

Do Your Homework

Databases vs. Websites: What's the difference?

What is a Library Database?

- **Library databases contain information from published works.** Examples: Magazine and newspaper articles, professional and/or peer-reviewed journal 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 topic examples: Biography Resource Center, New Book of Popular Science and ABC-CLIO Social Studies. For general topic examples: ProQuest, World Book Online and SIRS.

How is a library database different from the Web?

Online Subscription Databases

Subscription databases get their information from professionals or experts in the field.

Subscription databases are easy to cite in a Works Cited Page and may create the citation for you.

Subscription databases are easy to cite in a Works Cited Page and may create the citation for you or tell you how to do it.

Subscription databases can help you narrow your topic or suggest related subjects.

Subscription databases are updated frequently and include the date of publication.

Websites

Websites may be written by anyone regardless of expertise.

Website content is not necessarily checked by an expert.

Websites often don't provide the information necessary to create a complete citation.

Websites often aren't organized to support a student's research needs.

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 locate the information you need?

Accuracy: How reliable is the information, and are the facts accurate?

Bibliographic Content: How easy is the work to cite in a Works Cited Page? 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 of all information that you read or view.

	Websites	Media Specialist Selected Websites (Pathfinders)	Online Subscription Databases
Currency	Great	Great	Good
Organization	Fair	Good	Great
Accuracy	Fair	Great	Great
Bibliographic Content	Fair	Good	Great
Unfamiliar Content	Great	Good	Good
Languages	Good	Good	Fair

How can I tell if a Website has good information?

Use our easy-to-complete Website Evaluation form. You can pick up a print copy in the Media Center or complete the online .pdf version from our [Website](#).

How do I access Winston Churchill HS Online Subscription Databases?

From the Churchill HS [Homepage](#), click on the "Media Center Tab" at the top of the page. You can find a list of our databases on the page titled, [Online Subscription Services](#). To access the databases from home, you must obtain the login/password sheet from the Media Center.

Need more help? Your Churchill HS Media Center staff is ready to help you with your research needs. You can ask us in person or on the [phone](#).