Module 2.1. Where do you find information?

A library database is an organized, searchable collection of information resources making them essential to academic research. You can search a database to find information about articles, discover that certain articles exist, or gain access to the full text of articles you find. Many databases help you find journal articles, book chapters, books, newspapers, conference proceedings, and more.

Some databases are subject specific, such as *PsycINFO* which primarily contains resources for psychology and psychiatry. Subject specific databases have the advantage of having a more complete and in-depth coverage of a specific subject area but may not completely cover cross over areas with other disciplines such as music therapy or psychohistory. Other databases, such as *Academic Search Complete,* are general and contain references to resources across many subject areas from art history to zoology. This provides them with the advantage of covering a wide variety of subjects, but do not cover any particular subject in-depth. While there may be significant overlap in coverage between the general and subject specific databases, there is no one database that will cover all subjects, therefore, it is important to search in multiple databases as you could miss an important resource for your research.

Database interfaces may look different, but the way to search them is similar in most cases. The general principles of searching can be transferred across different interfaces, however, some database have rather unique search features. As well, some database interfaces that look the same may have distinct options for limiting your search results such as by historical time period or publication language. While all databases have a "help" option that can provide useful information, please contact the libraries public services staff in person or via online chat to learn the specifics of searching databases.