommend that you spend a few minutes planning your search terms so that you can carry out an effective search. Have a look at our short vodcast on how to plan a search for more information on this.

In our example we are looking for information on the **impact of the media on the body image of adolescents**. We'll assume that we have already used the library catalogue to identify books for background reading and perhaps we've accessed the ebrary full text electronic books collection for even more books. However, now we want to look at published research journal articles and papers. The library catalogue does not index these individual papers and to get information on them we must use one of our subject specific databases.

The Scopus database is the largest database of its kind that we have access to and it is very popular with students and staff at Aberdeen University. It has very broad subject content with the only arts/humanities subjects not well covered.

Scopus is available at www.scopus.com. Remember, if you are working from off-campus you will need to change settings on your computer to ensure that you have full access to the database.

Within Scopus you can login for a free account so that you have access to some advanced features however this vodcast does not cover the login feature.

The initial search screen – called the **basic search** – is quite sufficient for most subject searches and we will use this screen in our examples.

As mentioned earlier we are working on an assignment where you have to investigate the impact of the media on the body image of adolescents.

We have 3 separate ideas in this piece of work and we need to make sure that we cover them all. You rarely get the perfect search first time but by thinking about your keywords you will be able to increase your chances of finding relevant results!

Don't rely just on the words that appear in the title of your assignment. Think about alternative words or synonyms, and we think about whether there could be different endings to the words being used.

Once you've thought about your keywords – it's best to write them down in a table – check the database for hints and tips on their search rules. Each database has its own rules.

We will search across Article Title, Abstract and keywords as this gives us a broad search. You can limit your search by selecting different options from the drop down menu.

For this search we will type our search terms for the first idea into the top search box: **"body image" or appearance**. We have enclosed the phrase body image in quotation or speech marks to tell Scopus that we want these words in this exact order.

For the second idea we will use words to describe adolescence and type these into the second box: **teen* or youth* or adolescen***. We have used the * truncation symbol to find different endings to these words teen* will find teen, teens, teenage or teenager

Click on **Search**

We find over 3,000 references. But we haven't covered all aspects of our search yet and we can refine the results with our extra keywords.

We'll add the **media** search term to the **Search within results box** and click on **Go**

Scopus finds nearly 300 records that match these search terms. To refine the search further we can add extra keywords – perhaps the phrase **"eating disorder"** would be useful. However, if you are unable to think of extra keywords then using one of the categories within the Scopus **Refine Results** option can be helpful.

Click on **More** under any of these categories to see a breakdown of these 296 papers by Source title, author name, year of publication, document type and subject area. We'll use document type in this example. 49 of these references are review articles – these are special types of journal article that present a summary of work in a subject over a period of time. If you are reading in a topic for the first time this type of published paper can be useful particularly if has been published in the last 5 years or so. We'll limit the search to these items.

The most recent items are displayed at the top of the list and the older items at the end.

The display is clear with information presented in columns.

Skim down the titles and look for reference that may be relevant to your research.

(Who thinks I need a perfect body?)

Click on the **Show Abstract** link for more information on the paper. Alternatively, the **Show Abstract + Refs** button will display extra information.

When looking at your results list a full text button is displayed if the library has paid for access to a journal. This allows you to link through to read the paper on screen.

In this example we can select from one of 2 suppliers in the SFX pop up window. By clicking on Go for the Springer option we are linked through to the web pages of this particular publisher.

To open the article in full text – look for the PDF option. In the Springer page we then click on the link called **Entire document**.

The document opens up in a new window. You can read this on screen or use the PDF reader toolbar to print off the article or download to your hard disk or pen-drive. Remember that copyright applies to electronic items in the same way as for

paper items – you should not download or print off multiple articles from the same issue number of a journal.

Once you have evaluated your results in Scopus you can select references that are of most interest and output them in various formats – for example you can print them, email them, export them to software such as RefWorks or even produce a simple formatted bibliography of your selected references.

However, all of that is for another vodcast!

Once you have finished your searching you can move onto another database or website. We do not need to logout as we did not login at the beginning - if you did then for security reasons try to remember to logout.

In this vodcast we have demonstrated using the Scopus database to look for information on a subject. We have a series of vodcasts on using information resources – have a look at these to expand your information skills!

If you have any questions or problems just ask for help from a member of library staff.