

INFORMATION DISCOVERY

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OVERVIEW

In the “Watch” section you considered platform and keywords as I demonstrated searching in a library database. In this “Do” section I’d like you to run a similar search using a different information discovery tool. This time instead of a library database we will use a digital archive called Chronicling America which is part of the National Digital Newspaper Program.

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Understand the Platform
 - a) Get to know the National Digital Newspaper Program (and by extension, the Chronicling America Archive) in 3 key ways: 1 - What institutions/organizations sponsor this platform; 2 - What information is (or isn’t) represented in this archive; 3 - How do searches function in this information discovery tool?
 - b) Record answers to the questions below:
 - i) What institutions sponsor/participate in the [National Digital Newspaper Program](#)? To answer this question explore the “Home” and “About” pages of the program linked above.
 - ii) What information is (or isn’t) represented in this archive? Think about what newspapers have been digitized and which have yet to be. What time periods are represented and why? Think also about your answer to the previous question: What institutions participate in this program and how does that affect what is or isn’t represented in this archive?
 - (1) To find the answers to these questions explore the Chronicling America [about](#) page, [data visualization](#) page and [FAQ's](#).
 - iii) How do searches function on this platform?
 - (1) Does the search look at keywords in the metadata or does it search the full text of the newspaper articles themselves? (see “search and browsing tips”)
 - (2) For basic searches, results will appear higher in the list if they contain what?
 - (3) Does the search engine look for common words such as and, not, the?

- (4) Does the search engine look for variants of search terms (for instance if you type on “child” will it also look for “children”?)
- (5) What are some common language vs. historic terms they give examples of in order to help you understand the importance of using the language that’s represented in the textual objects you’re searching?
- (6) Can you search in different languages?
- (7) Review the section on searching an archive of more recent papers: “Searching the U.S. Newspaper Directory 1690-Present.” What kinds of searches can you run in this archive that you cannot run in the Chronicling America Archive?

2) Reflect on Search Findings

- a) Now you can run a search in Chronicling America. Start with the basic search bar and play with the advanced search later if you’d like.
 - i) Use the search terms demonstrated in the “Watch” section. When you type in “Learning Disabilities and Children” how many results do you get? What are these articles about? Contrast that to the number and kind of articles you get when you use the terms “retarded and children.”

3) Try it Again

- a) Play around with the search feature to find articles you are interested in. If comfortable, use advanced search techniques like narrowing down by year or searching for words near each other. If you are having a hard time thinking of topics, try looking at issues related to LGBTQ+ issues. Another sample topic is marijuana vs. cannabis. Record any interesting findings.
 - i) Record what you’ve learned in this module about how language functions in searches, and the importance of understanding the information discovery tool as an interface that connects you to sources.