

Search strategy checklist

Sometimes when you're searching the library catalogue and databases, you don't return the results you want. You may find that you are returning too many hits, or too few.

Too many results

- Be more specific with your search words- add more words, use different words (synonyms), put phrases in quotation marks, etc.
- Use the limiters in the **Refine my results** column to reduce your results by selecting a date range, resource type, Peer-reviewed, etc. You can use a combination of limiters to refine your results.
- Try using the **AND** operator. **AND** will decrease your search results and you will get fewer hits. Make sure you type **AND** in CAPITAL LETTERS.
- Try using the **NOT** operator. **NOT** will decrease your search results, and you will get fewer hits. Make sure you type **NOT** in CAPITAL LETTERS.
- Search for a phrase in quotation marks, e.g. "global warming."

Not enough results

- Did you spell your search terms correctly? Consult a dictionary.
- Check the words you are using. Are you sure they are the best words? Check a thesaurus, or online to find other words you could use.
- Take out some of the words.
- Have you found at least one good item? Click into the record and click on **Subjects** to take you to more items on the same topic.
- Allow for alternative spellings, e.g. use organi?e to find organise and organize.
- Use * to broaden your search, e.g. engag* will include the words 'engage, engagement, engaging' in your search.
- Check that you haven't limited your search too much in the **Refine my results** column.

Wrong kind of Information?

Check the coverage of the databases you are searching in. There's no sense searching a nursing database for theology content!