York University
Business Research at York Toolkit (BRYT)
Video transcript: Get better research results

Welcome to the BRYT side of business research! Today I'm going to show you how to search more effectively for articles in business databases. To find results that are on point for your topic, use what are known as **search operators** with your keywords.

Let's say you're researching corporate social responsibility issues that are impacting the Canadian mining industry. Start with relevant keywords for your topic. Notice how the list doesn't include words like impacting? That's because it's best to leave out words that don't describe the core concepts of your research topic. So how can you put these words together in a way that makes the most sense to an article database?

AND is the best way to combine distinct keywords and tell the database that you only want to see articles that have the words corporate social responsibility and mining in them. AND also narrows down your search and shows you fewer results which saves you from having to scan through countless irrelevant articles!

If your keywords have synonyms or other related terms, you'll want to use the search operator, OR. For example, articles discussing corporate social responsibility topics might use other terms besides CSR. When you use OR to connect your related terms, the database will show you articles that have at least one of these keywords in them.

See how there are double quotations around keywords that include more than one word? That brings us to my next database tip! When your keyword is a phrase with two or more words, enclose it in double quotations. This tells the article database to search for this exact phrase. While this will narrow your results, it will save you time as you will only retrieve articles with this exact phrase!

Now let's say you have a keyword like Canada, but you also want to retrieve articles that have the word Canadian. This is where the asterisk, or truncation operator, comes in handy. Just put an asterisk at the root of the word to tell the database to retrieve articles with variant endings for that word. For example, m-a-n-a-g* retrieves words such as manager or managing, and C-a-n-a-d* retrieves words like Canada or Canadian.

Now, let's put all of these search operators together: AND combines our distinct keywords; OR tells the database to look for related terms; double quotations are put

around phrases to search for an exact match; and the asterisk, or truncation operator, tells the database to search for variant endings of a word.

And now for the big reveal - a manageable list of on-point articles!

When you use search operators in business article databases, you'll be able to retrieve relevant results like a pro. To learn about other search operators that save you time, check out our step-by-step resources on the BRYT site or contact a business librarian.