FAQs for academics and researchers

This list of frequently asked questions for academics and researchers have been developed to guide academics and researchers on how to access the online research literature available to them. If you have further questions that are not addressed here contact your librarian.

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Access to resources

I am a researcher - how do I gain access to the electronic resources available in my country?

Some resources are available open access which means that no registration or subscription is needed in order for you to be able to access the resources. Other resources require a subscription which your library will handle, usually through a national consortium.

- For Open Access resources:

  Open Access (OA) means unrestricted online access to scholarly research. There are some major lists which allows you to search across content from various publishers in a single place, one of the best known open access lists is Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): www.doaj.org.

  A number of regions and countries have developed their own online journal platforms. Many of the journals on these platforms are Open Access; for others it is possible to obtain copies of the articles on payment of a token fee. These include:

African Journals Online (AJOL)	www.ajol.info
Bangladesh Journals Online (BanglaJOL)	www.banglajol.info
Central American Journals Online (CAMJOL)	www.camjol.info
Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL)	www.nepjol.info
Scielo (Brazil)	www.scielo.org
Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL)	www.sljol.info
Vietnam Journals Online (VJOL)	www.vjol.info

- For available resources that require a subscription and registration:

  Check with your librarian that they or your IT department has set up access for the computer you are using. If your institution is not registered on the Access to Online Research Dashboard, your librarian should register on behalf of the institution.

How will I know which resources are available in my country?

Your library website is the best starting point to see which resources are available to you. You can also contact your librarian to ask about what resources are available in your institution.

What URL should I use to access the resources available in my country?

Access to a resource is through the publisher's website. If your library has not got a direct link to the resource on the library home page, you can find the appropriate URL by searching for the publisher using a search engine.

I have typed in a URL which does not work – what do I do?

Check that the URL you are using is copied correctly. Where possible use cut-and-paste rather than re-typing. Try deleting the final /

Take the URL back to the first point which logically could conclude a URL e.g. after .org, .com, .co.uk etc.

If for example http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/servlet/useragent?func=showHome does not work, try http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/

If all else fails search for the publisher using a search engine like Google.

I can search and find the documents I need, but when I click on 'Download' nothing happens

Make sure you have [Adobe Acrobat](#) loaded on the computer you are working on. You can download a free copy of Adobe Acrobat from http://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/

Check with your IT department that the software on the computer you are using allows you to download. Sometimes this is prevented by anti-virus software.

I used to be able to access the resource, but I am no longer able to do so

If you are no longer able to use a resource that you previously had access to, contact your librarian or IT department for assistance.

I can open most articles in a resource, but am unable to open a specific article I want access to

Occasionally it will happen that you find you are unable to open one article, even though you are able to open others in the same resource. Contact your librarian to check that the journal title you are trying to access is included in your subscription. If it is, you also need to check the date range of your subscription.

Why am I asked to log on to access a resource?

If your institution has been registered for access to the resource by IP address, log on is not necessary to use a resource.

Some publisher platforms show a log on box, which can be ignored if you are able to download articles without logging on.

Some publisher platforms allow individual researchers to register, so they can receive email alerts and save searches. They need to log on for these features, even though access to the articles is via recognition of the institutions IP address and can be done without logging on.

If your institution has registered by IP address but you cannot get past the log on screen, contact your librarian so that they can help you troubleshoot the issue. They may find the FAQs for librarians help document useful for this: www.dashboard.inasp.info/page/access-support

Which journals or resources

Which journals or resources will be most useful for me?

There is no single way to identify and access all the online research resources you may need for your work, but by combining a number of different routes, being creative, and developing your search skills, it should be possible to find most of what you need. We outline some of the approaches you could take below.

- Get to know the key journals in your subject area

  You may already know the key resources most relevant to your subject area, and which you want to check regularly. But if you're not sure, or want to extend your knowledge of journals in your field, there are a number of ways in which you can do this.

- People to ask and places to look

  - Your **research supervisor, academic colleagues** or **fellow students** in your department will be able to provide information about the key journals or other resources in your subject area. These may include databases, books, journals, theses etc.

➢ **Your librarian** will be able to help you find out what resources are available to you and how to access them.

➢ Your **library website** may have a list of online (electronic) resources in specific subject areas, or it may enable you to browse its collections by discipline.

➢ Many **publishers' databases and archives** let you **browse resources in specific subject** areas to enable an overview of what is available.

➢ The websites of **academic subject associations and networks**, or other professional associations may include details of key journals in the field – many will publish their own journal. You will still need to access this via the routes described below.

➢ When you read an article which is useful and relevant, **check the bibliography** and see which other journals are listed. These may be useful places to look.

I know the name of the resource I would like to use, but I don't know how to find it

If you know the name of a specific journal but you don't know how to find it, **check the name of the publisher** (eg Cambridge University Press, Springer, Wiley etc). You can find this easily by entering the name of the journal in Google. Many publishers provide access to their journals via a single database or website and this will help you to know where to start.

If you know the title of the article, find out the **name of the journal** and where it was published.

Once you know who published a journal, **check if you have access via your library**.

It's useful to **check which year** the issue or article was published. Older issues of a journal are sometimes accessed by an archival route (such as JSTOR).

Your library website may provide a list of publishers' databases, or there may be a full e-resource service enabling you to search or browse journals by title or by subject area.

Once you have found the correct database (eg Cambridge Journals Online) you can **search or browse** for the journal.

I don't have a specific journal title in mind, where do I start?

Try searching **aggregated databases or bibliographic services**. These will show you articles or journals from a number of different publishers (this is often possible even if you don't have a subscription to the service, but you will not be able to download the full-text to all articles that you find). There are specialist bibliographic services for different disciplines.

For example **PubMed** (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/) and **African Index Medicus** (http://indexmedicus.afro.who.int) are both freely accessible abstracting services in medical-related fields. Other subscription services include Web of Science (all disciplines), the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), CAB Abstracts (applied life sciences) and Scopus (all disciplines). Your librarian will be able to explain what is available.

Try searching within a few different **publishers' databases** – accessible via your university library website. However, remember that these will only show you articles or journals from a single publisher.

Google can also help, but many of the results it provides may not be of the academic quality you need. **Google Scholar** (http://scholar.google.co.uk) may be more useful here, as this is focused on scholarly and academic sources.

The article I need is not available online – what do I do?

If the article you need doesn't seem to be available online, you may be able to get a copy via a **document delivery service** or as a **pre-print** from an **institutional repository**. Ask your librarian to find out if this is possible.

I need further help – who should I contact?

If you need further help with access or which resources to use contact your librarian.