

Database Selection Criteria

A List of Proposed Considerations Prepared by Robert J. Tiess, Middletown Thrall Library, July 2014

Access	Can the database be accessed remotely by library patrons? Is barcode verification available?
Accessibility	Does the database comport with established Web standards and provide accessible interfaces to disabled users? Does the database work properly in all modern browser?
Aesthetics	Does the database meet present-day expectations in terms of layout / appearance?
Audience	Does the database support your community's / patrons' interests / informational needs? Is the content overly scholarly and limited to a very specific audience? Is it age-specific/age-appropriate?
Authority	Does the database provide peer-reviewed content? Is there a "peer-reviewed" limit? Are authors of articles / information in the database clearly identified?
Citations	Does the database enable users to generate citations (APA, MLA, etc.)?
Complementarity	How well does the database complement your library's existing databases / resources?
Cost	How does pricing for this database compare with similar products? Are there any possible savings for consortium pricing? How is cost calculated? Do costs rise? How is the contract structured?
Coverage	How topically comprehensive is the database? Is it general or specific? Does it support in-depth research? Is similar information available freely from other sources?
Currency / Dates	How current is the information in the database? What is the date range of its content?
Demo	Can a full product demonstration of the database be arranged for library staff evaluation?
E-mail	Can articles be e-mailed? Which e-mail formats are available (text, HTML, PDF)?
Information	Is the information objective or biased? Consider the overall quality and range of this resource.
Integration	How well does the database integrate with your existing databases? For example, if it is a Gale or ProQuest product, does it support cross-database searching in Gale or ProQuest?
Language	Does the database support users fluent in other languages? Are translation options available for articles? Does the database itself use easy-to-understand wording or technical jargon?
Licensing	What are the licensing terms / terms of use for this product? Are they too restrictive? Are there limits as to how many concurrent users can access this database?
Marketing	Does the provider make any marketing materials (e.g. bookmarks, icons) for this database?
Mobile Access	Can the database be accessed via mobile devices? Is there an app available / included?
Multimedia	Does the database include multimedia (audio, illustrations, photos, page images, videos, animations)?
PDFs	Can articles be downloaded as they originally appeared via PDF?
Printing	Can articles be printed? Is there a printer-friendly option? Are there any user limits to prints?
Privacy	Are there any assurances as to user privacy? Must users create accounts to access this resource?
Quality Assurance	Can the database provider ensure this product has been tested on various operating systems, Web browsers, computers, tablets, etc.? Do all functions look and work as expected?
RSS / Alerts	Can patrons subscribe to RSS feeds of articles and/or create search alerts so, when new content of interest to them becomes available in the database, they will be notified?
Scalability	Can the database be expanded with additional content? Are different versions available? Can libraries add premium features / content (a la OverDrive's Advantage plan).
Searching/Browsing	How effective is the search engine? Is advanced searching available? Can users browse by topic?
Statistics	Are usage statistics available? If so, how? How detailed are reports? Can you export to Excel?
Support	Are there staff training materials for this product? Will the product be supported long-term by its provider? How is customer service / troubleshooting handled by the provider?
Technicalities	Does the database require any special software, plug-ins, or technical knowledge?
Usability	Is it user-friendly? Is it intuitive? How challenging might the interface / product be to someone fairly or completely new to databases? Could someone use this product comfortably for an extended period? How well might the average user be able to navigate this database? Does the database provide easily accessible help? Are patron training materials available?