

HFT Stuttgart Library

Tutorial for database research

Glossary

A

Abstract

Brief summary of a scientific text summarizing its subjects and content.

Alert

Some databases provide a feature to set up a so-called alert for a specified query. The user receives an email sent automatically by the database when new documents matching the search criteria are added.

B

Basic Index

Comprises several or all searchable → *data fields* of a database.

Bibliographic data

Contains uniquely defining attributes of a text. The data usually consists of information on author(s) and title of an article, the publication containing it (source), a document number like → *ISBN* or → *ISSN* as well as, if applicable, an → *abstract*, → *standardized* → *keywords* and other assortative input.

Bibliographic database

These databases, as opposed to → *full text databases*, don't provide full texts but only citations / references containing an article's → *bibliographic data*.

C

Catalog request

Leads the user to a website that enables the user to search catalogs of libraries, document delivery services, book sellers or the internet for the full text of an article by means of its → *bibliographic data*.

Citation

Shares three possible meanings with the word → *reference*, all of which are used interchangeably depending on the particular database's definition:

- comprises certain information - at the very least author and title - allocated to one specific document recorded within a database; synonymous with bibliographic data
- defines literature an author used and refers to in his own text
- defines literature that refers **back** to the respective text

Classification

In a library-related database: structure on the basis of defined rules that files a publication or article within a system of subjects. Apart from an ordering alphabetical / numerical taxonomy system, it contains → *standardized* → *keywords* that specify the subject area of an article.

D

Data fields

Elements of a → *record* that contain the → *bibliographic data*.

DBIS

"Datenbanken-Informationssystem": unites the commercial databases the library has purchased licenses for with numerous free databases for various subjects. A detailed tutorial for the system is available.

DOI

„Digital Object Identifier“: the digital equivalent of an → *ISBN* or → *ISSN*.

F

Feed

Feeds use a specific data format (e.g. RSS) to extract parts of a digital text from a dynamic website. This information can then be imported into other websites or special reader software.

The purpose of a feed is to keep its user informed about a special area of interest without him or her having to access the informing website and scanning for new entries themselves.

Full text database

As opposed to → *bibliographic databases*, full text databases usually provide access to the full text of a document. In some cases full texts are available but must be purchased in order to be viewed or downloaded.

I

ISBN

"International Standard Book Number": allocated to books (and similar publication types) to uniquely identify them.

ISSN

"International Standard Serial Number": allocated to → *periodicals* to uniquely identify them.

K

Keyword

Particular, usually → *standardized* word describing a document or filing said document under a subject within a → *classification*. Users can often find documents similar to what they have found by means of linked keywords.

P

Periodical

Publication consisting of several articles that is published on a regular, serial basis. Usually refers to journals and magazines.

R

Record

Entity of → *bibliographic data* of one single article within a database.

Reference management software

Saves bibliographic data of articles that the user wants to cite and imports citations / references based on an established or customized style into his or her documents.

Popular software: Citavi, EndNote, BibTex etc.

RSS

→ *Feed*

S

standardized

Standardized → *keywords* are allocated to documents by persons in charge of a database on the basis of a system of rules. They are used on → *records* to represent the recorded document's subject and enable the user to search for similar articles.

T

Truncation

In general: reducing words to their root. For database research, special "wildcard" characters are usually added to these roots to find all possible variations.

A detailed description on how to use this method is available in the [research pointers tutorial](#).

Thesaurus

Some databases feature a Thesaurus that can help you find search terms synonymous with your query.

V

VPN

Using a VPN connection, your PC becomes part of the campus network. That way, you can access resources otherwise requiring you to log in on one of the university's computers and use databases licensed by the library. For further information visit the HFT Computer Center homepage.

W

Web Portal

Here: Some home pages of database websites are constructed as a web portal. Functions for searching or browsing are united. Furthermore, elements showing information on new developments or data from parts of the website requiring the user to log in are often shown on this page.