Searching databases

Techniques for better results

1. Keyword searching
2. Phrase searching
3. Boolean searching
4. Using limiters
5. Subject heading searching
6. Field searching
7. Other useful features of databases

Field Searching

- Searching in a database using different fields can be a powerful way to find relevant results. A **field** is a specific part of a record in a database.

Common fields that can be searched are:

- author
- title
- subject
- abstract
- source

Range of fields

- Fields you can use are usually provided in drop down menus, next to the search boxes – these are only visible when using the ‘advanced search’ option

Example:
Let’s demonstrate the different results we get with a simple keyword search, and author field search, and a subject search…

Field options may vary between databases

Example:

Another database view

Example:
Let’s demonstrate the power of fields…

Let’s try a combination of field searches…

I want to find out what’s happening in the world of stem cells, and its use in spinal therapeutics.

In summary

- Field searching can be really powerful in getting highly focused results sets.

- It does take a little practice, and results may depend on what you need to find, so in some cases, it may not be the optimum technique to use – but great to have in your toolbox!