



# What is a Database?

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## Definition

A database is simply an organized collection of information available in electronic format. There are different types of databases that offer access to:

### ARTICLES

- from peer-reviewed journals, magazines, newspapers
- some offer
  - FULL TEXT articles OR
  - CITATIONS to articles (not Full Text).
- Databases that do not have full text articles are also called INDEXES.

### IMAGES & PRODUCTS

- usually HIGH RESOLUTION images from art galleries
- search for information on PRODUCTS, MATERIALS

### QUICK REFERENCE information

- from encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc.
- always FULL TEXT
- some offer links to related images, websites, or articles as well for ALL IN ONE searching

### E-BOOKS

- access an entire publication in electronic format
- allows keyword search of book text
- usually there are copyright restrictions on downloading the entire text

## Why Use Databases?

The OCAD Library licenses databases to use in the academic environment. For university-level research in art & design, it is essential that students, faculty and staff use information:

- from credible **academic institutions** and **professional organizations**
- written by **experts, theorists, and the foremost practitioners** of any field of research

Information found by search engines can lead to site completely out of context and often you have no idea who produced the information or who published it online. Whenever you find information on the Internet, always ask:

- who is the AUTHOR?
- who is the PUBLISHER? (**always check the URL!**)
- whether it conforms to academic citation standards with footnotes & bibliography?

**REMEMBER:** Databases provide this information already and they remove most of the guess-work involved in evaluating web sources.

## Quick Reference Databases

Always start your research with Quick Reference resources. They will help you become an “instant expert” in your subject.

- **Background information**
- **Biographies of key figures**
- **Definitions of key terms**
- **Historical surveys**

Selected OCAD Quick Reference Databases	Full Text	Information Included
<b>Access Science</b>	✓	Encyclopedia articles, definitions, research updates, biographies of scientists, web links, study guides, illustrations, animations, and image galleries.
<b>Encyclopedia Britannica Online</b>	✓	Encyclopedia articles, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, world atlas, historical timeline, and "year in review," web sites and full text periodical articles.
<b>Oxford Art Online</b>	✓	Encyclopedia articles, biographies, web links. <b>Note:</b> Use Oxford Art to access over 130,000 images.
<b>John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory</b>	✓	Definitions of key terms, encyclopedia entries, biographies, essays.

## Periodical Databases (or Indexes)

**FULL TEXT:** means that the full periodical article is included in the database. Some databases have a **combination** of full text and not full text articles. Usually full text articles are:

- in  HTML or PDF  format or by using a link to TEXT

OCAD full text databases	Full Text Starts	Peer-Reviewed Articles?	Full Text Only	Includes NOT Full Text
<b>Academic Search Premier</b>	1990	✓		✓
<b>AnthroSource</b>	1968	✓	✓	
<b>Art Full Text</b>	1997	✓		✓
<b>Canadian Periodical Index</b>	1995	✓		✓
<b>JSTOR</b>	1830s	✓	✓	✓
<b>Literature Resource Center</b>	1995	✓	✓	
<b>MasterFILE Premier</b>	1975	✓		✓
<b>Project Muse</b>	1993	✓	✓	
<b>Thomson Gale Powersearch</b>	1988	✓		✓
<b>SAGE Full Text Collection</b>	1960	✓	✓	

**NOT FULL TEXT** databases, sometimes called **Indexes**, allow you to look up articles, essays, exhibition catalogues or find images but will not include the full article. You need to **find a print copy** of the periodical or exhibition catalogue or book.

OCAD non-full text databases (indexes)	articles	exhibition catalogue	essays, reviews	art reproductions	books, dissertations
Art Bibliographies Modern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Art Index Retrospective	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals	✓		✓		
International Bibliography of Art	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Design and Applied Arts Index	✓		✓		
MLA International Bibliography	✓		✓		✓

## Other Databases

Database Name	Type of Information
Art Museum Image Gallery (AMIG)	Fine art images
ARTstor	Fine art images; download Offline Image Viewer to access high resolution “zoom-in” feature
AP MultiMedia Archive	Images of current events & people, graphics, audio files
Material ConneXion	Specifications and manufacturers’ contacts for innovative design materials and processes

## Open Source Databases

A selection of free, open source databases hosted by reputable institutions.

Type of Database	Database Name	URL address
Encyclopedia	<b>Canadian Encyclopedia:</b> online edition of 4 vol. print encyclopedia	www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com
E-Books	<b>Internet Archive:</b> over 2 million public domain titles	www.archive.org
E-Journals	<b>Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ):</b> over 7,000 peer-reviewed journals	www.doaj.org
Images	<b>Canadian Art Database:</b> images contemporary Canadian art	www.ccca.ca