

Discover ChengFind

By Kurt Wagner



Over the summer we rolled out a new version of ChengFind, a discovery tool that searches nearly everything: books, media, newspapers, journal articles and more. 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.

A few years ago, you had to search for books and media in one place and in several different databases for journal articles. 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 24,532 results.

- For many searches you'll see a "Research Starter" at the top of the results list. This is an encyclopedia entry providing overview and background information on your topic.
- Many searches will also yield a tan "Recommended Research Guides" list. These guides have been assembled by Cheng librarians to assist your research
- Use "Refine Results – Limit To" in the left-side menu to limit to Peer Reviewed, or to limit to results from the library catalog (books, e-books, and video).
- Use "Publication Date" slider to limit to materials published after a given date or within a range of dates.
- Use "Source Types" to limit to particular types of materials: "Academic Journals," "News," or other formats.

After limiting to "Peer Reviewed", published after 2013, and "Academic Journals", my results list decreased to 1,172. That's still a huge number, but further down the left-side menu I see that the "Subject" filter lets me limit the results to a specific field. I can see results from specific disciplines. I clicked "Show More" to expand the list, then clicked "food labeling." I was left with 26 articles. A much more manageable set of results.

This way of narrowing down giant results lists into something more manageable 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!