CE Research Groups
Library Workshop

Activity: Developing, testing, and analyzing a search strategy based on your research question

1) What is your research question?

2) Identify the **basic concepts** in your question (what are the key words within the research question?)

3) Identify similar or related words and phrases for each concept (as appropriate)
   
   Tip: as you search, look for terms that you might add to this list
   
   Concept 1, related terms:

   Concept 2, related terms:

   Concept 3, related terms:

4) Initial search string (use Boolean AND, OR, truncation, or other search refinements as appropriate)

5) What information are you trying to find? What database(s) or search tool(s) would be useful for this type of information?

6) Are there search limits that you want to apply?
   
   These can be either pre or post-search—the limits available will depend on the database selected. Examples: dates, authors, publications, subject terms, document types
7) Document your initial search strategy:

Example search strategy:

Date of search: July 19, 2017
Database: Compendex/GEOBASE/Inspec
Search string: ("Calcite precipitation" OR micp) AND (expansive soils OR Clay)
Filters or specialized search parameters: None
Number of results: 148
Notes: alternate terms might include—fine grained; biotreatment; “carbonate precipitation”
Notes about relevance: MICP also used for “mercury intrusion capillary pressure” OR “mercury injection capillary pressure”

Your initial search strategy:

Date:
Database:
Search string:

Filters or specialized search parameters:

Number of results:
Notes on relevance:

For low relevance, too few results or too many results—identify potential revisions:

Then test the new strategy-- refine as needed

Reflection: What search strategy or strategies worked best for this research question?
Tip: consider saving your search/ creating a search alert

What are your next steps?