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ASSIA (Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts) – A User Guide

COVERAGE

The Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) database indexes articles from over 650 journals from 1987 to the present, updated monthly. It covers many aspects of the Social Sciences including sociology, health, social services, economics, psychology, politics, race relations, legal issues and education. It provides bibliographic records along with some abstracts and some full-text access. Some of the periodicals and newspapers are held in the library and ASSIA allows you to search the library’s holdings from your results screen.

ACCESS

ASSIA may be accessed from any PC connected to the Internet, either on or off-campus. Go to the Library homepage at http://library.ulster.ac.uk and select ASSIA from the library’s list of databases; in the Special Instructions column, click on password & access info. Then click on Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts to log in. If you are working from off campus you will need an Athens username and password to access the service. To look this up, connect to the Student Web at http://studentweb.ulster.ac.uk with your student registration number and PIN, where you can look up the password required.

ASSIA is part of the Cambridge Scientific Abstracts collection of databases, so you may also access it by selecting it from the list of databases available once you have logged into CSA. Tick the box beside ASSIA in the alphabetical list.

SEARCHING

Searching Options
There are 2 main search options: Quick Search and Advanced Search. You will be automatically logged on to the Quick Search option and will need to click on the green Advanced Search tab to move to this search function. The Command Search is also available within the Search Tools function.

Quick search
Use this method for quick and simple searches.
1. Key in your search terms in the box provided. You can enter a single word, phrase or combine separate terms together. (See Search Tips below).
2. The database that you have selected will be listed on the search screen. For example, Now Selected: ASSIA: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts.
3. Click on the downward pointing arrow at Date Range to select a time period from the menu displayed.
4. Click on Search. Your search will be processed and the results displayed.

Advanced Search
Use this search method for longer and more complex searches.
1. Click on the green Advanced Search tab.
2. Key in your search terms in the boxes provided, using the drop-down menus to select the fields (areas within the record) you wish to search: Keyword, Author, Title etc. A Keyword search will look in Title, Abstract and Descriptors and give more relevant results than searching anywhere in the record. Combine the terms using AND, OR and NOT. See Search Tips below for more details on combining terms.
3. The database you have selected will be listed on the search screen. For example, Now Selected: ASSIA: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts.
4. At Date Range select a range of years to search within.
5. Tick in the checkboxes to limit your search to Latest Update, Journal Articles Only or English Only.
6. You can specify the format you wish to view results in by clicking on the downward pointing arrow at Show. Choose from short, full, full-omit refs or custom format. For the latter you select the fields you wish to be included in the results displayed.
7. You can specify the number of results to be displayed on each results page. Choose from 10, 25 or 50.
8. Click on Search. Your search will be processed and the results displayed.
Search Tips

Combine terms:
Use **AND** to specify that both terms must appear, for example: *children AND violence*
Use **OR** to search for either term, for example: *children OR youth OR teenagers*
Use **NOT** to search for one term but not the other, for example: *race NOT discrimination* will find articles which include the term race but not the term discrimination. Use NOT cautiously or you may lose relevant articles.

**Phrases**
To find words in a phrase simply type in the phrase, for example: *secondary school.*
Use proximity searching to find words within a specified radius.

**Proximity searching**
Use **WITHIN** to find words within a specified radius, for example: *(youth) within 2 (outreach)* to find these terms within 2 words of each other and in any order.
Use **NEAR** to find terms within 10 words of each other and in any order. **BEFORE** and **AFTER** find words in a particular order.

Note: use double quotes “ ” to search for near, before and after if you want to use them as search terms e.g. “near” misses.

**Truncation and wildcards**
The symbol * can be used to search for any word beginning with a set of characters, for example: emerg* will retrieve emerge, emerging, emergencies etc.
* may also be used to represent any number of characters within a word, for example: use colo*r for color or colour or behavio*r for behaviour and behavior.
The symbol ? can be used to represent a single character within or at the end of a word, for example: wom?n will find woman or women. ?? represents 2 characters, ??? 3 characters and so on.

Search Tools
(Click on **Help & Support** for more information about these).

1. **Combine Searches**: use this function to combine results from two or more searches from the current search history, or combine the results of current searches with new search terms. Use "AND" or "OR" to combine searches.

2. **Alerts**: A saved alert will be used to automatically search your selected databases for new content every week. You will receive an email message that contains up to 250 new records from each database that has new matching content.

3. **History**: Click here to see a list of the searches you have performed during your current session. Up to fifty current searches are displayed in sequence.

4. **Command Search**: You may choose to enter your search strategy in the **Command Search** box.

5. **Thesaurus**: ASSIA has a thesaurus which you can use to find search terms. You can browse for terms via an alphabetical, hierarchical or rotated index display.
   **Steps**: Select a Thesaurus from the drop-down menu. Only one thesaurus can be selected at a time. Enter a term in the box below.
   Select the **Alphabetical Index, Hierarchy or Rotated Index** display.
   Click on Go.
   The **Alphabetical Index** will display a list of terms which are closest alphabetically to the term entered, for example the word race will find the terms rabies and race relations.
   **Hierarchy** displays broader, narrower and related terms, for example the word race will offer the broader term social structure and narrower term ethnicity.
   **Rotated Index** displays all terms in the database that contain your search term. For example entering stereotypes will find national stereotypes, gender stereotypes, occupational stereotypes etc.
   To select a term or terms to search for from those displayed, tick the empty checkbox beside the term and click on Go on the left hand side of the screen. A search will then be carried out for your term or phrase and the results will be displayed.
6. **Indexes**: Use the indexes to browse for terms used in the database. For most of the databases you will be able to browse the author, journal name and publication type indexes.

**Steps:**
Select an Index from the drop-down menu.
Enter a search term in the box below.
Click on Go.
To select a term or terms to search for from those displayed, tick the empty checkbox beside the term and click on Go on the left hand side of the screen. A search will then be carried out for your term or phrase and the results will be displayed.

**VIEWING RESULTS**

The total number of results found in the database is displayed at the top of the screen. Click on the + sign to view additional links to either related references or Web resources.
By default results are displayed together regardless of publication (All Publication Types). You can view results by publication type by clicking on the appropriate tab near the top of the screen - Journals, Peer-Reviewed Journals, Conferences, Books etc.

Each record displayed will include title, author and source information. Click on the title or on View Record to display more information for each record including a fuller abstract.

**UU Find It**
Click the UU Find It button to check if the library provides access to the document you need. UU Find It will search both for full text electronic journals and current print journals as well as offering other options such as a Google search on the web. Click on the link to the option you wish to use, for example Full text from SwetsWise.

**Full-text Linking**
If available, you may also click on Full-text Linking to link into the full text of the document required.

**Marking Records**
You can mark (select) records by ticking in the box to the top-left of each record. You can then output these marked records using the Save, Print, Email function or export them using RefWorks.

**PRINTING AND SAVING RESULTS**
Click on the Save, Print, Email button. Select records for output. Use the drop down menu to specify a format for results to be displayed in.

**Emailing**
Type in your email address in the To: box provided. Click on the Email button.

**Saving**
Select the correct file format – PC, Macintosh or Unix and click on the Save function

**Printing**
Click on Print Preview, go to File and Print and print the required pages. To close the Print Preview window click on the x in the top right hand corner.

**Export to RefWorks**
Use this link to export your references to the RefWorks Bibliographic Manager service. This is also available as a separate function on the Results screen.
CHANGING DATABASES

You can move to another database or databases in the collection – you can do this from many of the function screens in the database such as the Quick, Advanced and Command Search screens.

Click on the downward pointing arrow at Selected Databases and highlight one of the subject areas displayed in the menu. Choose from Arts & Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences or Technology. Alternatively, click on Select Specific Databases and from the list displayed tick the checkbox or checkboxes next to those databases you want to search within. Remove ticks from any databases you no longer wish to search in. Click on Continue to Search.

HELP

Click on the Help & Support button near the top right of screen.

EXITING FROM DATABASE

Click on Logout to the top left of the screen.

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