Outline workshop WoS advanced and Block search, 20 March 2019
By Norma Fötsch, NSM Library Team, Radboud University

Web of Sciences advanced
Web of Science instruction videos

Already done: basic cited search

During the workshop:

  Cited search advanced (search for more articles of the author(...) of the golden paper
  Advanced search (combining search terms with AND, OR, NOT, index search)
  Combining search sets via search history (block search)
  Creating e-mail alerts
  Analyzing results

Block search

Block search = search terms in thematic groups (blocks), covering the various aspects of a topic

Why? = to create an overview of potential search terms

Relevance? = Correct use of Boolean search operators
  Complete set of important keyword
  Reproducible

Example:

What is known about the development of radioactive waste policy in the Benelux from 1980-1995?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 1: radioactive</th>
<th>Block 2: waste</th>
<th>Block 3: policy</th>
<th>Block 4: Benelux</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>radioact*</td>
<td>waste</td>
<td>polic*</td>
<td>Benelux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radiation</td>
<td>disposal*</td>
<td>polit*</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atomic</td>
<td>storage*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuclear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Luxemb*urg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Search string:

TS=(radioact* OR radiation OR atomic OR nuclear) AND TS=(waste OR disposal* OR storage*) AND TS=(Benelux OR Netherlands OR Belgium OR Luxemb*urg) AND TS=(polic* OR polit*)

Use the following filter to complete your search:

Document type: Articles and Publication

Block search step by step

1) Formulate a literature search question. What do you want to find?
2) Identify the key elements. i.e., establish what the main concepts of your search question are.
3) Define your blocks (main topics)
4) Collect search terms for each block. In every search block, you should include all relevant search terms and variants. Try to include as many relevant terms as possible, since this makes your search more sensitive. Use Thesaurus terms, keywords and subject terms, too. Some useful websites: [https://www.thesaurus.com/](https://www.thesaurus.com/), Collins Thesaurus, IATE (Interactive Terminology for Europe).
5) Set up a search string. The search terms within a block are combined with OR, the blocks are combined with an AND operator. Don’t forget the search techniques like phrase searching, nesting terms, proximity operators, truncation words etc.

Want to know more about it:

- [Search techniques](#)
- [Systematic search techniques](#)