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Database Searching: **Advanced**

library@tcd.ie | www.tcd.ie/library | [@tcdlibrary](https://twitter.com/tcdlibrary)



LEARNING OUTCOMES



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When you complete this session, you should be able to:

- Understand the main frameworks to enable you to formulate your research question
- Use advanced database features including controlled vocabulary
- Build an effective search strategy
- Save, export and manage your search results





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Formulating Your Research Question



LIBRARY RESOURCES ON DEVELOPING RESEARCH QUESTIONS



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Sage Research Methods

Supercharging research

Search within Sage Research Methods



[Advanced Search](#)

- Overview
- Philosophy of Research
- Defining a Topic
- Reviewing the Literature
- Developing a Researchable Question

SAGE Research Methods database:
Tools>Project Planner



Constructing research questions : doing ...



Developing research questions...

FRAMEWORKS TO HELP YOU FOCUS YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION



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A research question should be specific, focused, clearly formulated and well defined (no ambiguity). Consider using frameworks like PICO and SPIDER.

PICO

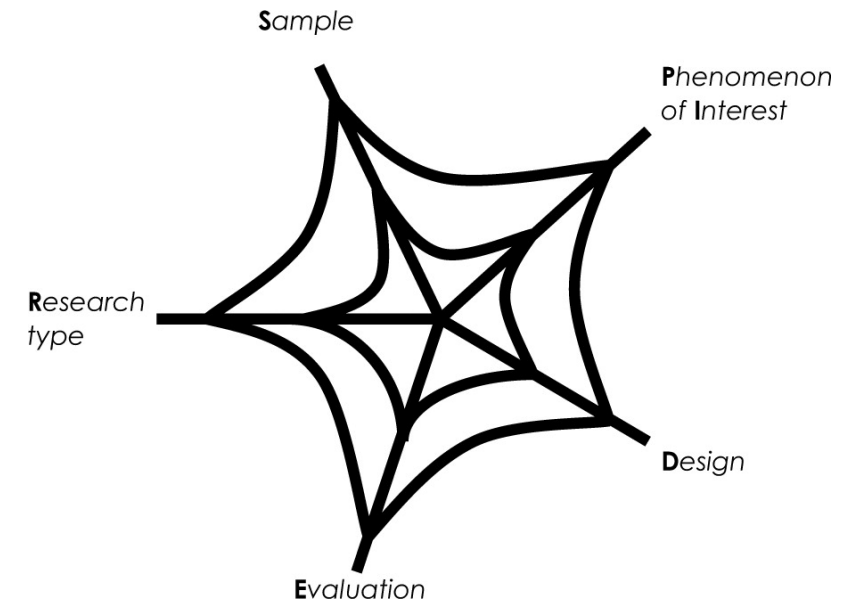
Population
/Problem

Intervention
/Exposure

Comparison

Outcome

SPIDER





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Database Recap



SAVE YOUR RESEARCH!



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Most databases have a way for users to make an account and save their searches.

The screenshot displays two database interfaces. The top interface is for Clarivate Web of Science, featuring a navigation bar with 'Smart Search', 'Advanced Search', and 'Research Assistant'. A red box highlights the 'Sign In' and 'Register' buttons, with the 'Register' button showing a user ID '033285'. The bottom interface is for ProQuest, showing a header with 'Access provided by TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN'. A red box highlights the user account icons (refresh, folder, and profile) in the bottom right corner.

Clarivate

English ▾ Products

Web of Science™

Smart Search Advanced Search Research Assistant ⓘ

Sign In ▾ 033285 Register

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New search Browse by ▾ Research tools ▾ Links ▾

MyEBSCO

ProQuest

Access provided by TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

⌵

🔄 📁 👤

ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS



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research-ebSCO-com.elib.tcd.ie/c/oaovxf/viewer/html/i164ynexdv

Reluctant warriors: Premillennialism and politics in the Moral Majority.

Published in: Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Sep 1991, APA PsycInfo

By: Wilcox, Clyde; Linzey, Sharon; Jelen, Ted G.

INTRODUCTION

Format settings

Font settings

Library Menu: Trinity College Dublin

GALE

Gale Research Complete

Q Search: [] Databases Advanced Search

View Options: []

Full Text Original Document (PDF)

Drama pedagogy: subverting and remaking learning in the thirdspace.

Authors: Janet Dutton and Kathy Rushton
Date: June 2022

From: Australian Journal of Language and Literacy (Vol. 45, Issue 2)
Publisher: Australian Literacy Educators' Association

Document Type: Report
Length: 9,069 words
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s44020-022-00010-6>

EXPLORE

More Like This

Fostering Critical Translingual Writing in an Elementary English Dominant Classroom: In this...
Language Arts, Nov. 2021.

Databases A-Z

Advanced search - EBSCOhost

Drama pedagogy: subverting and remaking learning in the thirdspace.

Search articles, ebooks & more

The Library of Trinity College Dublin - Leabharlann Choláiste na Tríonóide

Search: [] AND [] AND []

Results Cite Send To... Download

Language selection dropdown menu:

- Bahasa Indonesia
- Ceština
- Dansk
- Deutsch
- English (selected)
- Español
- Français
- Hrvatski
- Italiano
- Magyar
- Nederlands
- Norsk
- Polski
- Português (Brasil)
- Português (Portugal)
- Română
- Slovenčina
- Slovenski
- Suomi
- Svenska
- Tiếng Việt
- Türkçe
- Ελληνικά
- Русский
- עברית
- عربي
- فارسی
- हिंदी
- ភាសាខ្មែរ
- 한국어
- 日本語
- 简体中文
- 繁體中文

Language settings

DATABASE ELEMENTS



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Search articles, ebooks & more

The Library of Trinity College Dublin - Leabharlann Choláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath | Searching: [MEDLINE](#)

Advanced Search

[Basic search](#)

	Fields: Title, Abstract, etc.	All fields
AND	Boolean operators	All fields
AND		All fields

[+](#) Add row | [-](#) Delete row | ☐ Suggest subject terms [i](#)

[Clear all](#)

[Search](#)

Filters

Search options

MEDLINE -- MeSH 2026

Controlled vocabulary

Limit your results

Filters & Limiters

- ☐ Linked Full Text
- ☐ Peer Reviewed
- ☐ Abstract Available
- ☐ English Language
- ☐ EBM Reviews

[Clear all](#)

FOCUSED SEARCHING – FIELDS & FILTERS



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A database record is broken down into parts or **fields** e.g. author, title, abstract etc.

Advanced searching focuses on **title or abstract fields**.

Title or Abstract - XB

Title - TI

Named Person - NP

Limiters or **filters**, are restrictions on your search that can be applied by making selections within the database e.g **peer reviewed** articles.

Filters Search options MEDLINE -- MeSH 2026

Limit your results

☐ Linked Full Text

☐ Peer Reviewed

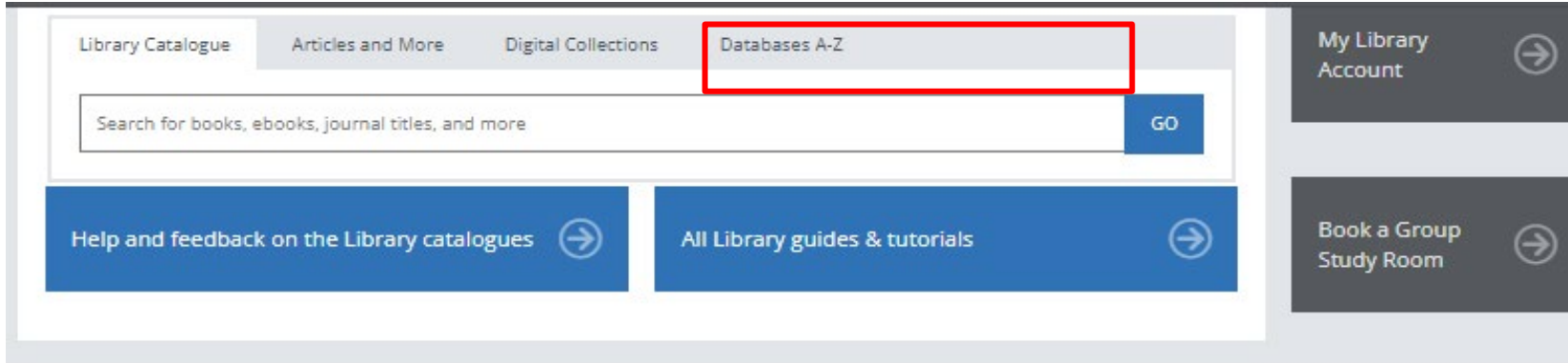
☐ Abstract Available

☐ English Language

FINDING RELEVANT DATABASES

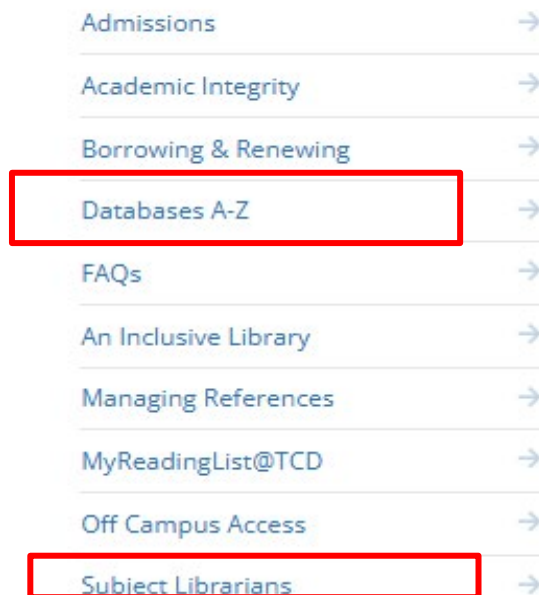


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What does good
academic integrity
practice look like?

[Check out our study and referencing tips](#)





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Using Controlled Vocabulary



CONTROLLED VOCABULARY



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Controlled vocabulary also known as
subjects, subject authority, thesaurus,
descriptors, MeSH

- defined tags within the database
- Retrieves items indexed under a particular topic
- Doesn't retrieve jargon, slang, or newer terms

☐	 Health
☐	 Adolescent Health
☐	 Child Health
☐	 Family Health
☐	 Health Status
☐	 Indigenous Health
☐	 Maternal-Child Health
☐	 Men's Health

CINAHL Subjects example

WHY USE CONTROLLED VOCABULARY?



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- **Broadens** search when used in combination with keyword search
- Capture **full potential** of database (historical and current terms)
- **Expected** in systematic type reviews (scoping, systematic, rapid etc), e.g. for writing a dissertation, a review, or an article
- Not all subjects will exist within a database even if it uses subject headings



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Building your search strategy



SEARCH STRATEGY



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- Break down your research question into concepts
- Choose your databases (subject based, multidisciplinary, approx. 3)
- Develop a set of terms or **keywords** to search systematically
- Use **controlled vocabulary** (if available)
- Use appropriate search techniques



COMMON DATABASE SEARCH TECHNIQUES



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Phrase searching “global warming” (finds exact phrase)

Truncation educat* (finds all word endings e.g. educator(s), education, educational, educating)

Title/Abstract – targets search in specific parts or fields of a database record

Proximity/adjacency search – x NEAR/3 y (words near each other in any order)

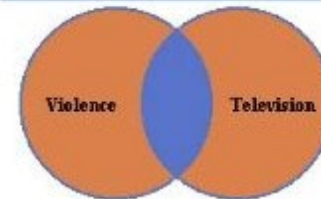
Boolean operators – AND (narrows) OR (broadens) NOT (use sparingly)

Controlled Vocabulary – Database index terms used in advanced searches for optimal results

To search systematically you need to use:

- **Controlled vocabulary** (where available).
- Your own **keywords** (inc. synonyms and variant spellings).
- Boolean operators (**AND, OR**).
- Techniques such as phrase searching "..."

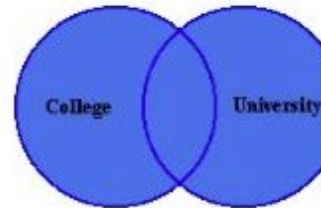
Boolean Searching



violence **AND**
television

AND

is used to **narrow** a search.
This will retrieve records that
have both keywords.



college **OR**
university

OR

is used to **expand** a search.
This will retrieve records that
have either keyword. It's
useful for synonyms.

A Venn diagram and description of Boolean searching.



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Over To You



SAMPLE RESEARCH TOPIC



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Topic: social media & climate
activism in young people



FRAMING & REFINING YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION



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PICO

Population/
Problem
YOUNG
PEOPLE

Intervention/
Exposure
SOCIAL
MEDIA

Comparison
No SOCIAL
MEDIA

Outcome
CLIMATE
ACTIVISM



What is the impact of social media influencers on youth climate activism?

KEYWORD EXERCISE: CONCEPTS



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Concepts

YOUNG PEOPLE

SOCIAL MEDIA

**CLIMATE
ACTIVISM**

- Take 1 minute to note down keywords for each concept
- Discuss with your neighbour for 2 mins

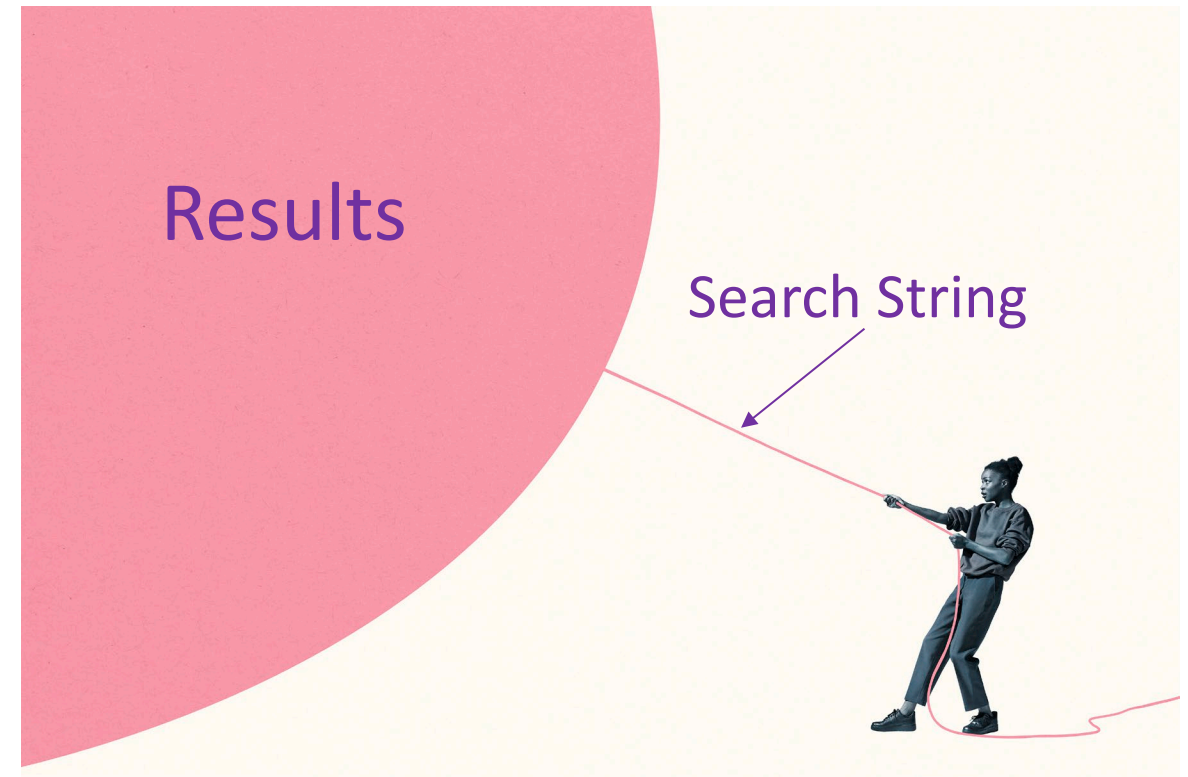
TRANSLATING YOUR QUESTION INTO A DATABASE QUERY



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Create and document
your **search/keyword strings**:

- “climate activism” OR “eco activism” OR “Environmental activism” OR “climate protest*” AND
- “social media” OR tiktok OR facebook OR insta* OR x OR twitter OR influencer* OR greenfluencer* AND
- Adolescen* OR youth OR “young people” OR teen* OR “gen z”



SEARCH STEPS



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1. Copy and paste prepared terms from master Word document
2. Search concept keyword strings one by one
3. Combine (using **OR**) with appropriate controlled vocabulary (if present)
4. Then combine main concept results using **AND**
5. Save search (name appropriately and date search)
6. Export results

SEARCH CONCEPTS ONE BY ONE

CLARIVATE: WEB OF SCIENCE



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Clarivate

English ▾

Web of Science™

Smart Search

Advanced Search

+ Research Assistant ⓘ

Sign In ▾

EX
ENU

📖

🕒

🔍

🔔

DOCUMENTS

RESEARCHERS

Search in: Web of Science Core Collection ▾ Editions: All ▾

FIELD SEARCH

QUERY BUILDER

CITED REFERENCES

STRUCTURE

Topic ▾

Example: oil spill* mediterranean

Adolescen* OR youth OR "young people" OR teen* OR "gen z"

×

+ Add row

+ Add date range

×

Clear

🔍

Search

USE **AND** TO COMBINE MAIN CONCEPTS

CLARIVATE: WEB OF SCIENCE



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www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/advanced-search

Session Queries **Combine concepts with AND**

Build a new query based

☒ 3/3 Combine Sets ^

And

Or

☐ 0/4 Combine

☐ Clear History

☐ 4	#1 AND #2 AND #3	37	Add to query ▾			
☐ 3	"climate activism" OR "eco-activism" OR "Environmental activism" OR "climate protest*" (Topic)	1,917	Add to query ▾			
☐ 2	"social media" OR tiktok OR facebook OR insta* OR x OR twitter OR influencer* OR greenfluencer* (Topic)	5,915,424	Add to query ▾			
☐ 1	Adolescen* OR youth OR "young people" OR teen* OR "gen z" (Topic)	1,045,111	Add to query ▾			

SAVE Search

SEARCH CONCEPTS ONE BY ONE

EBSCOHOST: ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE



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Search articles, ebooks & more

The Library of Trinity College Dublin - Leabharlann Choláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath | Searching: [Academic Search Complete](#)

Adolescen* OR youth OR "young people" OR teen* OR "gen z"



[Basic search](#)

Title or Abstract - XB



Select **Title or Abstract**
field

USE OR TO COMBINE KEYWORD/SUBJECT TERMS: EBSCOHOST ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE



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research-ebSCO-com.elib.tcd.ie/c/oaovxf/personalization/recent-activity/search-history 70% ☆

IT Services New Tab my.tcd.ie A-Z Databases: web of... Microsoft Office Home Blackboard Library Office 365 Trinity Web Systems >>

0 selected

☐ S3
S1 OR S2
Added: 12:11 PM • Results: 2,200,950
Find all my search terms Apply equivalent subjects

Combine with OR operator

☐ S2
DE "Social media" OR DE "Backchannels (Social media)" OR DE "Blogs" OR DE "Computer bulletin boards" OR DE "Online chat" OR DE "Online social networks" OR DE "Podcasting" OR DE "Social bookmarks" OR DE "Social media in business" OR DE "Social media in education" OR DE "Social media in medicine" OR DE "Theater & social media" OR DE "Wikis"
Added: 12:11 PM • Results: 110,562
Find all my search terms Apply equivalent subjects

☐ S1
XB ("social media" OR tiktok OR facebook OR insta* OR x OR twitter OR influencer* OR greenfluencer*)
Added: 12:11 PM • Results: 2,153,791
Find all my search terms Apply equivalent subjects

USE **AND** TO COMBINE MAIN CONCEPTS

EBSCOHOST: ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE



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research-ebSCO-com.elib.tcd.ie/c/oaovxf/personalization/recent-activity/search-history

0 selected

- ☐ S10
S9 AND S6 AND S3
Added: 12:11 PM • Results: 25
[Find all my search terms](#) [Apply equivalent subjects](#)
- ☐ S9
S7 OR S8
Added: 12:11 PM • Results: 4,167
[Find all my search terms](#) [Apply equivalent subjects](#)
- ☐ S8
DE "Environmental activism"
Added: 12:11 PM • Results: 3,262
[Find all my search terms](#) [Apply equivalent subjects](#)
- ☐ S7
XB ("climate activism" OR "eco activism" OR "Environmental activism" OR "climate protest")
Added: 12:11 PM • Results: 1,601
[Find all my search terms](#) [Apply equivalent subjects](#)
- ☐ S6
S4 OR S5
Added: 12:11 PM • Results: 637,076
[Find all my search terms](#) [Apply equivalent subjects](#)

SAVE SEARCH WITH APPROPRIATE NAME AND DATE



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The Library of Trinity College Dublin - Leabharlann Choláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath | Searching: Academic Search Complete

Advanced search

Search articles, ebooks & more



Search mode: Find all my search terms

Expanders

Apply equivalent subjects X

- ☐ Full Text
- ☐ References Available
- ☐ Peer Reviewed
- ☐ Cover Story

Publication Date

Databases

All results Images

1-25 of 25 total results

Show: 50

Relevance



Save search

Create alert

0 selected

1



Peer reviewed | Academic Journal

Communication, Citizen Participation, and *Climate Activism*:
A Bibliometric and Narrative Review of Scientific Research
(2014-2024).

By: López Gómez, Sara; Garzón Molina, Irene; Oliveira, Andrea • In: Palabra Clave, 2026 Special



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Saving, Exporting and Managing Your Results



- Database platforms save your search steps and records
- You can export the records in bulk as .RIS files
- These can be further used with relevant softwares for referencing, screening and analysis

EXPORTING RESULTS: EBSCOHOST D/B



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Search articles, ebooks & more

All filters (0) Linked Full Text Peer Reviewed All dates Source type

All results Images

1-50 of 85 total results

50 selected

All on this page: 50 (Up to 50)
Select 1-50
Deselect all

Export results (Up to 25,000)

Byte-sized *activism*: A qualitative exploration of political change.

Export results

You will receive an email with a link to download the metadata once the export is complete. The number of results exported can be up to 25,000, with an upper limit of 100,000 results in a 24hr period. The result count may be lower depending on duplicates and publisher restrictions.

Email address

fitzgey@tcd.ie

Additional recipients (optional)

Please separate e-mail addresses with a semicolon to share the link with others.

example@domain.com

Select a format

- ☐ XML
- ☐ CSV
- ☐ BIBTEX
- ☒ RIS

Select RIS format

Cancel

Send

EXPORTING RESULTS: CLARIVATE WEB OF SCIENCE



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+ Add Keywords Quick add keywords: < + youth climate activism + fridays for future + climate activism +

37 Documents You may also like...

Refine results Export Refine

Search within results...

Quick Filters

- ☐ Highly Cited Papers 2
- ☐ Early Access 2
- ☐ Open Access 29
- ☐ Associated Data 3
- ☐ Enriched Cited References 14

Publication Years ^ i

0/37 Add To Marked List

1 The relationship between climate movement and behaviour in Germany

Fabel, M; Flückiger, M; (...); Wichert

Mar 2025 | NATURE HUMAN BEHAV

Enriched Cited References

We study the relationship between Germany and citizen political behaviour under voting age, demanded imm

Full text at publisher View

EndNote online

EndNote desktop

Add to my researcher profile

Plain text file

RIS (other reference software)

BibTex

Excel

Tab delimited file

Printable HTML file

InCites

Web of Science Research Intelligence

Export Records to RIS File

Record Options

☐ All records on page

☒ Records from: 1 to 37

No more than 1000 records at a time

Record Content:

Author, Title, Source, Abstract

Export Cancel

Select RIS format. Finally ensure Abstract is included.

EMAILED .RIS FILE: EBSCOHOST



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All Unread		By Date	
From	Subject	Received	Size
▼ Today			
support@ebSCO.com	Search Result Export	Mon 09/03/2026 11:20	100 KB
[External Email] This email originated outside of Trinity College Dublin. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe. Metadata of the results for			
support@ebSCO.com	Search Result Export	Mon 09/03/2026 11:20	101 KB
[External Email] This email originated outside of Trinity College Dublin. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe. Metadata of the results for			

File sent to your account email. Open file.

Hello Researcher,

The metadata for the results of the following search has been exported. Please use the link below to download the metadata.

Export details

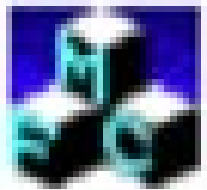
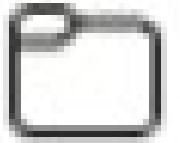
Date exported: 08/27/2026 12:20 PM

Search: ((XB ("climate activism" OR "eco activism" OR "Environmental activism" OR "climate protest*")) OR (DE "Environmental activism")) AND ((XB (Adolescen* OR youth OR "young people" OR teen* OR "gen z")) OR (DE "Teenage girls" OR DE "Teenage boys")) AND ((XB ("social media" OR tiktok OR facebook OR insta* OR x OR twitter OR influencer* OR greenfluencer*)) OR (DE "Social media" OR DE "Backchannels (Social media)" OR DE "Blogs" OR DE "Computer bulletin boards" OR DE "Online chat" OR DE "Online social networks" OR DE "Podcasting" OR DE "Social bookmarks" OR DE "Social media in business" OR DE "Social media in education" OR DE "Social media in medicine" OR DE "Theater & social media" OR DE "Wikis"))

[Download metadata](#)



Downloads



20eb4737-4899-4437-909a-
a4b99801de35.ris

[Open file](#)

REVIEWING RESULTS WITH SOFTWARES VIA TCD LIBRARY



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Access library supported softwares to export & manage results in one place:



- Download reference manager s/w **Endnote**
(available from Managing References page)

- Register for **Covidence** (screening s/w)
(available from Databases A-Z page)



- [LibKey Nomad](#) to use Google/Google Scholar to find specific articles and use our paid subscriptions. Can also be used in Covidence (download from Off campus access page)

IN THIS SESSION WE COVERED:



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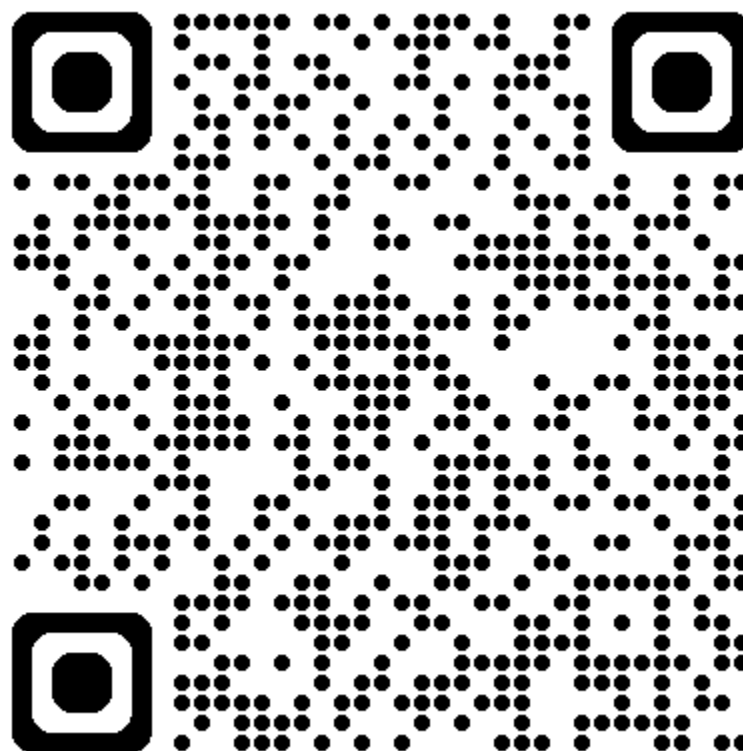
- ✓ The main frameworks to enable you to formulate your research question
- ✓ Advanced database features and controlled vocabulary
- ✓ Building an effective search strategy
- ✓ Saving, exporting and managing results

QUESTIONS?



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Please scan to complete our feedback form.

WHERE TO FIND HELP



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Your [Subject Librarian](#)

Our [HITS classes](#)

- Top Tips for Research Your Literature Review
- Managing Your References: EndNote 2025

Our [Guides & Tutorials page](#)

Our [LibGuides](#)

- [Writing a Literature Review](#)
- [Doing a Systematic Review](#)
- [Step 1: Your Research Question, Frameworks and Creating a Protocol](#)

Thank You

www.tcd.ie/library