During this PubMed tutorial, we:

- will view the search details to see how PubMed translated our search

- add filters to narrow our search

- look at some examples of accessing full text

- use the “Similar articles” feature

PubMed is a free MEDLINE search engine from the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health.

Although PubMed is freely available, you need to use the library’s customized PubMed link or the library’s PubMed search box to access the full text of the e-journals that the library purchases.

On the Library homepage, the default search box is for PubMed. Let’s do a search for articles about prostate cancer screening. **Type prostate cancer screening into the PubMed search box and click Search.**

Our results appear. After you run a search in PubMed, always check the search details to see how PubMed translated your search. PubMed takes your search terms and modifies or adds additional search terms behind the scenes to improve your retrieval. PubMed will try to add both British and American spellings, add the singular as well as the plural word forms, and add other synonyms.

PubMed also uses automatic term mapping, which means PubMed will try to map your search terms to medical subject headings or MeSH, the controlled vocabulary PubMed uses.

Let's look at the search details. The search details are found in the advanced search page. **Select the Advanced link below the search box.**

The Advanced screen appears. The search details area is at the bottom of the page. To view the search details, you would select the chevron icon in the Details column.

Selecting the chevron icon for our search...

Best practice is to use a combination of keywords and MeSH terms in your search.

This will help do two things: make your search more comprehensive, and it will make sure you find the newest articles. It can take some time for articles to be assigned MeSH headings, so if you were to search only using MeSH headings, you may miss out on recent articles.

Let’s look at how PubMed translated our search.

You can see that PubMed automatically mapped prostate cancer to the MeSH term prostatic neoplasms. You can also see that PubMed searched for the word screening, and it also added the MeSH terms mass screening and early detection of cancer.

It is important to view the search details to check for two things. Did PubMed map my search terms to MeSH headings? Secondly, did PubMed add any unwanted search terms to my search? Since PubMed mapped our keywords to appropriate MeSH terms and used appropriate keyword variations, we don’t need to edit our search.

Let’s return to the results page. Selecting the number of results link, 55,026...

PubMed offers a variety of filters (limits) you can use to narrow your search results.

A warning about using the Free full text filter: The Free full text filter does NOT include journals purchased by USC; Free full text ONLY includes articles freely available to the general public.

Let’s narrow our search results to English review articles published in the last 5 years.

Review articles are summaries of what has been written in the journal literature on a topic over time. They can provide you with a nice overview on a topic. Under Article Type, **select the Review check box** to narrow our search to only review articles.

Under Publication Date on the left, **select 5 years**.

Now let’s apply the English language filter. It does not automatically appear on the left as an option, so we need to add it. **Select the Additional filters button.**

**Select Language.**

**Select the check box for English.**

Next, **select the Show button.**

English now appears as an option, but we still need to click on it to activate it as a filter.

**Select the check box for English.**

Applying these limits to our search brought our results down from 55,026 to 2,034 articles. Note the “Filters applied” note near the top of the page, which shows you the filters that were applied to the search. These will remain in place for subsequent searches unless you remove them.

Now let’s look at some examples of accessing full text articles. **Select the title of the first search result**, Prostate Cancer Screening by Dunn.

The Full Text Links appear on the right sidebar. The icon, Find Full Text @USC School of Medicine Library, will appear next to each citation when you are viewing the abstract or full details view. The icon is a link resolver that helps you access the e-journals purchased by USC. The icon appears after every citation of the search results regardless of whether full text is available from the SOM Library or not.

**Select the Find Full Text @ USC School of Medicine Library icon** to see if we have electronic access to this article.

The Find It @ UofSC Libraries screen appears. You can use any of the links in the View Online area to access the journal, but you need to pay attention to the coverage dates listed. We are looking for a 2007 issue, so we can use the Elsevier ScienceDirect Journals link, which has current access going back to 1995.

**Select the Elsevier ScienceDirect Journals link.**

The full text of the article appears. Let’s look at another example of accessing full text articles.

This reference contains a publisher icon. Most of the publisher sites charge to view the full text.

Sometimes you will find Free full text icons. **Select the Find Full Text @ USC School of Medicine Library icon** for this citation.

The Find It @ UofSC Libraries screen appears. There is no “View Online” area with links for this citation, so we do not have full text access for this article.

If you would like to request a copy of the article via Interlibrary Loan, **select Sign in.**

Next, **select UofSC Students, Faculty and Staff.**

On this screen you would enter your UofSC network username and password (the same login you use to access BlackBoard). Unfortunately, you can’t use your School of Medicine username and password to login.

Selecting Login...

Now that we are signed in, you have the option to Request through interlibrary loan.

Let’s take a look at one final PubMed feature: the Similar articles list. The Similar articles list appears below the abstract on the full record view of a citation.

The Similar articles feature uses a word-weighted algorithm to compare words from the title, abstract, and MeSH headings to calculate a set of PubMed citations that are closely related to the selected article. The first five most closely related articles are listed. **Select the See all similar articles link** at the bottom to view the full list.

Using the Similar Articles list is one way to identify related articles that may not have been in our original search results.

During this PubMed tutorial, we:

- viewed the search details to see how PubMed translated our search

- added filters to narrow our search

- looked at some examples of accessing full text

- used the “Similar articles” feature