Planning your literature search

Formulate your own literature search plan

1) Key concepts
What is your research question? What are the key concepts?

2) Selecting the keywords:
Brainstorm or mind map all the words that describe the subject you’re looking for:
3) Truncation, wildcards and phrases

Question: Can you truncate any words using *?

Question: Can terms be searched as “phrases”?

4) Connect ideas

Group the different aspects of your search together with the appropriate Boolean operators.

5) Identify limits

Question: What types of document are you looking for (e.g. journal articles, patents, standards, legislation, news?)

Question: What age of material are you looking for? How far back do you want to go?
Question: What language/s are you looking for? What geographical location/s are you looking for?

Question: Any other limits? E.g. human, animal, age of research participants?

6) What resources and databases do you need to search?

Further Help with literature searching:

- Planning your literature search
  - [http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers/find-information/plan-your-literature-search](http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers/find-information/plan-your-literature-search)
- Conducting your literature search
  - [http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers/find-information/conduct-your-literature-review](http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers/find-information/conduct-your-literature-review)
- Making research information come to you
  - [http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers/find-information/make-information-come-to-you](http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers/find-information/make-information-come-to-you)

The library’s Research Services team are available to help:

- E: [librarians@le.ac.uk](mailto:librarians@le.ac.uk)
- [http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers](http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers)

Adapted, with permission, from materials created by Loughborough University.