Hello this is Jesse Vestermark speaking, and I am your Librarian for the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. This is me and here's my contact info. This is one of several of my “research guides” which you can get to by going to this URL or navigating through the “Library Services” tab in the portal.

This screencast is meant to show you the value of using a single database for your searching. The multi-database search is fine for scanning the information landscape and maybe gleaning a few articles that are good enough to get started with, but, from the multi-database search page, you can also go directly to a single database.

And the advantage of this is that most databases provide you with several ways to zero in on specific topics. If I want to know a little more about a database’s specialty, I can click on the little “i” for more information. Once I have selected a specific database, I can just click on its name. For now, I’m going to try ABI/INFORM.

When you arrive at the homepage for a new database there are any number of ways to approach your search, and depending on the specificity of your topic, it’s hard to say which way is best, so I’ll demonstrate both.

If I simply type in the words construction productivity, searched
for in every article's citation and abstract, in other words, the most basic information from each article, let’s see what we get.

You’ll see I get 87 results under “all sources”. But before I start clicking on the “top” result, it’s important to scan the features on the entire results page to see how I can best weed out the junk.

The first thing I want to point out is the order of the results. The first articles aren’t necessarily the best, just the most recent. But if I choose the “most relevant first” option, I get an article from 1978, so for now, I’m going to stick with the “most recent first” list.

The “Suggested Topics” box can be a really valuable way to refine my search topics. These topics are selected by the staff of the database company and are chosen to highlight the heart of what an article is about, rather than just what words appear in an article. These may be very useful to you as actual students, but for the sake of this tutorial, I’m going to stick with my relatively general topic of construction productivity. You’ll see this brings my results total down from 87 to 66.

Now, sub-topics within these results are listed for added ability to zero in. For example, to see all the articles on “construction AND productivity” that are also about “project management” I can click on that, and I’m down to 12”

In some CAED disciplines such as construction management, there are generally two types of quality publications: trade and scholarly. Trade articles are generally written by practicing professionals for other practicing professionals, while scholarly articles are generally written by scholars for scholars in academia. Of course these two things aren’t mutually exclusive, and depending on your topic, you may find valuable information in either type of source.

We’ll analyze some of my individual results in Part 2 of this
Welcome back--this screencast is part 2 and is not meant to be watched without having seen part 1 first. I have returned to my list of 12 results on the topics of “construction” AND “productivity” AND “project management”

The “abstract” of an article is a summary of the main points in the article. Abstracts allow you to decide whether an article is relevant to you before you bother downloading or reading the whole thing.

Speaking of, there are several different links for downloading articles, usually depending on the publisher’s agreement with the database company. PDFs are generally easier to read, especially for printing. You’ll also see that older such as those published before the mid-90s, are less likely to have been digitized. Still, if your topic is timeless or requires a historical analysis, these may be of value to you.

9. **Multiple Productivity Objectives on Construction Sites**

This “FIND IT” button links to a piece of software that communicates with PolyCAT--Kennedy Library’s catalog of everything we’ve paid for. If we have a print copy in our stacks for an article you need, please contact me with the article information and we’ll send you a scan. Otherwise, you’ll often get a message like this one:

*Full Text isn't available here, but…
We'll get it for you!*
*Interlibrary Services (1-5 days)*
Simply click on the link and, if you haven’t logged into the portal in the last 15 minutes, do that, and you are automatically logged into your “Interlibrary Loan” account. This is a network of other libraries all across the country that share information. Make sure the required fields are properly autofilled and click “submit request”. From there our the request is usually processed within 24 hours and will be delivered, scanned, to your account almost always within a matter of a few days. You’ll get an email when it arrives, and simply need to log in with your CalPoly ID/PWD to retrieve a digital copy.

So, now that you know everything a database can do, let’s look at ABI/INFORM’s homepage again. You’ll see that most of the options we found after starting the search are available from the start. I can select “construction” AND “productivity” from as subjects. I can decide if I want scholarly journals only, full-text (digital) documents only. I can also choose to just search a subset of ABI/INFORM, such as their “Trade & Industry” publications.

Finally, let’s look very quickly at one more database for comparison. You’ll see that while Engineering Village is more engineering focused, even though has a completely different LOOKING interface, you can do many of the same types of things with it, including refining by language, country, year, subject, etc.

So, if you have any questions about any of this stuff I’m going to take us back to the Action Research tab of my Construction Management research guide, which you can get to through the portal or the Kennedy Library Homepage. My phone number and e-mail are here, so don’t hesitate to ask me questions about this stuff. And just remember, this kind of research takes time and patience. Good luck!