



Tips for Technical Writing Research in Prescott Library (especially on the webpage)

1. First, think about the **type** of material you would like to include:
books, government information, journal & magazine articles, newspaper articles, technical reports, standards, statistics, patents.
2. Next, determine the best place to locate this material:
 - a. The **Library Catalog** is the best overall place for finding books and government documents owned by the library or accessed through its webpage. Another good place for government material is the link **Gov Info**. Useful federal websites include USA.gov and NTIS.gov. The library has several excellent e-book collections. Click on **Books** then **Electronic Book** collections to see the list.
 - b. **Databases** is your best starting point for locating journal articles. Then, click on **Subject List** to find our databases arranged by College and subject.

The best database to use will depend on your topic. Currently, the *best all purpose* database with many fulltext articles is EBSCO's **Academic Search Complete**. However, it is always a good idea to use a variety of databases. **CQ Researcher** contains fulltext reports on a variety of topics, complete with graphics, footnotes, and links to other resources.

News articles can be found under the link **More than Newspapers**. At present, **Lexis-Nexis Academic** provides the most complete access to free, fulltext newspaper articles.

Your teacher may require you to use scholarly (or peer reviewed) journals, such as The Journal of Psychology, rather than popular magazines, such as Psychology Today. The good news is that most databases will enable you to limit your search to scholarly journals simply by checking off a box. Other databases such as Engineering Village will search scholarly journals when you click on **Limit By...Journal Article**.

- c. Statistics can be found in many places. One excellent source is the Statistical Abstract of the United States, a government publication located in paper in the Ref Dept and also available online under the link

Databases > Reference Resources > Facts & Statistics. Another very useful online source is **FedStats** located under the **Gov Info** link.

- d. Patents can be found under **Gov Info > Federal websites > Patent and Trademark Office**. **Google Patents** is also a great resource.

3. Now, beginning your search:

- a. When conducting a search, use a variety of words for the same term or concept. For example, if you are researching alcohol and its effects upon children, use synonyms for the word *children*: youth, adolescents, teens or teenagers, etc. Also, use Boolean search operators (*and, or, not*). For example, the search phrase “alcohol and schools” might bring up more results than simply “alcohol in schools.” Try it both ways.

4. Finally, locating your material:

- a. The library contains material in many formats: hardcopy, online, microfilm/fiche. Sometimes the item you need can be found in more than one format. If you cannot locate an item on the shelf, check and see if it may have a URL or be available on microfilm/fiche.
- b. Remember, if the item is:
 - A. a **reference book**, it will be located on the main floor in the Ref Dept.
 - B. a **hard copy federal government document**, it will be in the basement, unless it is marked reference, in which case see Part A.
 - C. a **docmicro**, it will be in the microfiche file cabinets in the back on the main floor. Copies can be made on the 3rd floor behind their Info Desk.
 - D. a **Louisiana state document**, it will be located on the blue bookshelves at the very back of the main floor (just past the Curriculum Library).
 - E. an **electronic book or document**, click on the URL. You can choose to print out just those pages you need.
 - F. a **fulltext electronic journal article**, simply print it out. If it is in pdf format, you must click on the Adobe printer symbol to print.

Notes: *This journal is available at the Prescott Library* indicates that the library has a hardcopy of this journal on the 3rd floor. Click on Search the Louisiana Tech Catalog to obtain the call number. But! Be aware that some subscriptions may have been cancelled or transferred to an online version.

LS Check LinkSource for more information indicates the **possibility** for fulltext access elsewhere outside that database.

Request this item through ILLiad indicates this article or book can only be obtained through interlibrary loan. Log on to make a request or click on the link **First Time Users** to set up your free account.

- c. Information of local interest, such as Ruston or Louisiana in general, is often harder to locate. On the library homepage be sure and check these sources: **Gov Info > Louisiana websites**; the **Bayou State Periodical Index**; under **Newspapers** try these state publications: the Advocate (Baton Rouge), the Ruston Daily Leader, the Shreveport Times, the Tech Talk (La Tech), and the Times Picayune (New Orleans); also search **Regional Business News** and **Lexis-Nexis Academic**.

Information on Louisiana Tech University can be found in many places, including the Ref Dept, the library's Archives department on the 4th floor, or in sources such as the school yearbook, *The Lagniappe*, and the school newspaper, *The Tech Talk*, with back issues and an index located on the 3rd floor.

Moreover, did you know that an index to the *Ruston Daily Leader* is maintained on the 3rd floor of the library?

Also, contact these groups: the Ruston Chamber of Commerce, the City of Ruston and its departments, La Tech's Enterprise Center, 257-3537, and La Tech's CEnIT, Center for Entrepreneurship and Information Technology, 257-2938.

5. Other libraries:

Check the resources at other university libraries throughout Louisiana under **Catalogs > Louisiana Academic Libraries** (where material can be borrowed directly using your free LaLINC card). Also, search the Lincoln Parish Library at www.mylpl.org and Ouachita Parish Library at www.ouachita.lib.la.us.

Interlibrary Loan (**ILLiad**) is available to all students for items you need but cannot locate otherwise. Click on **Library Services** then **InterLibrary Delivery Services** for more information on how to order those items.