

Briner Academic Center

Library Databases vs. the Web

A quick guide to better starting points for free, round-the-clock, reliable research.

Free Web

General. Quick and easy for small tasks.

Broad sweep of all information available online. This is a vast information pool of everything openly available on the Internet.

May not search information stored in databases, subscription sites, or membership/organization sites.

Provides keyword searching. May not have subject categories.

CCCK Briner Library's Online Resources

Designed to help pinpoint information for research and class assignments.

Provides the best and most relevant information available on a specific topic.

Information chosen by librarians for relevance to curriculum, and has a correlation to academic standards.

Search by keyword, by subject, by author, by date of publication for the most recent and relevant results.

Quality, type, and relevance of information

Search results are websites, ranked by relevancy determined by computer programs.

Unreliable for getting to peer-reviewed, or refereed content.

Links to information that can be out of date and/or taken from sources unknown or open to question.

Note: same uncertainty holds true for Wikipedia-style encyclopedias; user-supplied content can be poorly sourced or biased.

Google Scholar searches can be used for more scholarly literature (newspapers, curriculum-relevant magazine and journal archives), but many are only available for a fee.

Search results are research solutions, ranked in order of relevance by professional researchers and subject experts.

Accurate. Reviewed and updated regularly.

All library content is available for FREE through the library databases.

Reflects partnership with thousands of publishers to ensure copyrighted magazine, newspaper, and journal content is included in search results.

Our resources provide access to more than just journal articles such as: eBooks, maps, graphs, images, videos, reference material, gray literature, conference proceedings, and data sets.

Research aids

Not much support.

High quality finding aids, helpful guides, video tutorials, and much more await you on the library webpage.

Allows you to collect, organize, and share your research.

Remember, your librarian knows more than just books. They're experts in finding hidden information if you get stumped.

Paid placements and ads

Ads and links can distract users.

None! The library funds the subscriptions making access FREE to students with NO ADS.

Bottom Line

Free. Inconsistent—can be good for quick questions, but for academic research, time can be wasted viewing irrelevant websites or judging incomplete, false, or misleading information. If used for research, back up the information with at least two other non-Web sources.

Free to students 24/7 from anywhere with internet access.

Consistently reliable for quality, relevant, and reviewed information. If used properly, your library databases can save you time and frustration.