Guide to Accessing Databases

As a college student of Norfolk State University, at any level, whether you are undergraduate, graduate or even post-graduate, you will be expected to use specific types of resources in order to ensure that the research produced is of the highest quality. It is the common expectation of all college students, everywhere that students will be able to utilize both quality print and electronic resources in their studies. The Lyman Beecher Brooks Library offers a variety of both print and electronic resources. For more information on print resources, please visit the “Basic Library Instruction” LibGuide at https://libguides.nsu.edu/Basic_Library_Instruction.

The Library’s electronic resources can all be found in the online library databases. This tutorial will walk you through the steps required to access the databases, and provide a brief overview of how to use the databases effectively. It is important to note that every database vendor has their own proprietary solutions and the look and feel is likely to change as you increase your usage of these resources. Although the platform may have differences, this tutorial aims at familiarizing you with components that are almost universally found in all databases.

To begin, you should navigate to the Lyman Beecher Brooks Library homepage at www.library.nsu.edu.

By following the path, highlighted in the images below, you will come to the A-Z List of Databases from the library’s homepage.

#1 Begin at the Library Homepage: at www.library.nsu.edu, and select “Search”.

![Image of Library Homepage with highlighted search option](image_url)
#2 Next, you will select “Databases” from the dropdown menu under “search”.

#3 You will now find yourself at the page below. This page explains all that you need to know to access the databases online, so please take the time to read it in entirety. For the purposes of this tutorial, you will want to go ahead and click on the link for A-Z List of Databases at http://libguides.nsun.edu/az.php. Keep in mind that you can also navigate directly to the OpenAthens portal from here as well; it just works a bit differently. Both choices are shown in the graphic below.
#’s 4-8: The following steps assume that you chose to navigate directly to the A-Z List of Databases at http://libguides.nsu.edu/az.php. If this was your selection, you should find yourself at the for A-Z List of Databases displayed below. All the available choices on this pages are shown as numbered steps 4-8 in the graphic below and explained in detail in the following pages. If you selected the OpenAthens option, please click here to advance to that step.

#4 These dropdown menus allow you to filter by “Subject,” by “Database Type,” or by “All Vendors / Providers.” Of these options, the most useful is filtering by “Subject.” Filtering by “All Database Types” can also be useful, especially to the advanced searcher. You can choose to filter by things like Ebook or Articles. You may also apply multiple filters, such as “Allied Health” under “All Subjects” and “Ebooks” from “All Database Types.”

In the image to the right, you can see what it looks like when you choose the drop-down menu for “All Subjects.” Right away, you can see that it is listing all of the subject headings in alphabetical order. The numbers in parentheses next to each of the items in each of the drop-down indicates the number of databases you will find matching that heading.
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For example, when you select “Allied Health” combined with “Ebooks, it will populate a results page that looks very much like the one below. You get a small set of results, but they are more likely to be what you are looking for. The most important thing to take notice of here is your ability to “Clear Filters/Browse All Databases.” It’s just a bit quicker than going back to the drop-down menu and selecting “All Subjects” from the list. We will cover what happens when you make a selection just a bit later.

#5 This is your search box for **Databases Only**. This will not search the Library’s catalog, and the only books that you will find here are Ebooks. It also does not search for the articles within the databases. However, if you know you need a database that covers a topic like ceramics, for example, it will give you a small list of journal titles that are certain to have information about ceramics in them, as you can see here.

#6 Here you have a basic hyperlinked A-Z list. This filtering system will help you if you know the title of the database you are looking for. The databases are organized by title for this A-Z list.
#7 This area is where the actual links to the databases are found. There are just a couple of useful things to point out in this area.

First is the fact that you can see if an item is new or popular, as it will be noted next to the database title.

The next is this symbol. It's almost undetectable, but if you hover over it, it's packed full of information about the database you are considering. Here is an example of what you see if you hover over the button next to “Abstracts in Social Gerontology,” from the top of this list. In this example, it tells us that the type of records you will find are bibliographic records. It lists the subject areas that are covered and the number of records in the database is listed here.

You may recognize this next icon. It is this familiar share button that you may have come across while social networking or any of a variety of other online activities. If you click our share button, it will open this dialog box where you can either directly email the link to this spot to anyone, or simply copy the link and paste it wherever it is needed.

#8 The most important thing to remember about number eight is that although it may see like it is the same on every page, it isn’t. The default is for it to show any trial databases that are available in our library. However, if you filter by subject, to something like Criminal Justice, you will notice that it changes from...
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the New / Trial Databases to LibGuides on that topic.

#9 OpenAthens

Now on to OpenAthens. OpenAthens is the portal where you will enter your credentials to gain access to any of our databases. Because they are an expensive subscription service, you need to verify your NSU identity.

Once you are on the OpenAthens login page, enter your NSU username (everything to the left of the @ in your email address using lower case only) and your NSU password. This will provide you access to all of our databases as long as your browser is open. In other words, you can switch from one database to another without having to log into OpenAthens again.

Many patrons start their academic research at Academic Search Complete. It is the second database listed at http://libguides.nsu.edu/az.php.

You can also access OpenAthens directly by going to https://login.openathens.net/auth/nsu.edu/o/71385022. Enter your NSU username (everything to the left of the @ in your email address using lower case only) and your NSU password. Once you are on the OpenAthens.net page, click on the "Login to MyAthens" and you will get an interactive list of everything we are subscribed to. EBSCO Information Services is quite popular with our patrons, as well as the video streaming service called Kanopy, but all of our digital subscriptions are accessible 24/7 and it is a wealth of valuable resources.

If you need help, please feel free to contact one of our librarians or access our LibChat/LibAnswers page at nsu.libanswers.com.