

Intro to Databases

Welcome to the NWACC Library's Introduction to Databases tutorial. You might know that you need to do some research for a class, but you don't know how. Or, you might have an instructor who told you to use the Library's databases to complete an assignment, but you're not sure what they're talking about. In either scenario this short lesson will be helpful.

So, what is a database, anyway?

A database is a collection of related information organized to make the research process more efficient and precise. Usually, when people talk about a Library database, they mean an online service to which the Library subscribes that contains information that can be used for class assignments or research. The information found in these resources is the credible type that you'll need for your college-level assignments.

Here are the kinds of resources available through the Library's databases:

- Full text access to thousands of journals, magazines, and newspapers
- Over 100,000 ebooks
- Thousands of films
- Millions of high-resolution images
- Test Preparation
- Career Information
- And more!

And, as a student at NWACC, you can use these resources anytime, from any computer with Internet access!

Here's how.

If you're on the Library's website, available at www.nwacc.edu/library, you can click the Research Databases link. You'll be asked to log into My NWACC Connection. Once you've logged in, you'll see an alphabetical list of Library databases with descriptions and links to tutorials. Simply click the title of the database you wish to use.

You can also get to the Library's databases from NWACC's home page, www.nwacc.edu. Log into My NWACC Connection, click the Library tab at the top of the screen, and you'll be ready to access all of the Library's database content.

If you're not sure which database to use, but know, for example, that you need an ebook, you can click the ebooks link on the left side of the screen. Only databases containing those materials will appear. You can also choose Articles and Reference, Images and Videos, or Career and Test Prep.

Why should you use Library databases instead of simply conducting an Internet search?

As I mentioned before, the Library's subscription databases contain information sources that are appropriate to complete assignments. These are published articles from journals, newspapers, and magazines; electronic versions of books; films developed by academic production companies; works of art from collections around the world, and much more. The databases are an electronic library, ready to use anytime.

Remember, ANYONE can write a Wikipedia article and ANYONE can create a website devoted to any subject they choose. This doesn't mean that they know what they're talking about or that they're treating the subject in an unbiased, objective manner.

Using the Library's databases instead of, or in addition to, the Internet, helps you refine your search results to sources that have gone through a formal publication process, which means they're more likely to be credible and appropriate for college-level research. Unlike many open-access websites—which have a tendency to bury or even omit important information about the content creators, sources used, and publication dates—library databases consistently provide all the publication information you need to critically evaluate the information resources you find. In addition, these details will help you create accurate citations for your works cited or reference lists, which are fundamental components of academic honesty.

If you have any questions about the Library's databases, please don't hesitate to contact a reference librarian in-person at the Library, located on the first floor in Burns Hall, by phone at 479-619-4244, or by emailing library@nwacc.edu.