

Searching America: History & Life and Historical Abstracts simultaneously

When you are looking for journal articles, you will notice that your key resources, listed in the history subject guide, are *America: History & Life* and *Historical Abstracts*. These are two distinct databases. *America: History & Life* deals with the United States and Canada from prehistory to the present. *Historical Abstracts* deals with the rest of the world from 1450 to the present. Sometimes though, your topic really requires you to search both databases. There is a way of combining a search so that you are searching both databases at once.

Let's take, for example a search for material on the fur trade in Canada. You might start your search in *America: History & Life*. Your search might look something like this: "fur trade" as a subject term and "Canada" as geographic term. This search brings you 646 results. You might get the idea that fur trade in Canada, especially pre-Confederation, might involve Great Britain and a number of other countries as well that are outside the United States and Canada. You might want to run your search in *Historical Abstracts*. In *Historical Abstracts*, the same search will give you 16 results. Some of these may be overlapping the results you get from *America: History & Life* but you can't really be sure.

If you want to combine your search so that you are searching both databases at once, go to the top of the screen and select "Choose Databases." At that screen, you see that *Historical Abstracts* is already selected, select *America: History & Life* as well and click "ok." You now have both databases here, *America: History & Life* and *Historical Abstracts*. Notice that your search has changed a little bit. It still has "fur trade" as a subject term, but "Canada" is no longer listed as a geographic term—it has become a keyword search. You do lose some of the field choices in your search, when you select both databases. If you run this search, which is slightly wider, you get 753 results all dealing with the fur trade and mentioning Canada in some capacity. It is a nice, tidy way of doing a search in two databases at once, made possible because both databases are coming to us from the same company called EBSCOhost.