

Digital Dissertations

What is Digital Dissertations --

UMI's Digital Dissertations contains citations and abstracts of doctoral dissertations and masters theses for all subject areas from over 1,000 accredited colleges and universities in North America and Europe. The database includes citations for materials ranging from the first U.S. dissertation, accepted in 1861, to those accepted as recently as last semester. Those published from 1980 to present day include 350-word abstracts, written by the author. Citations for master's theses from 1988 to present day include 150-word abstracts. Of the 1.5 million titles listed, Digital Dissertations offers the full text of most dissertations beginning in 1997 in PDF computer file format.

Keep in mind that free full-text PDF retrieval of dissertations is only available for those dissertations published from 1997 to present day. All other dissertations offered in this database may be found in library collections, or may be purchased if you choose to order them through this UMI database.

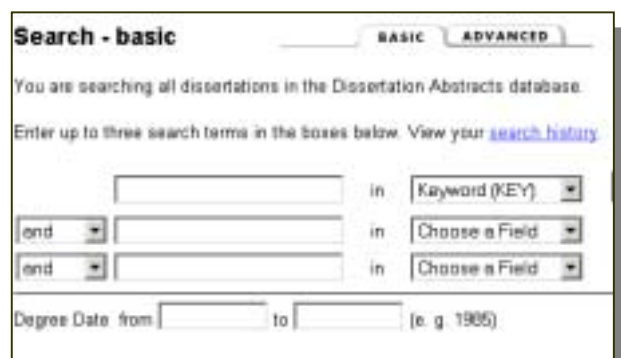
Accessing Digital Dissertations --

1. From the University Library System home page (<http://www.library.pitt.edu>), choose *Databases A – Z* from the *Find Articles and More* section.
2. Choose **D** from the index near the top of the page and then choose the *Digital Dissertations* link.
3. On the Digital Dissertations page, click the *Connect to the database* link.
4. At the *ProQuest Digital Dissertations* web page, click on the blue **Enter** button.

Searching Digital Dissertations --

There are two different search screens for searching Digital Dissertations – the Basic Search screen, or the Advanced Search page. You can choose which searching method you want by clicking on the appropriate tab at the top of the search page.

Basic Search – For a general topic or keyword search, simply type your search term in the text box. You can focus the search for that term to a specific portion of a citation or abstract by selecting from the drop down menu to the right of the text box, and you can also use Boolean operators to combine two or more search terms to create a complex search. This search screen also offers the ability to restrict your search to a certain publication date by using the *Degree Date from* fields at the bottom of the search screen. For help in using operators and in crafting your search strategy, check the *Searching Tips* section of this guide.



The screenshot shows the 'Search - basic' interface. At the top, there are two tabs: 'BASIC' (selected) and 'ADVANCED'. Below the tabs, it says 'You are searching all dissertations in the Dissertation Abstracts database.' and 'Enter up to three search terms in the boxes below. View your [search history](#)'. There are three search boxes with 'and' dropdown menus between them. The first box is empty, and the second and third boxes contain 'and' and are empty. To the right of each box is a dropdown menu for the search field. The first dropdown is set to 'Keyword (KEY)', and the other two are set to 'Choose a Field'. At the bottom, there are two 'Degree Date from' fields with a 'to' field and a '(e.g. 1985)' example.

When you have finished creating your search, simply click on the blue Search button.

Advanced Search – The Advanced Search page allows you to craft a complex search using Boolean operators to combine search terms, searching using phrases, searching by field operators, and combining terms with previous searches. Type your search strategy in the Build Query box. Listed below are some methods you can use to craft your search.

Field Operators -- Each record or abstract is broken down into informational *fields*—*AU* for author, or *TI* for title, etc. You can limit your search to searching just within a specific field of information. To do this, type the field code you wish to search within, followed by the search term placed within parentheses. For example, **ti (biology)** will search for all dissertations that have the word “biology” in the title field.

Searching using Phrases -- To use a phrase as a search term, simply place the phrase within parentheses. For example, **keyword(cross country skiing)** will search for all documents containing the phrase “cross country skiing.”

Combined Searching -- You can combine terms, phrases, and/or previous searches to create a new search by using the Boolean operators **AND**, **OR** or **NOT** (see **Searching Tips**). You can also reuse any previous search that is displayed in the Search History window. Simply use the set number as part of your new search. Examples: **#5 and biology**, **#2 and ti (computer)**, **#3 not #4** . For more information on these searches, or for help in phrasing your search, click on the **Help** button or consult the *Searching Tips* section of this handout.

The Advanced Search screen also offers other features to aid in creating your searches. These features are located in the shaded box below the Build Query box, and you can select the feature you wish by clicking on the designated tab. *Keywords + Fields* offers drop-down menu searching similar to the Basic Search screen. *Search History* numerically lists all the searches you have performed, and allows you to access the result list for any of these searches by clicking on the numeric *Hits* total for a specific search. *Subject Tree* allows you to search and find specific subjects by following a linked subject tree. The *School Index* lets you search for specific institutions by university or college name. Each of these features has an **ADD** button that lets you add your results to your search query.

Search Results --

Once you submit a search, a brief citation result list will appear. Each brief citation will list the dissertation title, author, institution where it was written, and UMI dissertation number. To access the full citation and abstract, double click on the Citation + Abstract link. You can print the record or abstract by using the Print button on your web browser.

Some of the most recent dissertations will also offer two useful options –*Preview*, and *Free Download*. *Preview* lets you view and read the first 25 pages of the dissertation online, usually covering the table of contents and summary of the dissertation. Dissertations offering this option will be labeled with a 24 page Preview link below the brief dissertation citation. Click on this link, and 25 tiny “thumbnail” page images will appear. You can view any of those pages by clicking on the thumbnail image to open it. You can print any of these pages by using the browser Print button while that page is open. *Free Download* lets you download the whole dissertation text file to an intermediary web site for viewing. The Download process is discussed in the *Dissertation Download* section below.

The screenshot shows the 'Search - advanced' interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'BASIC' and 'ADVANCED'. Below the title, it says 'You are searching all dissertations in the Dissertation Abstracts database.' There is a search box containing 'ti (biology)' and a 'Search' button. A 'CLEAR QUERY' button is also present. Below the search box, there are tabs for 'KEYWORDS + FIELDS', 'SEARCH HISTORY', 'SUBJECT TREE', and 'SCHOOL INDEX'. A shaded box contains instructions: 'To include search terms in your query, *ADD* the terms and fields to the Build Query box using AND, OR or NOT.' Below this, there are three rows of search criteria: 'and' with a dropdown, a text box, and a field selection dropdown (currently 'Keyword (KEY)'); 'and' with a dropdown, a text box, and a field selection dropdown (currently 'Choose a Field'); and 'and' with a dropdown, 'Degree Date from', a text box, 'to', a text box, and '(e. g. 1985)'. Each row has an 'ADD' button.

You can mark citation lists for later printing, emailing, or downloading by clicking on the box beside the blue folder icon to the left of the record. The records can be unmarked by clicking again on the box.

Print, Email or Download Selected Results --

Once you have marked the dissertations you want, click on the black *Marked List* button in the button bar at the top of the screen. You will go to a brief citation list of all the dissertation records you have marked. You can remove any dissertation from this list by clicking on the marked box to the left of the record. You have the ability to print, email or download these citations. You are also able to purchase copies of dissertations through this index; for information on purchasing, click on the Shopping Cart button on the black button bar.

Print, Email, or Download Citation List: Click on the button for the appropriate format. In the *Print/Download/Email Citations* page you must select an option in the *Output* format and *Sort by* menus, and fill in the remaining text boxes. When finished, click on the button—*Print List, Email List, or Download List*—at the lower right. If you chose to print, a text version of your list will appear. Use the browser's Print button to print, and then the Back button to return to searching. If you used email, a message will appear that the list has been sent, and you can use the Web browser's Back button to return to searching. If you downloaded the list, The Save As . . . menu will appear. Select your computer's floppy drive in the Drives: bar. Then select *Plain Text (*.txt)* in the Save File as Type bar. Type the file name you wish in the File Name: bar. When finished, click on the **OK** button. The list will be saved to your floppy disk. You can access this file in any word processing software by using that program's *File: Open* command.

Dissertation Download: Most dissertations published from 1997 to present are available in PDF format, an accessible and viewable computer file. The PDF file will be made available on an intermediary web site designated by the database at time of download request. This file is usually several megabytes in size, and will not fit onto a floppy disk. Viewing a PDF file requires the Adobe Acrobat software. If your computer does not have this software, it is available free of charge at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

If the dissertation is available in PDF format, a Free Download button can be found to the left of the individual dissertation entry on the search result list. In the PDF Download page, enter your email address. This information will be used to notify you when the dissertation is ready to be viewed. When finished, click on the **Download Now** button. You will go to the Online Order Receipt page that will verify your personal and order information, and give you a PIN number that you need to access the PDF file. After the dissertations have been downloaded to a web site for viewing, you will receive an email message (usually within 15 minutes) confirming the availability of the requested dissertations, and instructions about how to access the documents. You will have 72 hours in which to access that web address, and 48 hours from time of access to view the dissertation file.

Searching Tips --

Boolean Operators -- You can use special operators to combine search terms and either broaden or narrow your search. Here are a few examples:

AND Example: **biology and plants**
Finds records containing both biology and plants.

NOT Example: **chemistry not organic**
Finds records containing chemistry but not organic. Use this carefully because it eliminates records which contain both terms.

OR Example: **apples or oranges**

Finds records containing either apples or oranges, or both terms.

Phrases -- Separate words by spaces to specify retrieval of documents that have those exact phrases. For example, **title(cross country skiing)** finds records with the exact phrase in the title field. For more information about searching by specific fields, see the *Field Operators* section below.

Truncation -- You can broaden your search by typing a word root immediately followed by the truncation symbol ? . This will find all records containing any word that begins with the root word. Truncation can be used to retrieve both singular and plural forms of a word, as well as various endings of the root word.

Example: **title(biolog?)**

Finds records with both biology and biological in the title field

Example: **keyword(librar?)**

Finds records with library, libraries, librarian, librarians, librarianship

Field Operators -- Each record is broken into several fields of information. When you search for a term without specifying a field, the retrieval software automatically searches the default field (the keyword or basic index field), which contains all words in the title and abstract fields of a record. A field search specifies which field should be searched for occurrences of the keyword or phrase. To search by field, use the specific field abbreviation, followed by the word or phrase you want to search in parentheses. For detailed information about any of the fields, consult the *Field Specific Search Tips* section of the Help page.

Field Name	Field Abbreviations	Search Example
Abstract	ab; abs; abstract	ab(Iowa and Caucus?)
Adviser	ad; adviser; advisor	ad(Smith, Ann?)
Author	au; at; author	au(Hart, William)
Degree Date (year)	ddt; da; date; yr; year	DDT(1996); da(<1990)
Degree Awarded	dg; ddn; degree	dg(PHD)
Dissertation Database ID	disdb	disdb(DAI)
Dissertation Volume/Issue	disvol	disvol(DAI-B 56-02)
ISBN	isbn	isbn(91-554-3527-0)
Keyword (Basic Index)	keyword; bi	keyword(Cuba or Haiti)
Language of Dissertation	la; language	la(French)
Publication Number	pn;no	pn(AAT9634098)
School Name/Code*	sc; sch; school	sc(Ohio State); sc(0254)
Subject Name/Code **	su; sub; subject	su(Cinema); su(0900)
Title	ti; title	ti(Fuzzy Logic)

* an index of school names and codes can be found at the School Name/Code entry in *Field Specific Search Tips*.

** an index of subject names and codes can be found at the Subject Name/Code entry in *Field Specific Search Tips*.