

Organizing a Literature Search

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Please turn your cell phones to vibrate or off. Thank you!

Ed-Tech Tuesday

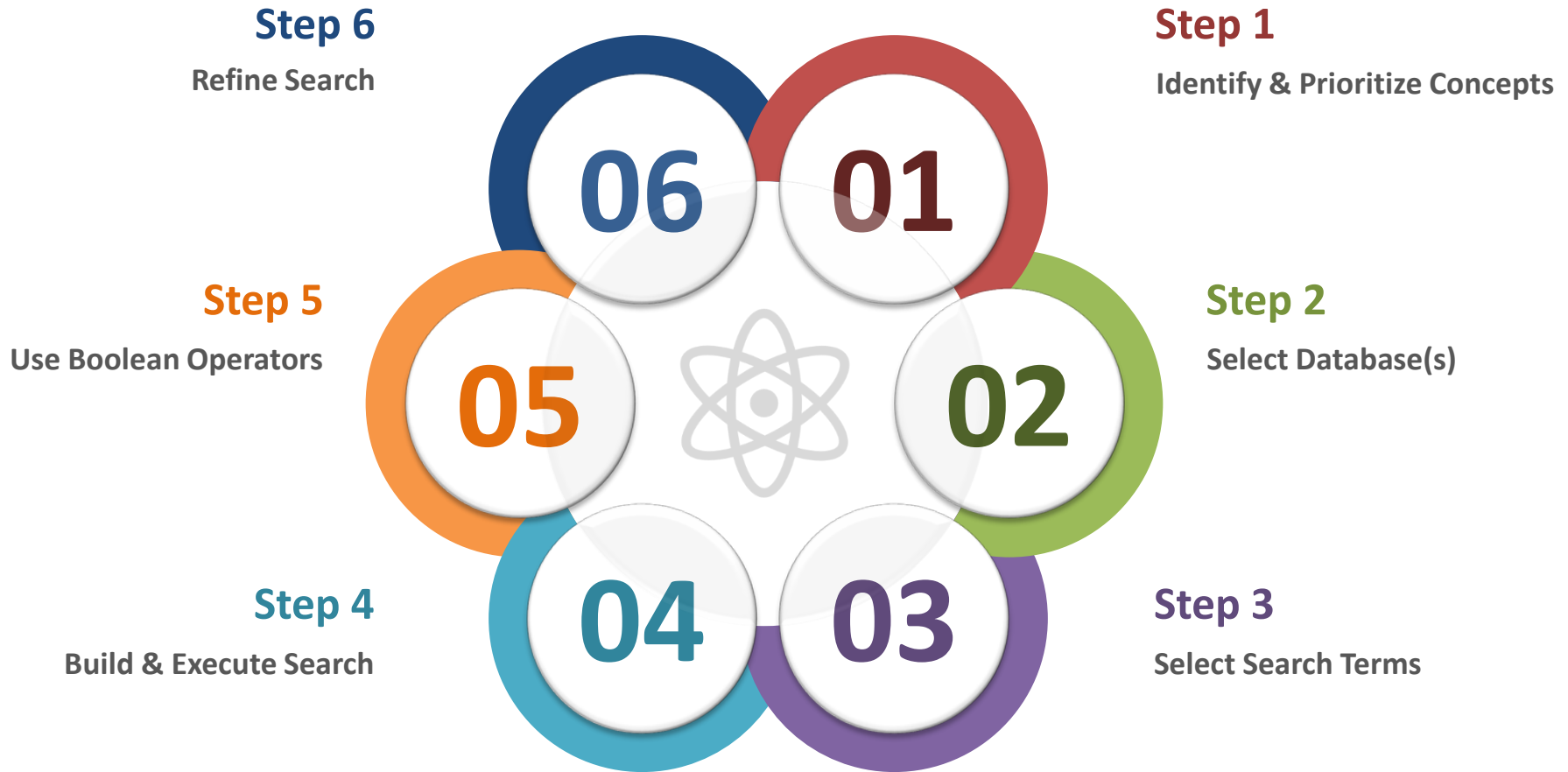
Objectives

- Describe the steps in the search cycle
- List services available that can assist with the literature search process
- Identify resources, such as databases and other tools, suitable for meeting specific information needs

Before you begin searching...

- What question do you want to answer?
- How will you use your search results?

The Search Cycle



Step 1

Identify and Prioritize Concepts



- Identify the primary concepts you need to search
- Prioritize your list of concepts and search for the two most important concepts first

Why is it important to prioritize your list of concepts if you have more than two?

Step 2

Select Database(s)



- Points to consider:
 - What resource(s) provide the most comprehensive coverage of the subjects and/or disciplines relevant to your topic?
 - What kinds of materials will be useful (e.g. journal literature, book chapters, dissertations, non-print items, etc.)?

How do you determine which database(s) to search?

What is the difference between a database and an interface?

Step 3

Select Search Terms



- Controlled vocabulary
 - Curated list of preferred terms (subject headings/descriptors)
- Keywords
 - Typically derived from fields such as the title, abstract, or text

What are some of the advantages of using controlled vocabulary terms in searches? What advantages does keyword searching provide?

Step 4

Build & Execute Search



- Search your primary concepts separately
 - Each concept may have multiple search terms that are relevant to that concept

How does the database (e.g. MEDLINE, CINAHL, Embase, etc.) and the interface (Ovid, EBSCO, Web of Science, etc.) you are searching in affect your use of controlled vocabulary and keyword searching?

Step 5

Use Boolean Operators



- AND
 - Retrieves records that contain all concepts connected by the operator
- OR
 - Retrieves records that contain any of the concepts connected by the operator
- NOT
 - Retrieves records that exclude the concept following the operator

Sometimes a visual helps! → <http://library.ouhsc.edu/searching/boolean>

Step 6

Refine Search



- Apply limits
- Browse retrieval
- Revise search as needed

What are some useful limits that you have incorporated into your searching?

After the search...

- Managing search results
- Finding full text
- Documenting your search strategy/history

Resources

- Librarians
 - Need help? Please reach out! → [Ask a Librarian](#)
- Services
 - [Mediated Searches](#)
 - [Instruction / Consultations](#)
- Content & Tools
 - [Databases A-Z](#)
 - [Citation and Document Management](#)

Questions? Comments?

Thank you!