

E-journals and information retrieval

Information from e-journals can be accessed through a search interface specifically designed for a given e-journal or more commonly by a given e-journal publisher, such as Emerald or ScienceDirect; in the latter case all the e-journals published by the given publisher can be searched through one search interface. However, there are also services, called aggregators, that provide access to e-journals published by more than one publisher. Figures 13.6 to 13.8 show three search interfaces of e-journals. Figure 13.6 and 13.7 show the simple and advanced search interfaces of Emerald. As may be noted from Figures 13.6 and 13.8, a user can select a specific journal to search or may conduct a search across all the journals. The advanced search interface, as shown in Figure 13.7, allows users to choose a number of search options, and conduct a relatively complex search. A quick look at the interfaces will reveal that the search and retrieval features offered by the e-journal services differ from one another and it is the responsibility of the users to learn and apply the required features. Thus the process of the information search often becomes a time-consuming and challenging process, especially when a user is required to use more than one e-journal service, or to use a new service.

The search index files for e-journal databases are quite large compared to those of OPACs because they are full-text indexes: they contain search terms from the title, author name and abstract, as well as the full text of the journal papers. The specific techniques used for choosing terms from the journal papers and organizing them in the index file(s) are proprietary to the given service provider (the e-journal publisher or the aggregator service), and they vary from one another.

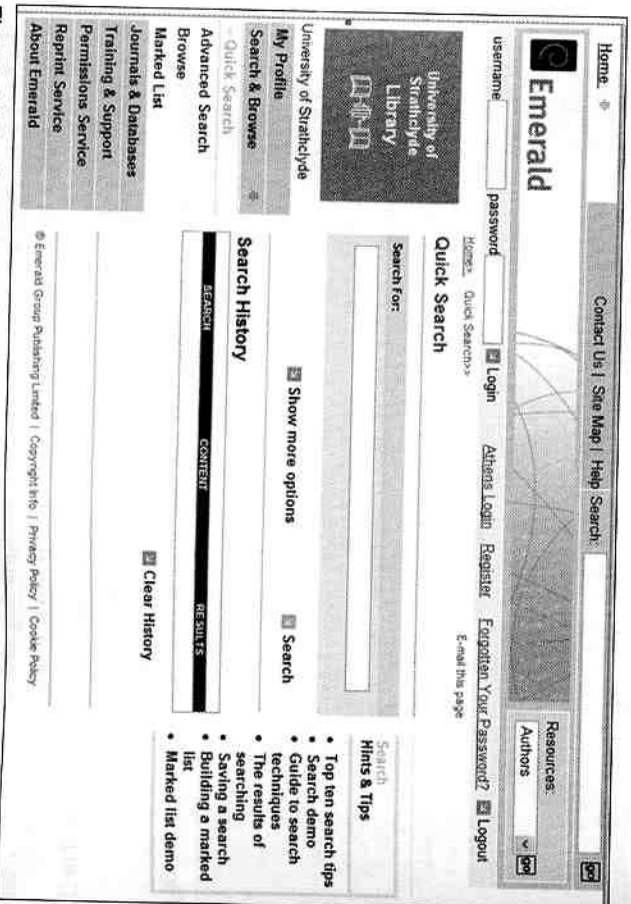


Figure 13.6 Emerald quick search screen

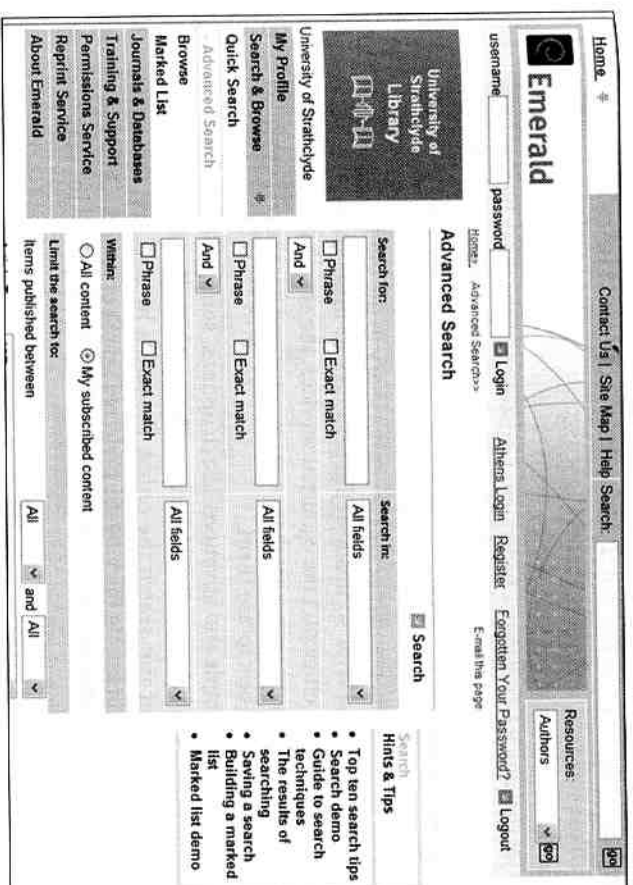


Figure 13.7 Emerald advanced quick search screen

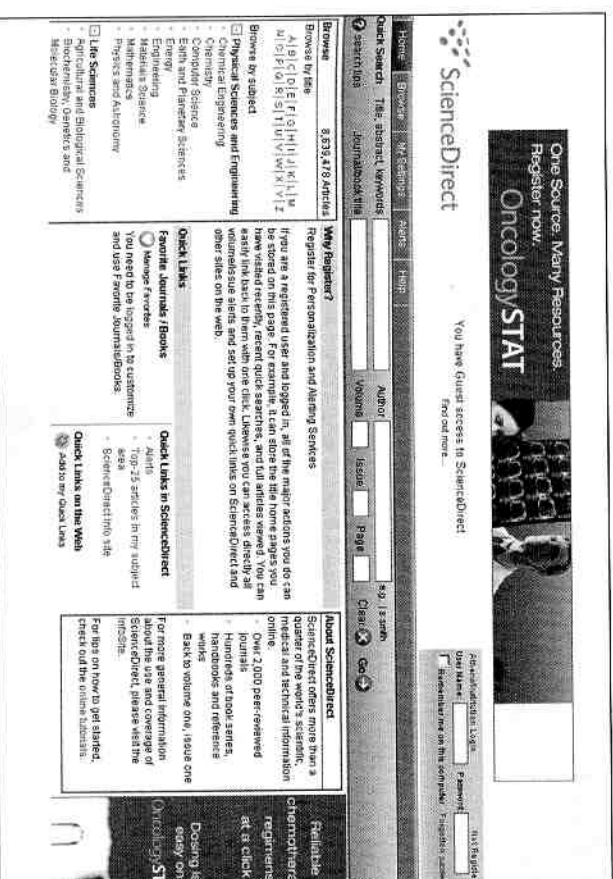


Figure 13.8 ScienceDirect search screen

Online databases and information retrieval

Just like e-journals, online databases allow users to search by bibliographic keys such as author, title and so on, and also by words and phrases appearing in the full text of the journal articles, conference papers, etc. Consequently, the index files are large. Users can choose the simple search interface or can formulate complex search expressions by using the advanced search options. Figures 13.9 and 13.10 show the basic and advanced search interface of the ProQuest online database. The tools and techniques used for term selection and indexing are proprietary to the online database services, and they employ several sophisticated techniques to make their retrieval systems more effective and efficient. Like e-journal services, the search and retrieval features offered by the different online database services vary, and it is the responsibility of the users to learn how best to use them.

As well as the simple and advanced search options, some online database services also allow users to use an online thesaurus. Figure 13.11 illustrates the LISA online thesaurus. The user can search the online thesaurus by selecting the appropriate search terms and combining them by the preferred search operators. Online databases often produce a ranked list of search results, and sometimes allow the user to define the criteria for sorting them.

Information retrieval on the web

Web information retrieval is different from traditional information retrieval systems. These differences mainly stem from characteristics of the web such as its distributed

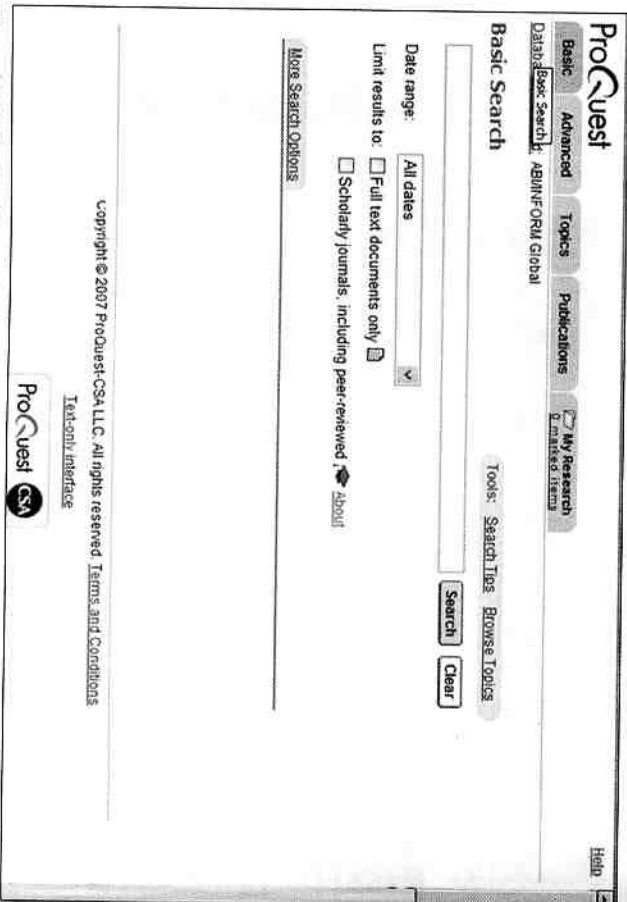


Figure 13.9 ProQuest basic search interface

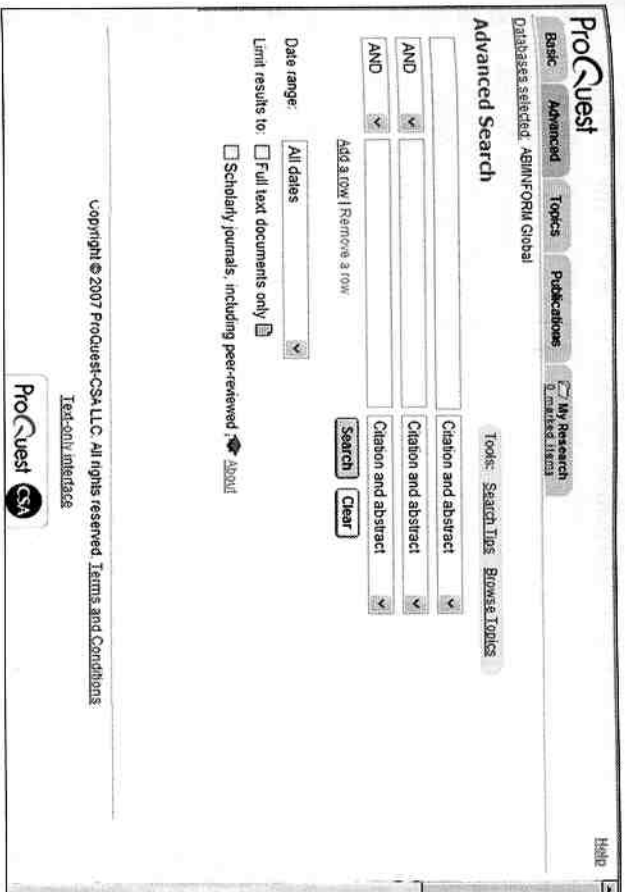


Figure 13.10 ProQuest ABI/INFORM Global advanced search interface

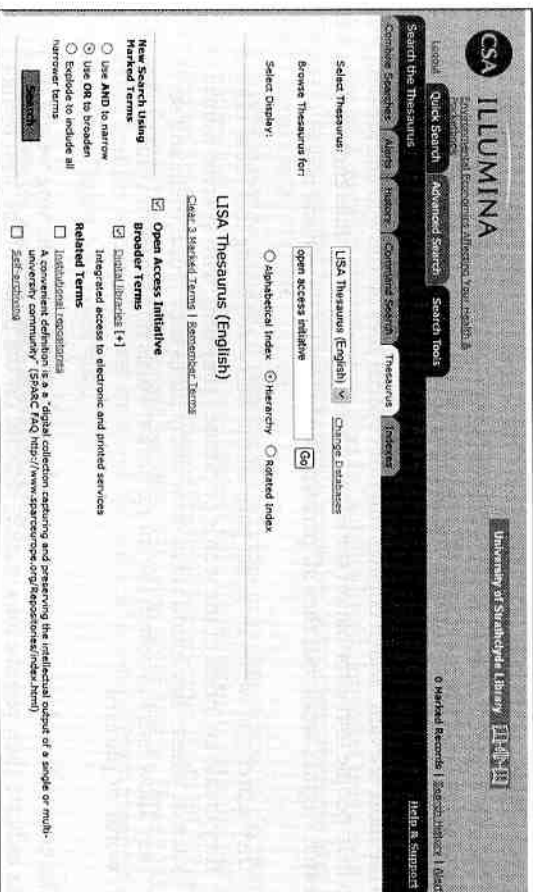


Figure 13.11 Use of the LISA online thesaurus