

Stepping Up Your Scholarly Research: Tips for Databases & Search Strategies

Graduate Online Success Series
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Drexel University
Libraries

Agenda

1. Library Homepage Basics
2. Research Questions
3. Translating into a Search Strategy
4. Selecting Databases
5. Searching in Databases
6. Citation Searching
7. Saving results and Citation Management Tools

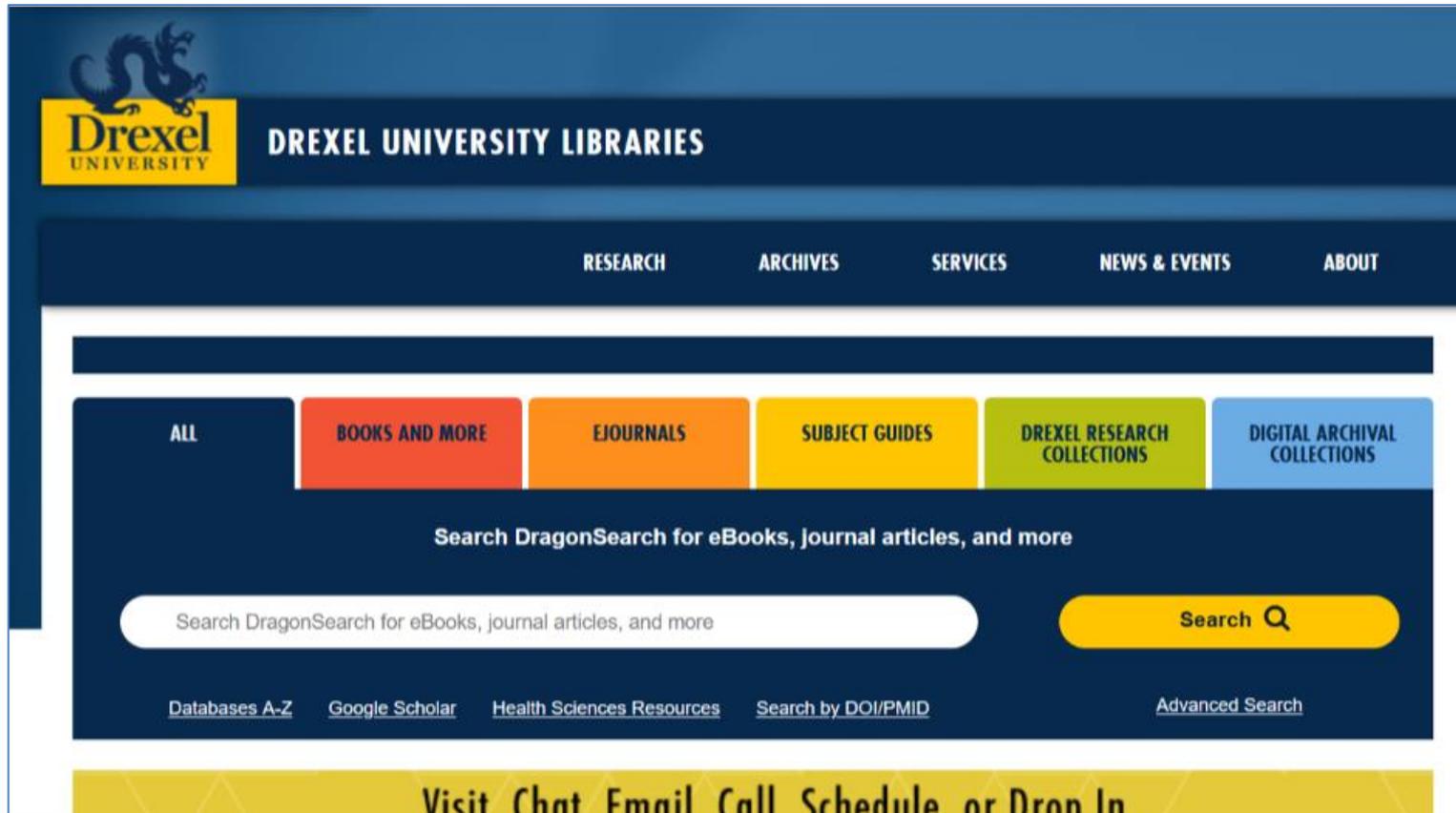


1. Drexel University Libraries Basics

- Dragon Search
- Databases A to Z
- Subject and Course Guides
- Interlibrary Loan
- 24/7 Chat
- Research Assistance / Consults with subject librarians



Library Homepage and Dragon Search Demo



The screenshot displays the Drexel University Libraries homepage. At the top left is the Drexel University logo, featuring a dragon and the text "Drexel UNIVERSITY". To its right, the text "DREXEL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES" is displayed. Below this is a navigation menu with the following items: RESEARCH, ARCHIVES, SERVICES, NEWS & EVENTS, and ABOUT. The main content area features a search bar with the text "Search DragonSearch for eBooks, journal articles, and more". Above the search bar are six colored tabs: ALL (dark blue), BOOKS AND MORE (red), EJOURNALS (orange), SUBJECT GUIDES (yellow), DREXEL RESEARCH COLLECTIONS (green), and DIGITAL ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS (light blue). Below the search bar, there are links for "Databases A-Z", "Google Scholar", "Health Sciences Resources", "Search by DOI/PMID", and "Advanced Search". At the bottom of the page, there is a yellow banner with the text "Visit Chat Email Call Schedule or Drop In".



2. Research Questions

- *A research strategy* will help
 - focus the topic
 - organize the search
 - manage time efficiently
 - progress from general to specific resources
 - understand if the topic has been examined thoroughly enough
 - ID knowledge gaps on the topic



Research Questions

- The process takes *time* and *effort*.
 - You should not expect to complete all steps in a single sitting.
- By thoughtfully approaching your topic you will be able to research the topic in an organized fashion and compose a thorough scholarly paper.

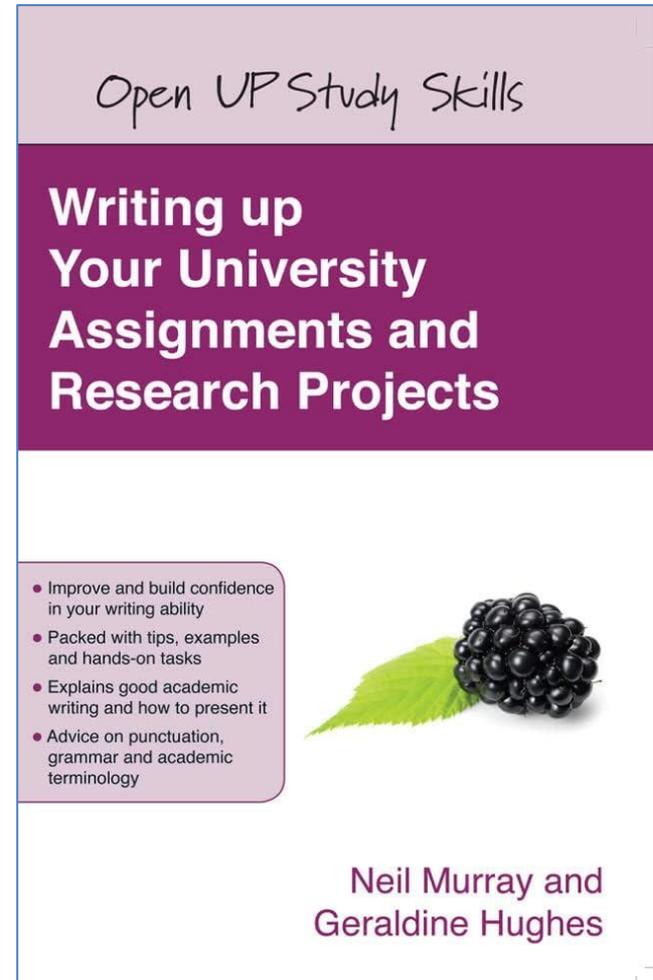


Research process



Suggested reading

- [Writing up Your University Assignments and Research Projects](#) by Neil Murray & Geraldine Hughes.
- “Academic writing can be a daunting prospect for new undergraduates and postgraduates alike. This accessible book provides students with all they need to know to produce excellent written work.”



Choosing a topic and gathering background information

- **Aim for a happy medium**
 - Topic not too broad but also not too narrow in scope.
 - Who, what, where, when, and why.
- **Gather background information**
 - Consult news articles, books, encyclopedia and internet searching to gather information to start.
 - **Dragon Search** can be helpful.
- **Using Google**
 - Locate credible professional associations, organizations and government pages.
- **Iterative process**
 - Research questions evolve.
 - Search will not be one and done.
- **Transition into the search**
 - Breaking down the big search concepts into manageable pieces.



Where to gather background information?

- **Dragon Search (Library Homepage)**
 - Very broad, searches across library catalog.
- **Databases A to Z**
 - Listing of all library databases.
- **Subject and course guides with database links**
 - Will contain links to suggested databases based on subject and discipline.



3. Constructing a Search Strategy

- Define your search question/topic.
- Identify the separate concepts in your question.
- For each concept, think of appropriate search terms, including synonyms and related terms.
- Map out how to connect your search terms.



Define your question:

What is the effect of video games on empathy
in teenagers?



Identify the separate concepts in your question:

What is the effect of **video games** on **empathy**
in **teenagers**?



Think of appropriate search terms, including synonyms and related terms:

Video Games	Empathy	Teenagers



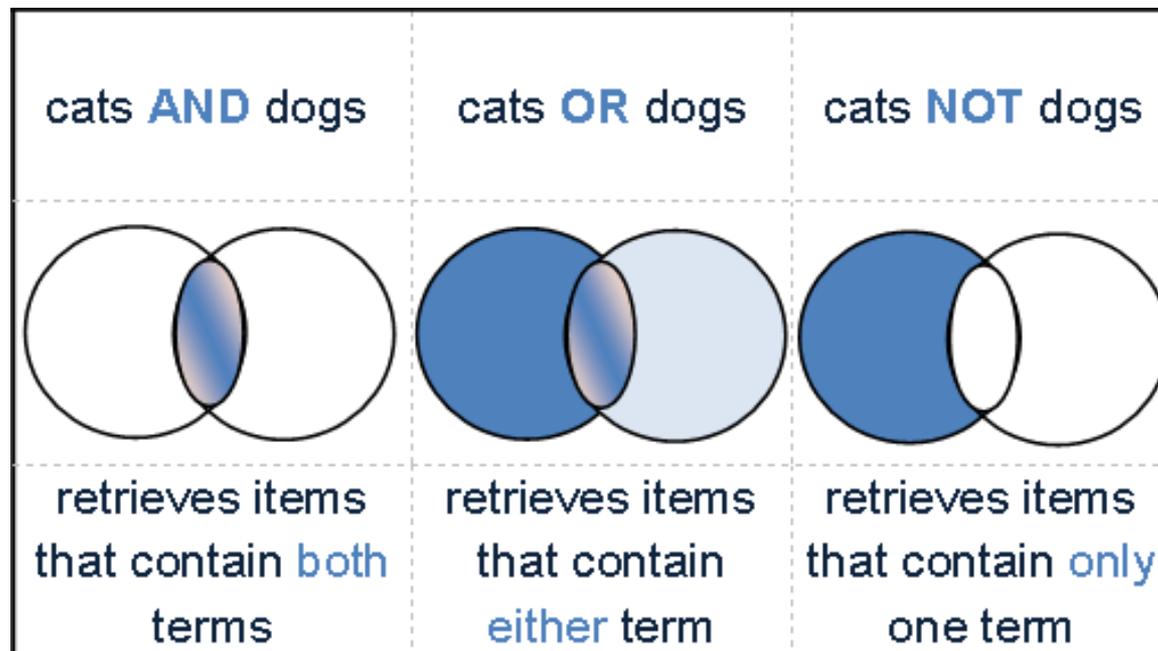
Think of appropriate search terms, including synonyms and related terms:

Video Games	Empathy	Teenagers
Gaming	sympathy	Teens
Virtual reality	compassion	Adolescents (or adolescence)
Computer games		Youths
		[database age filters]

If the database(s) you're using has a thesaurus or listing of subject terms (controlled vocabulary), look there for equivalent or related terms.



Connect terms together with Boolean Operators



Combining Search Terms: Boolean Operators

- OR
 - broadens a search by telling the database that *any* of the words it connects are acceptable.

- AND
 - narrows a search by telling the database that **ALL keywords used must be found** in an article in order for it to appear in your results list.



Combine synonyms or related terms with OR:

Teenagers

OR

Adolescen*

OR

Youth

OR

Youths



Combine separate concepts with AND:

Video Games

OR

Gaming

OR

Computer
Games

OR

Virtual
Reality

AND

Empathy

OR

Sympathy

OR

Compassion

AND

Teenagers

OR

Adolescen*

OR

Youth

OR

Youths



4. Selecting databases

- Research can be interdisciplinary, so consider all the subject areas that your topic can fall into.
- Use **Databases A to Z** to see databases by subject or use our Subject Guides.



5. Searching in databases

- Each database has unique interfaces and settings.
- Consider creating a login for each platform you may use frequently to save searches and content:
 - EBSCOhost, Clarivate, ProQuest, Gale, McGraw Hill, Wolter Kluwer, Elsevier, Taylor & Francis.
 - Car make and model:
 - EBSCOhost → CINAHL, APA PsycINFO, Criminal Justice Abstracts
 - Toyota → Prius, Camry, Highlander



Quick database search tips

- Each database has unique interfaces and settings.
- Consider creating a login for each platform you may use frequently to save searches and content:



“Phrase searching”

- Add quotes to get phrases
 - “Critical Care Nursing”
 - “SARS CoV2”



Truncation

- Add a * at the end of a root word to get variations on spelling
 - **Nurs*** = the database will search for nurse, nursing, nurses.
 - **interact*** = the database will search for interact, interacting, interaction, and interactivity.



Limiters and Filters

- Add in limiters and filters as needed:
 - Publication year
 - English language
 - Peer reviewed
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Geography
 - Source type



Controlled Vocabulary the “hashtags” for databases

CINAHL Headings

The screenshot displays the Drexel University Libraries search interface. The top navigation bar includes the library name and a 'MyEBSCO Sign in' button. A left sidebar contains navigation options such as 'My dashboard', 'Projects', 'Saved', 'Recent activity', 'Alerts', 'Research tools', 'New search', 'Help', 'Publications authority', and 'CINAHL Headings', which is highlighted with an orange box. The main search area features a search bar with the query 'CINAHL with Full Text' and a 'Basic search' dropdown. Below the search bar are three rows of search criteria, each with an 'AND' dropdown and an 'All fields' dropdown. At the bottom of the search area, there are 'Add row' and 'Delete row' buttons, a 'Clear all' button, and a 'Search' button. A bottom navigation bar includes 'Filters', 'Search options', 'Publications', and 'CINAHL Headings', with the latter highlighted by an orange box.

Controlled Vocabulary – CINAHL Headings

Drexel University Libraries

My dashboard ^

- Projects
- Saved
- Recent activity
- Alerts

Research tools

- New search
- Help
- Publications authority
- CINAHL Headings

Filters Search options Publications **CINAHL Headings**

MyEBSCO Sign in

OCD

Relevancy ranked Term begins with

OR Add to search

Term	Major Concept	Explode
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ▾
<input type="checkbox"/> Neurodiversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ▾

CINAHL with Full Text (EBSCOhost) Demo

Drexel University Libraries

All changes have been saved

MyEBSCO
Sign in

EBSCOhost

Search articles, books, journals & more

Searching: CINAHL with Full Text Basic search

AND All fields

AND All fields

AND All fields

+ Add row | - Delete row Clear all Search

Filters Search options Publications CINAHL Headings

Limit your results Clear all

Full Text

References Available

Abstract Available

My dashboard ^

- Projects
- Saved
- Recent activity
- Alerts

Research tools

- New search
- Help
- Publications authority
- CINAHL Headings



(ProQuest) One Academic Demo

The screenshot shows the ProQuest One Academic website interface. At the top, the browser address bar displays the URL <https://www.proquest.com/pq1academic?accountid=10559>. Below the browser, a navigation bar includes links for Home page, Drexel Connect, Health Sciences, Ex Libris - Alma, LibApps, RefStats 2.0, CWAL chat data form, SharePoint, and DULHub. The main header features the ProQuest logo and the text "Access provided by DREXEL UNIVERSITY". A teal sidebar menu is visible on the left. The main content area displays "ProQuest One Academic" and navigation options: Basic Search (underlined), Advanced Search, Publications, Browse, and Change databases. Below this is a search bar with a dropdown menu showing "All", "Scholarly Journals", "Books", "Videos & Audio", "Dissertations & Theses", and "All source types". The search bar contains the placeholder text "Enter search terms...". At the bottom of the search bar, there are checkboxes for "Full text" and "Peer reviewed" (with an information icon), and links for "Recent searches" and "Search tips". A help icon with a question mark and the number "4" is located in the bottom right corner.



6. Citation Searching

- Citation searching is useful when you want to analyze literature in a way that keyword or subject searching does not allow, such as when you are exploring a new area of study and are either studying the current state of research in that area or are still learning the *language* of the topic.
- Citation searching is good for:
 - Gathering relevant literature quickly.
 - Identifying good and appropriate keywords for future searches.
 - Using the knowledge and research of the original author, through citation, to save time.
 - Mapping out a *scholarly conversation* in a particular area.



Citation Searching Definitions

- **Citation mining**: The act of using citations to locate additional articles related to a research topic. Citation mining helps you find literature from other literature.
- **Forward Citation Search**: A search to find all of the articles that cite back to a specific article. This search looks forward in time to see how this article contributed to the scholarly conversation.
- **Backward Citation Search**: A search to find all of the cited references in a single article. This search looks backwards in time to see what led to the article you start with.
- **Author Citation Search**: A search to find all articles by an author or group of authors.



Web of Science Citation Searching Demo

Web of Science™ Search Sign In Register

>| MENU

DOCUMENTS RESEARCHERS

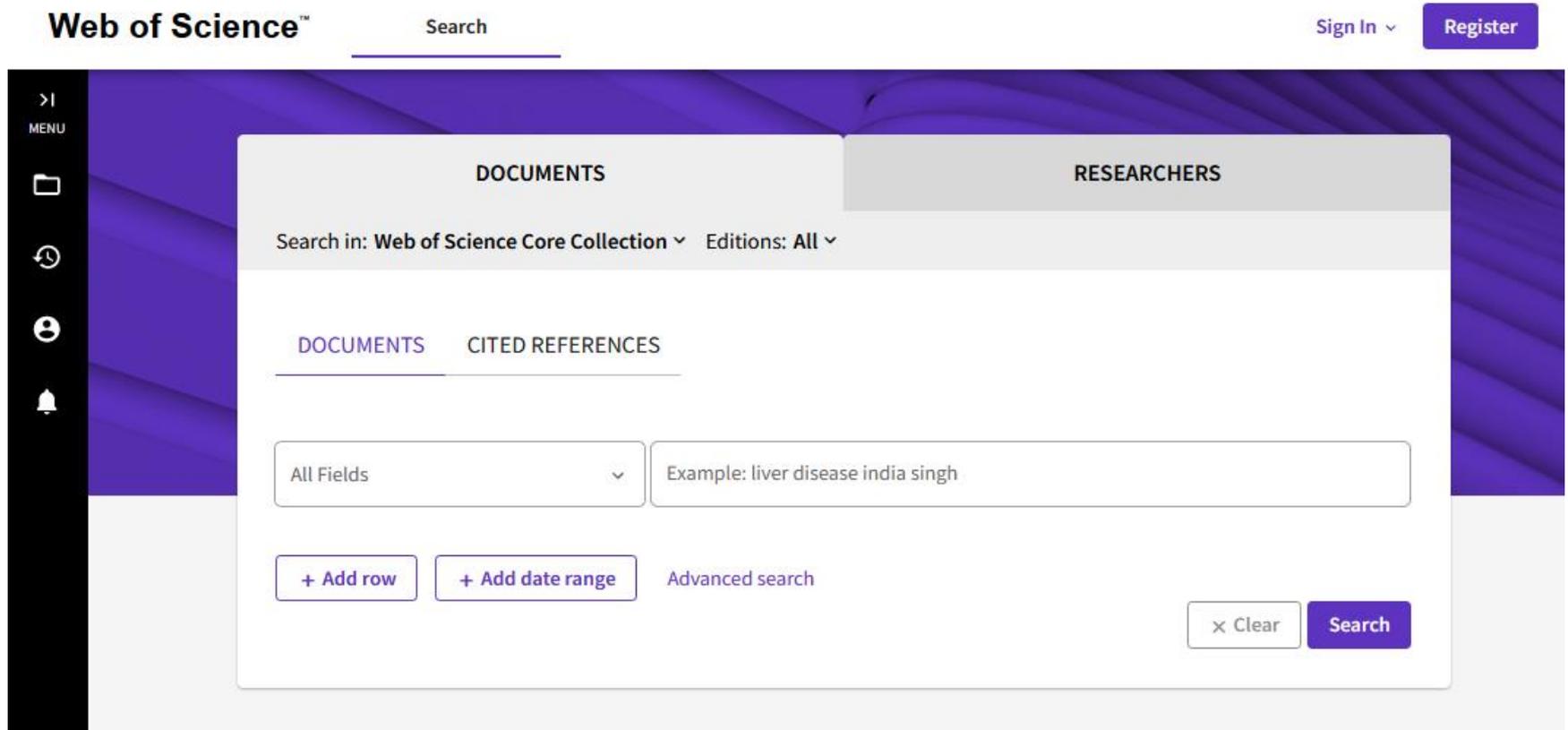
Search in: Web of Science Core Collection ▼ Editions: All ▼

DOCUMENTS CITED REFERENCES

All Fields ▼ Example: liver disease india singh

+ Add row + Add date range Advanced search

× Clear Search

The image shows a screenshot of the Web of Science search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'Web of Science' logo, a 'Search' button, and links for 'Sign In' and 'Register'. Below this is a dark purple sidebar with a 'MENU' icon and several navigation icons. The main content area is a white search box with two tabs: 'DOCUMENTS' (selected) and 'RESEARCHERS'. Inside the search box, there are dropdown menus for 'Search in: Web of Science Core Collection' and 'Editions: All'. Below these are two sub-tabs: 'DOCUMENTS' and 'CITED REFERENCES'. A search input field contains the text 'Example: liver disease india singh'. To the left of the input field is a dropdown menu currently set to 'All Fields'. Below the input field are three buttons: '+ Add row', '+ Add date range', and 'Advanced search'. At the bottom right of the search box are two buttons: '× Clear' and 'Search'.

ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global Citation Searching Demo



The screenshot shows the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global search interface. At the top, it says "ProQuest" and "Access provided by DREXEL UNIVERSITY". The main heading is "ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global". Below this, there are navigation links: "Basic Search" (underlined), "Advanced Search", "Browse", "About", and "Change databases". A search bar is prominently displayed with the placeholder text "Enter search terms...". To the right of the search bar is a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there are three checkboxes: "Full text", "Doctoral dissertations only", and "Citation Connections" (with an information icon). To the right of these checkboxes is a "Search tips" link. The background of the interface is a blurred image of a library interior with many tables and lamps.

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global (PQDT Global) database is the world's most comprehensive collection of multidisciplinary dissertations and theses, featuring 6 million records from more than 70



Workshop Practice

- [https://padlet.com/sh3675/steppingupyour
scholarlyresearch](https://padlet.com/sh3675/steppingupyour
scholarlyresearch)



7. Citation Management Tools

- EndNote
- Zotero

