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Conducting Virtual Research at U.S. Naval War College

The library may be closed, but there is a wealth of virtual resources that you can use for writing papers at the U.S. Naval War College (NWC). Key resources:

- The Library's reference guides on how to search specific databases effectively are very helpful. Access at <https://usnwc.libguides.com/c.php?g=86609&p=1026022>.
- The library regularly updates their blog with helpful guides and resources. They are emailing it to students but you can always find it at <https://usnwc.libguides.com/blog/>.
- Contact your librarians at libref@usnwc.edu with any questions or needs. They will connect you to a research librarian who can help you.
- All of the below searching options can be accessed from the main page of <https://usnwc.edu/Learning-commons>.

Option 1: Use the Library Research Guides

Find a Library Research Guide for your topic. This will guide you to databases and other useful resources that won't come up in a search engine, but will give you specific data points that can be used as evidence in your papers. <https://usnwc.libguides.com/index.php>.

Option 2: Find a Relevant Database

NWC has access to over a hundred databases of articles and data. Rather than searching a general database, you may find it useful to narrow your search by going to a subject specific database. Go to <https://usnwc.libguides.com/az.php>.

In the 'subject' drop down menu, pick the subject closest to your paper topic—area studies, military, law, counterintelligence, etc. Then you can search in that specific database for your narrow topic, ensuring that only highly relevant materials will show up in your search.

Option 3: Go Directly to a Relevant Journal

You might know a specific journal that would be useful for your research—perhaps you've found a couple of articles from it already, and would like to browse others. Go to <https://usnwc.edu/Learning-commons>, and click on Search journals. Either search for the journal you need, or use the Subject drop down menu to select a relevant subject and see journals that are in that area. Select an online access point for the journal (there will be a list if it's a popular journal, as in the example below)—pick a database that has recent issues of the journal, such as JSTOR, EBSCO host, or a subject-specific database. You can then browse by issue or search within that journal.

International security

ISSN: 0162-2889

[Look up Article](#)



Peer Reviewed

07/01/1976 to 12/31/2014 in [JSTOR Arts & Sciences II](#)

[JSTOR Security Studies Extension](#)

06/01/1993 to 1 year ago in [EBSCO Military & Government Collection](#)

[International Security & Counter Terrorism \(EBSCO\)](#)

Spring 1996 to Present in [MIT Press Journals](#)

2002 to 2011 in [EBSCOhost EJS](#)

Option 4: Use the [Library's Summon Search](#)

The link in the title above will give you full instructions and advice, but here's a general approach.

If you prefer to start broad and narrow your approach later, use the Summon Search. Go to <https://usnwc.edu/Learning-commons>. On this main page you will see the Summon search engine. This will search all of the library's resources. Enter your search terms (be specific; the more general you are, the more sources you'll need to sort through).

A new tab will open with your results. On the left side bar, click 'Full Text Online' so you only see online sources, rather than those housed physically in the library. If you see a source that looks promising, click on it to see the full record. At the bottom of the entry will be a link to the resource. You may need to log in using CAC or Blackboard credentials to access the source. Depending on the database it is housed in, you will then be able to click on the PDF full text or download links to access the source.

The record for each source will include subject links. If this source is very central to the topic of your paper, click on that subject to find all other library sources that are on the same topic. This is a great shortcut to finding the most relevant sources.

For example, in the below entry, you see subject and geographic terms, along with the http address for the source in the EBSCO host database.

Subject term: [Security, International--Arctic regions.](#)
Geographic term: [Arctic regions--Military policy.](#)
Geographic term: [Arctic regions--Strategic aspects.](#)
Added Entry-Personal Name: [Kraska, James.](#)
HTTP: <http://usnwc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=375954>

Once you find a good, relevant, recent source, use it! A scholarly source will have a literature review section that will discuss the key articles in this area, AND a bibliography. Use those sources as a guide for what you can get next.

Option 5: Get Outside Articles

What if NWC doesn't have the article you need for your paper? Maybe you used a broader search engine like Google Scholar*, or you found a bibliographic reference that is not available through the library's databases. In that case, you can request the library to get that resource for you.

Email ill@usnwc.edu or circ@usnwc.edu with the title, author, and publication information (year of publication, publisher/journal, doi if available), and the Interlibrary Loan technician will work to email you your digital resource within a couple of days whenever possible.

In general, keep in mind that the library staff are working virtually to assist you with all your research needs. They have created many useful resources for you, so explore all the links in this document and don't hesitate to contact library staff by email with questions or requests!

**Google Scholar is certainly better than regular Google, in that it will restrict your searches to scholarly articles. But it will still give you millions of hits to wade through, which means a lot of time looking at articles that are not very relevant or which you may not be able to access. You are better off focusing your time on the Library's search engine, and then if you can't find what you are looking for, broaden your search here.*