

GOVT 1101 – Australian Politics, Semester 1, 2006

Library Home Page: <http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/>

Government Guide: <http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/subjects/government/>

Aims of the class:

1. Demonstrate how to find books on your topic in the Library's collections through the Online Catalogue.
2. Demonstrate how to find references to journal and newspaper articles on your topic. [Electronic Database searching].
3. Discuss the search strategies needed when searching for articles.
4. Demonstrate how to locate resources available on the Internet via the Library's *Government Guide* and via web search engines.

1. Finding books via the online catalogue:

Go to the Catalogue by clicking on *Catalogue* on the top menu bar of the Library's Home Page, or go directly to <http://opac.library.usyd.edu.au/>. Use *keyword* and *subject* to find books on your topic. If you do not know the exact subject heading for your topic, start with a keyword search to find books on the topic and then look for appropriate subject headings in the full catalogue records to refine your search. See the keyword search examples to see how to construct your keyword search.

You can also find edited books on your topic by including the term "edited" in your keyword search.

2. Finding journal articles: Electronic Databases:

Electronic Databases are used to search for journal articles on a topic. They are found on the Library's home page by clicking on *Databases and Electronic Resources* on the menu bar. You can go to an alphabetical title list, or use listings by subject.

APA-FT: (Australian Public Affairs Information Service – Full Text) [often called APAIS Full Text] This is a major Australian database for the social sciences. It is very useful for Australian political subjects. It indexes scholarly journals from 1978+. It also includes chapters in edited books containing collections of readings, and can be used to find significant newspaper articles such as those that appear on the editorial pages written by expert journalists. It contains the full text of some of the articles.

AGIS Plus Text: This database is produced by the Australian Attorney General's Department. It covers all aspects of Australian law – including roles of government and constitutional law. 1975+. Full text is available for some references.

It is also worth looking for additional databases that may be specific to your research area. For example, if you are researching education in Australia, then you might want to consider the A+education database. If you are researching gender, multiculturalism, indigenous issues you could consider both FAMILY and MAIS databases. A list of these databases can be found at:

<http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/subjects/government/databases.html>

3. Constructing Your Search:

When using the electronic databases, you need to link your keywords together using Boolean logic. This search logic can also be used when using Internet search engines.

AND Keywords linked together with AND retrieves records that contain **all** of your search terms. It REFINES, narrows your search.

Example:

australia and constitution

parliament and representation and women

OR Keywords linked together with OR retrieves records that contain **any** of your search terms. It is useful for when there is variation in your subject or there is variation in the spelling of your search terms. It EXPANDS your search.

Example:

laws or legislation or statutes

organisation or organization

NOT Keyword linked together with NOT retrieves records that contain your first search term but removes any records that contain the keyword(s) that are after the NOT. EXCLUDES search terms.

Example:

power not electricity

NOT should be used carefully as it can exclude relevant articles.

Truncation: Put an asterisk * at the end of a word stem to search for all possible endings to that word.

Example:

Democra* - retrieves democracy, democratic, democratically etc.

Protest* - retrieves protest(s), protestant(s), and Protestantism etc.

(In most database platforms the symbol is *. If in doubt, click on the help icon in the database.)

5. Finding government reports

These are mainly in two forms:

a) Papers tabled in parliament

Use the Government Guide

(<http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/subjects/government/govinternet.html>) to go to the Commonwealth parliamentary papers database:

Go to *Document Type*

Go to *Parliamentary Papers / Government Reports*

Go to *Australia*.

This takes you to an index of Commonwealth parliamentary papers produced by the parliamentary Library: <http://www.apf.gov.au/library/parlpapers.htm>

After finding relevant reports in the index, find the full text via the links in the Government internet guide eg Parliament of Australia committees at http://www.apf.gov.au/committee/committees_type.htm

OR

Find a government agency web page and check for publications in eg PDF format

b) Papers produced by government agencies

Use the Government Guide

Go to *Official Government Sites*

Go to [Australian Government Home Page](#)

Choose a relevant agency eg [Dept of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs \(DIMA\)](#)

Check for *publications* on the main menu.

5. Finding a web page

One easy way to find relevant material on your topic is to use the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library Publications website.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Library: Publications

Excellent collection of online documents which provide comprehensive overviews of key policy areas. The collection is searchable

<http://www.apf.gov.au/library/pubs/index.htm>

Use the **Government Guide:**

(<http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/subjects/government/>) to locate full text government documents such as party policy documents, press releases/media statements and speeches in parliament. Use the path

Find information by document type to get started.

- **Finding Parliamentary debates**

To get the full texts of debates in the Commonwealth Parliament since 1981, go to <http://search.apf.gov.au/search/Parlinfo.asp>

or click on *Document Type*, then *Parliamentary Debates (Hansards)* then *Australia* then *Search by subject, speaker etc* from the *Government Guide*. This link connects you to a search engine that defaults to a search for all parliamentary publications, not just the Hansards. You will need to scroll down the page to limit the search to Hansards by clicking on **Choose a collection** and then select **Chamber**. A list of document types will appear – remove all ticks except for **Senate Hansard** and/or **House Hansard** from the list.

State Hansards are also available via the pathway above, or directly via:
<http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/subjects/government/austdocs.html#statehansard>
however they have a different search interface to the Commonwealth site.

- **Finding policy documents**

Use the websites of political parties. These can be found via the *Government Internet Guide - Document Type - Parties/Policies*.

Use the press/media releases of the federal or state governments. Media releases often announce new policies or changes in policy.

You can use:

<http://www.australia.gov.au/media-sites>

or click on *Document Type*, then *Media Releases* from the *Government Internet Guide*.

Note that the media releases of State Government can be found via the link:

<http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/subjects/government/austofficial.html#statestable>

Use parliamentary debates (see **Finding Parliamentary debates** above). The second reading speech of a bill is the major debate of policy issues.

Use the *Capital Monitor* database.

- **Finding the text of Acts and Bills**

Acts can be located via *Government Guide - Document type - Legislation*. This link takes you to a range of databases that you can search to find the full text of the Act. Most databases include both Federal and State acts.

Bills of the Commonwealth and NSW governments can be found via the pathway *Government Guide - Document type - Bills*.

Web searching

You can also use web search engines such as GOOGLE to search the web directly.

A list of search engines can be found via the Library Home Page by clicking on *Search* at the top left of the menu bar, then on *Search the Internet*, then *Search Engines*.

Remember to carefully assess sites found via the web, using such principles as:

Content: *substance, depth, uniqueness*

Authority: *institutional affiliation, developer credentials*. See if the page lists the author and institution that published the page and provides a way of contacting him/her

Accuracy: (including currency): See if the page provides accurate information and it is objective in presenting the information.

Currency: Check that the page is current and updated regularly (as stated on the page) and the links (if any) are also up-to-date.

Finding Government Publications in the Library's Collections

The Library receives a large range of Government publications. The main location for Government Publications is on the 9th Floor of the Fisher Research Library. In this collection the publications are arranged by their geographic coverage and the type of publication.

For example:

G = Government publications
AUS = Commonwealth of Australia
P = Parliamentary Papers

If you are searching for Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers – you need to know that they are filed by a paper number within the year they were published. If you do not know the paper number, there are indexes for Parliamentary Papers in the Reference Collection. They are located at: Fisher Reference 328.9404 1. There is also an online index at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/parlpapers.htm>

If a report is quite significant or the Library receives it on a regular basis (i.e. department annual reports), then extra copies will be included in the Fisher Research Collection. You can then search for specific reports through the Library catalogue. Some tips for searching for government reports on the catalogue:

If searching by Author – remember you have to put country or state before the department name.

e.g. australia dept of foreign affairs

Many reports become known colloquially by the chairperson's name. If that is all the detail you have then search the catalogue by **keyword**.

e.g. Burdekin Report on homeless children – you would search burdekin **and** homeless children.

6. Finding newspaper articles

Many newspapers have web sites but they only give the current day's news and if they have archives, require payment for access. But other sources are available:

Use the *Factiva* database to locate the full text of many Australian and overseas newspapers, including the SMH (1986+) and The Australian (1996+). Click on *Databases and Electronic Resources* from the Library menu, and then locate *Factiva* in the alphabetical sequence. Type your search terms in the search box and choose the required dates and newspapers to search.

Contact Information

Fiona McCay
Coordinator, Economics & Business Liaison team
Phone: (02) 9351 3560
Email: f.mccay@library.usyd.edu.au