

# What is a Library Database?

- **Library databases contain information from published works.** Examples: Magazine and newspaper articles, encyclopedias and other reference books.
- **Library databases are searchable.** By Keywords, Subject, Author, Magazine Title, Date, etc.
- **Library databases provide citation information.** Author, if available, Title of Article, Publication (Title of Magazine, Newspaper, or Reference Book), Publisher, Date of Publication
- **Library databases often contain full-text articles.** You can print or email an entire article.

There are different kinds of library databases. For specific topics. Examples: Chilton Auto Repair, Reference USA. For general topics Examples: Expanded Academic ASAP, Popular Magazines. Library databases are paid for by taxpayer dollars.

How is a library database different from a website?

Library Databases	Websites
Library databases get their information from professionals or experts in the field.	Websites can be written by anyone regardless of expertise.
Library databases contain published works where facts are checked.	Website content is not necessarily checked by an expert.
Library databases are easy to cite in a bibliography and may create the citation for you.	Websites often don't provide the information necessary to create a complete citation.
Library databases can help you narrow your topic or suggest related subjects.	Websites often aren't organized to support student research needs.
Library databases are updated frequently and include the date of publication.	Websites may not indicate when a page is updated.

Questions to ask about ANY information:

- **Currency:** How recent is the information, and when was it last updated?
- **Organization:** Is it easy to find the information you need?
- **Accuracy:** How reliable is the information, and are the facts accurate?
- **Bibliography:** How easy is the work to cite in a bibliography? Does it give you the author, title, publisher, and date?
- **Unfamiliar Topics:** How useful is it when you don't know where to start?
- **Languages:** How easily can the work provide languages other than English?
- **Any source, whether a library database or website, can have good information.** It is necessary to think critically about all information that you read or view.

For more information about citing electronic resources please see the following link from the [Internet Public Library](#).

[Adapted from Hennepin County Library's Reference and Research web page]