

The New ChengFind

By Kurt Wagner



Last April I reported that over the summer we would implement a new search tool and in this edition of ChengChat I'm happy to report that this has been done. Let's pop the hood and find out three or four ways that the new ChengFind will make your search for information better than ever.

The search box on the Library's web page previously searched only the Library catalog for books, e-books and audio/video. At most, you were searching about 500K items and if you wanted articles you had to first scan through a list of databases and choose the right one. Things are much easier now. Just type your search words in the box to search not only the library catalog but also nearly 500 million other resources including a huge amount of full-text content. It's very easy to get a large number of results in ChengFind. The most important thing, though, is sorting and filtering your results to list the resources that work best for you. Let's do it!

I searched for "genetically modified foods" (the quotation marks keep the phrase together) and got 189,332 results.

- Use "Refine your search" in the left-side menu to limit to scholarly & peer-review, or to limit to results from the library catalog (books, e-books, and video).
- Use "Content type" to limit to particular types of materials: journal articles, newspaper articles, books/ebooks, or others.
- Use "Publication date" sliders to limit to materials published after a given date or within a range of dates.

After limiting to scholarly & peer-review, journal article, and published after January 2013 my results list decreased to 7,528. That's still a huge number, but further down the left-side menu I see that the "Discipline" filter lets me limit the results to a specific field. I can see results from biology, engineering, agriculture, or a long list of others. It's simple to select "Business" from this list so that I will only see the 69 results that pertain to the business aspects of genetically modified foods.

This way of winnowing down giant results lists into more manageable sets should be very familiar to anyone who has navigated e-commerce sites like Amazon, Ebay, or other major online shopping sites. You will quickly be able to zoom in and get only the most meaningful results. ChengFind will also be most useful for interdisciplinary topics such as Africana Studies, Film Studies, Economics, and many other topics that previously required repeat searches in multiple databases.

Is ChengFind right for everyone? No, but it's a great place to start. A more advanced researcher will still want to make use of the specialized tools available in specific databases. Click the "Articles & Databases" tab to select a database.

The new ChengFind is a big change, we know. Please ask us for help. Call 973-720-2116, email at refdesk@wpunj.edu or drop by the reference desk! We're happy to help!