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Searching for Answers

Guide to Database Searching at the EPA Headquarters Library
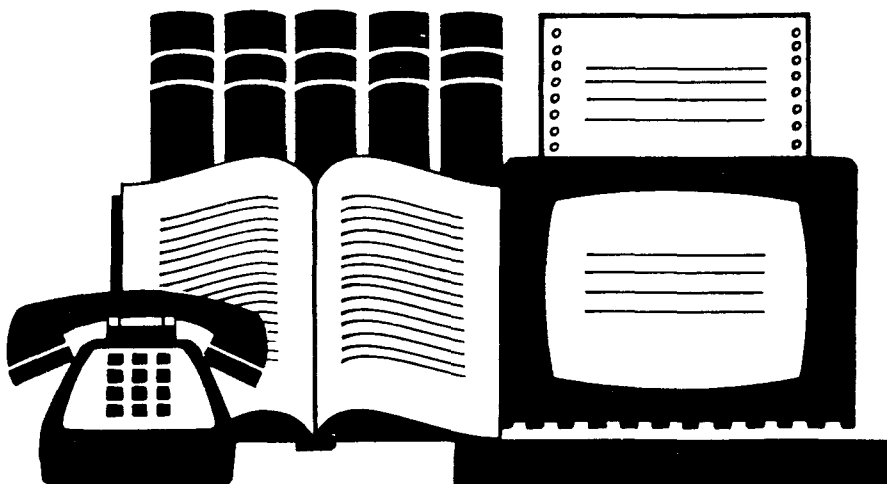
Introduction

This brochure describes how the database search services provided by the EPA Headquarters Library in Washington, D.C. can help EPA employees get up-to-date information for improved analysis, report preparation, background research, and legal work. Similar database search services are available in many other EPA libraries. Locations of EPA's libraries are listed at the end of this brochure.

The questions usually asked at the reference desk about online searching are answered in this brochure. Those questions concern what database searching is, which databases are available, when a search is most useful, how to request a search, and how to use the results of a search.

by
Brigid Rapp
Head Librarian

What is a Database Search?

A database search is a process of selecting or retrieving data or records from large files of information. Databases are usually accessed through a computer terminal connected to the database through a telephone line. This process is called online database searching. Although databases can be created by anyone, those usually searched are created by publishers, government agencies, and commercial vendors.

Why are Database Searches Useful?

EPA Headquarters Library staff can use databases to retrieve full-text articles or special statistical, directory, or financial information from sources throughout the country and the world, and to compile bibliographies with abstracts of relevant books, government documents, conference proceedings, reports, and newspaper and journal articles.

Database searches can quickly retrieve information from a wide variety of sources, for many kinds of analysis and report preparation. Often databases index and locate material that would otherwise be buried in a large collection. Databases can also be more convenient and comprehensive than catalogs and printed indexes. Catalogs list only documents in selected collections, while databases include information regardless of where the information is located. In a database, information from different collections is automatically integrated to be searched at once, while volumes of a printed index must each be searched separately. Some databases are "full-text:" the entire newspaper article, periodical article or other source document is available online and a copy can be instantly made, thus combining the two steps of identifying and retrieving the material.

What Questions can be Searched?

Information can be retrieve meet a wide range of information needs. Searche made by using the requestc key words or phrases, date source documents, proper names, geographic areas, o document types. Examples search requests are:

● journal articles on the technical and risk analyses kilns and industrial furnace

● news releases from think tanks, especially Rand Corporation;

● all books and articles wri by Daniel Boorstin;

● speeches concerning the of DDT in the Midwest;

● all CFR title 40 cites since 1980 that concern intergovernmental review c EPA's programs;

● policy analysis articles on Superfund;

● empirical analyses, writte after June 1975 and before] 1978, on mobile source pollution control;

● treatises on the sources o pollution and the ambient quality of Puget Sound.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

How do I Request a Search?

What Databases are Available?

What Happens after the Search is Completed?

Any EPA employee may call or come in to the Library to request a literature search on a work-related topic. The database searching service is free to EPA employees. Computer Search Request forms (example attached) that the researcher or the Reference Librarian can fill out, are available at the reference desk. Before starting a search, a Librarian will ask questions in order to determine all the limits of the search and to insure that he or she fully understands the nature of the request. The researcher will be asked to suggest appropriate words that will help focus the search. It may be helpful to review the thesaurus or subject terms of relevant databases with the Librarian to select the terms most likely to result in retrieval of pertinent information. The Librarian will determine, based on the request, which databases are best to search.

The many databases currently available in the Headquarters Library are described at the end of this brochure. The Library has a profile of each database that is used when devising strategies for retrieving specific information. Anyone may review the database summaries in the Library.

New databases and interesting aspects of current databases are highlighted each month in the Library's newsletter, "What's New." EPA employees receive this newsletter regularly, and others can ask the Reference Librarian to be added to the mailing list.

One easy way to learn about the databases and how they can help is to visit the Library and talk with one of the Reference Librarians. Also, Library staff can arrange for special briefings for large or small groups to review databases that are especially relevant to the work of a particular office. To arrange such a meeting, contact the Head Librarian, 382-5921.

The reference staff continuously review new databases as they become available to evaluate their relevance to EPA's information needs. The researcher is one of the most important sources of information on new databases. Please contact the Head Librarian with suggestions on databases the Library may add to its service.

The Reference Librarian usually performs the search the same day it is requested. If the search is a limited one, the results can be printed in the Library. If the search is more extensive, the Librarian may request the results to be printed offline. Offline prints are mailed to the Library and are usually available in three or four working days. The requestor is called as soon as the prints are received.

To narrow or expand the information received, discuss the search results with the Librarian and redefine the search. After a new strategy is formed, the Librarian will either re-search the same databases, search different databases, or suggest alternative information retrieval techniques.

If the search topic is one of on-going interest, the Reference Librarian can arrange to have the search repeated at regular intervals to retrieve new information that has been issued since the last search.

After the search results are reviewed, fill out the On-line Literature Search Evaluation form. (A copy of the form is reproduced at the end of this brochure for review.) The Library staff uses these evaluations to monitor the quality of the search service and document recommendations for change.

If the search was for bibliographic citations, check to see if the sources are available in the EPA Headquarters Library, which has about 400,000 documents.

If the materials needed are not in the Library, fill out an Interlibrary Loan Request form (copy attached) and leave it at the circulation desk. The requested document will be borrowed or photocopied from another library, such as an EPA regional library, the Library of Congress, or an academic, special or public library. Since most libraries participate in interlibrary loan programs, it is possible to access almost any document through this service. The turn-around time for interlibrary loan service varies with the document, but 3.5 working days is the average time to retrieve a document. The Interlibrary Loan Request forms are at the circulation desk in the front of the Library a copy of the form is attached.

IRSB COMPUTER SEARCH REQUEST	DATE 8-20-84

FORWARD TO:	
Information Resource and Services Branch *(PM-213)*	**NOTE:** For any future reference(s), please contact the librarian shown below.

NAME OF REQUESTER	PHONE NUMBER	MAIL CODE
Rick WRA	382-4321	WO-404

NAME OF LIBRARIAN	DATE REQUIRED	SHOULD THERE BE A PERIODIC UPDATE?
Elsie Dewey	8-22-84	Yes

TITLE AND SCOPE OF THIS REQUEST *(Provide appropriate terms or key words. Designate what is or what is not to be included such as time periods, countries or language to be covered.)*

Any companies in zip codes
31255, 31259-31263

whose businesses are in SIC codes
2869-2875, 2879, and 2899

and have more than 10 employees
Need name, address name of
Mec. 2 of company & brief description of
business.

LIBRARIAN

SEARCH STRATEGY *(Indicate most effective one(s))*

DATA BASIS USED *(Indicate those which were most effective)*

EPA Form 2170-4 (10-78)

4

PLEASE PRINT

's date:

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request? ☐

MAIN TITLE: Journal title & Volume (issue) & Date.
OR: Book title. Do not abbreviate.

Hazardous environment, Vol. 3 #7 July 1984

COMPONENT TITLE: Article pages & first author & first few words.
OR: Book author & Publisher & Date.

PP. 211-260 Cere, L.A. "Alternative treatment of industrial wastes..."

stor's printed last name, Full first name   Mail code   Telephone

Wra, Rick   WO-404   382-4321

sted for: self   Recommended for purchase? ☐

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ON-LINE LITERATURE SEARCH EVALUATION

Please evaluate the citations accompanying this form and indicate the category of relevance.

Your opinions and comments will help us improve our service.

Please return this self addressed card as soon as convenient.

☒ HIGH		MODERATE		MARGINAL

COMMENTS
Just what we needed!

REQUESTER NAME Rick Wra	MAIL CODE WO 404	DATA BASE(S)
SEARCHER E. Dewey	DATE FORWARDED 8-22-84	

EPA Form 2170-5 (10-78)

Databases Available as of January 1985:

EPA Libraries and Information Centers

National Groundwater Information Center Database, a bibliographic database, contains references on the occurrence and utilization of surface and ground water, and on water well technology. Indexed titles include trade and technical journals and newsletters, books, and government documents. Because EPA established the Center, there is special emphasis in the database on EPA-sponsored reports.

Dialog Information Retrieval Service, a commercial vendor of databases, has more than 200 databases available through its system. The type of information varies with the database accessed; database records may be bibliographic citations, abstracts, directory listings or statistical tables. *Some of the DIALOG databases* commonly used in the library are Pollution Abstracts, Enviroline, Chemical Regulations and Guidelines, Social SciSearch, and The National Technical Information Service (NTIS).

NEWSNET, originally designed for use by the business and communications communities, is a full-text database of newsletters, press releases, and wire services. It is a good current awareness tool, as well as a means of selectively accessing otherwise costly information. Subject areas in NewsNet include the environment, chemicals, government and regulation, public relations, farming and food, research and development, and electronics and computers.

National Library of Medicine (NLM) On-line Services database consists of bibliographic citations on biomedical literature, including health care services and administrative, clinical, and policy topics. Special files on population, cancer, and toxic substances are also available on the NLM database.

NEXIS is a full-text database that contains general and business news. NEXIS sources include magazines, newspapers, wire services, newsletters, and government documents.

CAS Online contains records for the documents covered since 1967 in the printed version of *Chemical Abstracts.* Journals, patents, technical reports, books, conference proceedings, and dissertations from all areas of chemistry and chemical engineering are abstracted and the file is updated biweekly.

Brigid Rapp, Head Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Headquarters Library, PM211A
401 M St. SW, Rm M2904
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 382-5922
(FTS) 8-382-5922

Barbara Morrison, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Law Library, LE-130L
401 M St., S.W., Room 2902
Washington, D.C. 20460
(202) 382-5919
(FTS) 8-382-5919

Geraldine Nowak, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Technical Information Center, TS-793
Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances
Chemical Information Division
401 M St SW, Rm. E447
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 382-3568
(FTS) 8-382-3568

Peg Nelson, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 1 Library
JFK Federal Building, Room 2100-B
Boston, MA 02203
(617) 223-5791
(FTS) 8-223-5791

Audrey Thomas, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 2 Library
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278
(212) 264-2881
(FTS) 8-264-2881

Diane McCreary, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 3 Library
Curtis Building, 3PM24
6th and Walnut Streets
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 597-0580
(FTS) 8-597-0580

Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 4 Library
345 Courtland St. NE
Atlanta, GA 30365
(404) 881-4216
(FTS) 8-257-4216

Lou Tilley
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5 Library
230 South Dearborn St., Room 1420
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 353-2022
(FTS) 8-353-2022

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region V, Library
230 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Nita House, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 6 Library
1201 Elm Street
First International Building
Dallas, TX 75270
(214) 767-7341
(FTS) 8-729-7341

Connie McKenzie, Librarian
U S Environmental Protection Agency
Region 7 Library
324 East 11th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106
(816) 374-3497
(FTS) 8-758-3497

Dolores Eddy, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 8 Library, 8PM-ASI
1860 Lincoln Street
Denver, CO 80295
(303) 837-2560
(FTS) 8-327-2560

Vera Warnck, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9 Library
215 Fremont Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 454-8076
(FTS) 8-454-8255

Julienne Sears, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 10 Information Center, M/S 541
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 442-1289
(FTS) 8-399-1289

Rose Ann Gamache, Librarian
U S Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Research Laboratory
Library
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, RI 02882
(401) 789-1071 x265 or 268
(FTS) 8-838-5087 x265 or 268

Dorothy Szefczyk, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 2 Field Office Library
Edison, NJ 08813
(201) 321-6762
(FTS) 8-340-6762

Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Central Regional Laboratory Library
839 Bestgate Road
Annapolis, MD 21401
(301) 224-2740
(FTS) 8-922-3752

Libby Smith, Librarian
Library Services, MD-35
U.S Environmental Protection Agency
Research Triangle Park, NC 27711
(919) 541-2777
(FTS) 8-629-2777

Charlotte Folk, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Research Laboratory
Library
College Station Road
Athens, GA 30613
(404) 546-3324
(FTS) 8-250-3324

Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Air Quality Planning
and Standards Library, MD-16
826 Mutual Plaza
Research Triangle Park, NC 27711
(919) 541-5514
(FTS) 8-629-5514

Susan Means, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Research Laboratory
Library
Sabine Island
Gulf Breeze, FL 32561
(904) 932-5311 x218
(FTS) 8-686-9011

Evelyn Poole-Kober, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESRL—Meteorology Division Library,
MD-80
Research Triangle Park, NC 27711
(919) 541-4536
(FTS) 8-629-4536

Jonda Byrd, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Research Center Library
26 West St. Clair Street
Cincinnati, OH 45268
(513) 684-7701
(FTS) 8-684-7701

Mary Harden, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Research Laboratory
Library
6201 Congdon Boulevard
Duluth, MN 55804
(218) 727-6692 x538
(FTS) 8-783-9538

Debbie Talsma, Librarian
U.S Environmental Protection Agency
Motor Vehicle Emission Laboratory
Library
2565 Plymouth Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
(313) 668-4311
(FTS) 8-374-8311

LoRene Fuller
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Robert S. Kerr Environmental Research
Laboratory Library
P. O. Box 1198
Ada, OK 74820
(405) 332-8800
(FTS) 8-743-2241

Mary Quinlivan, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Enforcement Investigation
Center Library
Building 53, Box 25227
Denver Federal Center
Denver, CO 80225
(303) 234-5765
(FTS) 8-234-5765

Doreen Wickman, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Monitoring & Support
Laboratory Library
P.O. Box 15027
Las Vegas, NV 89114
(702) 798-2648
(FTS) 8-545-2648

Betty McCauley, Librarian
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Corvallis Environmental Research
Laboratory Library
200 SW 35th Street
Corvallis, OR 97330
(503) 757-4731
(FTS) 8-420-4731