Develop keywords for the use the databases

What is a database?
A database is an electronic index to journal or magazine articles, containing citations, abstracts and often the full text of the articles or links to the full text.

Different types of Information resources in a database:
(Remember not all information is available electronically in full text).

- Dictionaries & Encyclopedias
- Text books
- Journals / Articles
- Theses, Dissertations
- Internet – Google Scholar

First step in your research is to find background information:

- By reading in-subject-encyclopedia or dictionaries you will find key concepts.
- Read articles in these reference works to set the context for your research.
- This is very important and is your departure point in research.
- Later when your topic has been defined these types of sources are not so important anymore but this is a helpful tool to clarify details.

How do you approach a database or search in a database?
During and after you established and narrowed down your topic you will approach the electronic databases with keywords related to:

- **Canonical**: selected corpus of scriptures
- **Geographical**: particular region or regions
- **Cultural**: cultural or language divisions
- **Historical**: specific time period
- **Ecclesiastical**: certain churches or denominations
- **Conceptual**: conceptual elements to be covered

Important: Start thinking like a computer:

- Use simple keyword terms
- Use controlled language
- Think of all possible synonyms or any other relevant words (draw up an extensive list and use it during the course of your studies)

Before you search make a plan

- Understand your topic and what is expected from you
• Think of all concepts and aspects – who, what, where, when and how
• Identify keywords
• Use simple computers style words and nouns
• Make a list of search terms for each concept
• 1st word in the string of terms is the most important

- Keep it simple
  - As few words as possible
  - Use words most likely used on site
  - Unique descriptive words are better – gives more relevant results

Combine your keywords with Boolean operators?

• Form the basis of database logic.
• There are three AND, OR and NOT
• Connect words together to narrow of broaden a set of results (journal articles, theses and dissertations, books)
• Tool to focus a search when a topic contains multiple search terms
• Connect pieces of information you are looking for:

  - AND – contains both of your search terms
  - NOT – exclude some words
  - OR - search one word or both
  - AND OR – search for a combination of search terms

culture and religion
fatherless and children
drug and abuse and poverty
absent and mother or father

Phrase and other search tips

Phrase search “ ” – search only for this word and no other variations and in the exact order
“leadership development” and “rural congregation”

“blended family”

**Truncation*/Wildcards use an * to replace some words**

Old Testament prophets during Exilic period

| exil*       | = exile, exilic |
| prope*  | = prophet, prophecy, prophetic, prophesying |

**Common + Scientific - Terms that go together**

Eating disorders in teenage girls: pastoral approach to healing

- anorexia
- bulimia
- emotional eating

**Look for Synonyms**

- minor
- juveniles
- adolescent
- youth
- young person

**Look for related terms**
Administration

- management
- direction
- command
- authority
- management state

More Generic search hints – use limiters

- Advanced search – date published, language, format
- Peer reviewed journals
- Language
- Journal title

Work with a plan through the different databases

Part of your “research mind-set” is to work systematic and with a definite plan through available electronic databases in the library.

When you start to get duplicate results on different platforms (databases, Google Scholar, library catalogue) it means you are following the right search methods. All types of scientific information is connected through scholarly research.