Using Primo: Looking for books on a topic

This video demonstrates how to use Primo to find books on a topic. You can access Primo from the Institution Page section of MyAberdeen or on the Library homepage.

When you land on Primo, you will see the simple search option. Click on Advanced Search at the right hand side of the search box to switch to the advanced search platform. We would strongly encourage you to log in, as this makes linking to online resources simpler and provides further options to manage your library account. I will demonstrate this now. When looking for books, make sure you switch to the Books+ tab.

Before you start searching for books, it is worth spending some time thinking about your search terms and familiarizing yourself with Primo’s search rules. Creating a good search strategy will save you time and affect the quality of your search results.

We will use the following question as our example:

“Discuss the social and economic changes in the United States during World War Two”

As you can see in this planning grid, we have broken down our topic and identified concepts, or sets of keywords, which we will then type into the search boxes in the advanced search platform on Primo. So our first concept is: “world war II” OR “second world war”, our second concept will be “united states” and the third one is economic. All sets of keywords are linked with the word AND instructing Primo to find material where all your keywords appear in the title, author, description or subject fields of items in our collection.

Primo returns 25 results but we can improve the search by adding an asterisk after econom in the third line. This instructs Primo to include in the search multiple endings to this word. When we do this, the number of results changes to 39.

Let’s see what happens if we add further synonyms to our search terms, bearing in mind that different authors may use different terms for the same concept. So we will add: OR USA after “united states” in the second line, and: OR social OR sociolog* after econom* in the third line.

This search produces 134 results. You can narrow your results from the options on the left hand side of the screen. Some of the refinement options available include by subject, author and year range.

If a book is online, right-click on its title and open it in a new tab. You will be taken to the online library holding the book. If a book is in paper format click on Availability to find out if it is available and, its location in the library.

For further guidance on Primo, click the Help button at the top of the search screen, see our other videos, or contact members of library staff. More help can also be found online.

Contact information at: bit.ly/InfoConsultants