

## Library Databases vs. the Web

### What is a library database?

- A library database is an organized collection of electronic information that allows a user to search for a particular topic, article, or book in a variety of ways (e.g., keyword, subject, author, title). Some databases contain the full-text of articles from journals, magazines, and newspapers, as well as books. You can access library databases off-campus by logging in with your library account.
- Examples: EBSCO, CQ Researcher, ProQuest, JSTOR, Gale, Films on Demand

### Can't I just Google the same information?

- Most of the information found by using Internet search engines, such as Google, is free. Library databases contain copyrighted, licensed, and proprietary information.
- Your ARCC Library pays for access to databases so that students can access the information for free.
- Information retrieved from Google may not have been evaluated. It could be inaccurate, biased, or out-of-date. You will need to carefully critique information.
- Articles found in the library databases have already been evaluated for accuracy and credibility by discipline-specific experts and publishers.

### How do I access the library databases?

- On campus, access databases from the library webpage--no login is required.
- Off-campus, you will need to login with your StarID and password.

### My instructor said we can't use any (or only a few) Internet sources. Can I still use the library databases?

- **Yes.** Library databases are *not* considered the Internet. Databases contain print material that has been digitized for electronic access. Still considered "journal articles," although delivery is electronic.
- Always clarify with your instructors what they actually mean when the class is told no (or few) Internet sources.

## Library Databases vs. the Web

Library Databases	The Web
<b>When to Use</b>	
<p>Best for college level research. Best for credible information quickly. Best for full-text, scholarly articles.</p>	<p>Best for shopping and entertainment. Good for finding statistics. Good place to find background information.</p>
<b>Reliability</b>	
<p>Articles and books written by journalists or experts in a professional field. All material in database is evaluated for accuracy and credibility by subject experts. Reviewed and updated regularly.</p>	<p>Anyone can publish their opinions and ideas on the Internet. Internet content does not have consistently applied standards.</p>
<b>Accessibility</b>	
<p>Library database subscriptions are paid for through your tuition and state taxes. To access the ARCC Library databases from off-campus, you will need to log in with your StarID and password.</p>	<p>Information is often free. When information does come from a legitimate source, the user usually has to pay to access it.</p>
<b>Usability</b>	
<p>User can specify advanced search criteria; full-text, date, scholarly, format, etc. Results can be further filtered for precision. Databases usually include a <i>citation tool</i> to automatically create a citation for the article.</p>	<p>User must wade through a list of results often over 100,000...many irrelevant. Most web sites found on the <i>Internet</i> do not have a <i>citation tool</i>.</p>
<b>Stability</b>	
<p>Published content from journals, magazines, newspapers and books does not change. Most material remains in database for a significant length of time and can be easily retrieved again.</p>	<p>Web site content can often change. Web pages and sites may disappear for a number of reasons. May not be able to retrieve the same content at a later time.</p>