ACM Digital Library

A step-by-step guide to using the ACM Digital Library database

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1 Accessing ACM Digital Library

To access the ACM Digital Library and the content within King’s subscription you need to log in via the Library’s database pages.

- Go to the Library homepage: www.kcl.ac.uk/library
- Select the databases link
- In the title search box type in ACM and click on go
- Select ACM from the search results
- You will then be directed to the King’s Shibboleth login page where you will need to enter your King’s username and password.

2 Searching the ACM Digital Library

From the homepage there are two search options available: simple search and advanced search.

2.1 Simple search

This search box is in the top right hand corner of the homepage. Type your keywords into the search box and press search.
2.2 Advanced search

Using the advanced search features offers you a larger number of ways to control your search. Using advanced search also allows you to limit your search results in different ways e.g. affiliations, publications, conference, computing classification system. Scroll down the ‘advanced search’ page to use these options.

- Select advanced search from the ACM homepage
• Select some keywords to describe the topic you are searching for and type these into the search boxes.
• Use the drop-down menus where appropriate to further refine your search
• When you have entered you keywords and selected your search limits, click on search

3 Understanding your search results

The search results pages will give you the number of search results returned and it lists them at 20 per page. The results are ordered in descending order of relevance. If an item is included in King’s subscription there will be an icon stating that it is included with your subscription.

If the article you are interested in is available through our subscription you will see a link to the PDF.

There are two different ways to view more detailed information about the individual results.

1) If you wish to stay on the results page you can select the quick abstract button to read the abstract.
2) Clicking on the title of the article will take you through to the full bibliographic information of the article.
On the right-hand side of the page there are also the options for exporting items of interest to bibliographic software. These are listed under export formats. You may also wish to use the tags underneath to browse for other items, or use these as keywords to do a new search.

4 Refining your search results

To refine your search results use the options on the left-hand side of the search results page. The options include keywords, people, publications and conferences. This option is useful if you have a lot of results and you wish to narrow them down.

5 Browsing the ACM Digital Library

Another way to discover what material is available is by browsing the content of the database.

5.1 Browsing from the search results
If you click on one of the tabs e.g. related journals, it will give you a list of the top 5 most related resources. Click on the title of the one that interests you to find out more and explore the content.

**Top 5 Related Journals**

1. **TOG**
   
   _ACM Transactions on Graphics (TOG) is the premier journal in the graphics field. In the colorful pages of TOG, breakthroughs in computer-aided design, modeling and other areas. “Research,” the intellectual nourishment for anyone implementing these ideas._

2. **CSUR**
   
   _These comprehensive, readable tutorials the literature and explain topics to those outside their specialties. The carefully planned _Computing Surveys (CSUR) are also an educational resource, perspectives on, and identify trends in computer graphics, image understanding, software and database topics._

### 5.2 Browsing from the homepage

On the homepage there are different browsing options available e.g. **Special Interest Groups**, **Conferences** and **Special Collections**. To browse a set of resources click on the title. It will open up a page listing the different resources e.g. if you were to click on Special Interest Groups it would list in alphabetical order the various groups.
ACM Special Interest Groups

SIGACCESS  Special Interest Group on Accessibility and Computing

The ACM Special Interest Group on Accessible Computing promotes the disabilities and the application of computing and information technology strives to educate the public to support careers for people with disabilities.

SIGACT  Special Interest Group on Algorithms & Computation Theory

The ACM Special Interest Group on Algorithms and Computation Theory the discovery and dissemination of high quality research in theoretical and computational processes. SIGACT, through its awards significant contributions to the field in research and service. TCS covers structures, computational complexity, parallel and distributed computing automata theory, information theory, cryptography, program semantics and computational economics, computational geometry, and computational science distinguished by its emphasis on mathematical technique and rigor.

SIGAda  Special Interest Group on Ada Programming Language

The ACM Special Interest Group on Ada Programming Language provides technologies, including usage, education, standardization, design methods library, and conference addresses Ada’s role in building industrial-strength application, distributed, high-assurance, and high-integrity requirements, supporting engineering, software development processes, object technology, component-based Architecture (CORBA), and Java.

Click on the group title for more information about that particular group e.g. SIGACT  Special Interest Group on Algorithms and Computation Theory.

Use the tabs at the top to browse further.
6 Creating a personal account

You can create a free personal account with ACM. To do this you need to click on **sign up** in the top right hand corner of the screen just above the simple search box.

Once you have created a personal account you will be able to use the binders tool. A binder is your own personal bibliography of citations from the ACM database. This is a good way to keep track of your reading. Once you have logged in you will be able to access your binders. Use the link on the top right hand side of the page.

Once you have selected **My Binders** you will be taken through to the page which allows you to manage your binders. On the left hand side of the screen you will see the option to create a binder.

If you click on **create a binder** you will be able to create a new Binder and give it a designated name.

You will also be able to share your binders with other people who have a free web ACM account. Enter the person’s email address and your invitation will appear in their ‘My Binders’ folder next time they log in.

**To share this binder**, add a user’s email address to the shared binder list

*email address* [add to list]

Note. An email will not be sent. The invitation will appear on the user’s “My Binders” screen.

**Shared binder user listing**: (shared with 0 users)
6.1 Adding results to Binder
When you have run a search and clicked on the title of the article you are interested in you are able to save this to a Binder by clicking on the ‘Save to Binder’ section on the right hand side of the screen.

To email your selected results click on the email selected results icon. Enter your name, email address and the recipient’s email address and (optional) any messages you wish to include then click on email.

6.2 Exporting your results
As well as being able to save you results to your ACM Binder you can also export to bibliographic software, email or share via social media.

Again, look to the right hand side of the screen and you can see the export formats for bibliographic software which include BibTeX and EndNote. Underneath these are the options for sharing including the email icon which allows you to email the record to yourself should you wish to have a record of your search results.

Remember to sign out once you have finished using the ACM Digital Library.

7 Help and support
If you’d like to know more about using ACM take a look at their frequently asked questions page at: http://dl.acm.org/faq_dl.cfm.

If you have any questions about the content of this guide please contact Elizabeth Simpson (elizabeth.m.simpson@kcl.ac.uk).
8 Search tips

If you spend some time planning your search before you use the Library’s databases it will help you make the most of the search functionalities available to you. This section contains some advice about developing a search strategy which you will be able to use across all databases.

8.1 Using keywords

Databases work best when using keywords so rather than typing in your essay title or research question, spend some time identifying keywords and key concepts relating to the information you are looking to find. If you type in the title of your assignment or a long descriptive phrase, then you will find only articles with that descriptive phrase of title. You also need to think about the different ways to describe a particular topic as these will need to be included in your search.

8.2 Search operators

Search operators (or Boolean operators as they are sometimes called) can be used to link your keywords together and to help you refine your searches. The operators are

AND – use this to combine your keywords e.g. ‘global AND warming’. This will find all articles containing the words ‘global’ and ‘warming’

OR – use this to search for synonyms e.g. ‘energy OR fuel’. This will find all articles containing either one of the words ‘energy’ or ‘fuel’.

NOT – use this to exclude words from your search terms e.g. ‘carbon NOT dioxide’. This will find all articles containing the word ‘carbon’ and will exclude from the search results all the ones containing ‘dioxide’.
8.3 Phrase searching
This will help you if your key words are a phrase rather than words occurring separately. You search for a phrase by putting it in quotation marks e.g. “climate change”. This is different from searching for ‘climate AND change’ because such a search will find the words anywhere in the text.

8.4 Alternative word endings
If you wish to search for a variety of possible word endings you can use a truncation symbol. For example, technolog* will search for technology, technological, technologies, technologist, technologically, technologize. This symbol may vary in different databases; check the help or guidance section of that particular database if you are unsure.

8.5 Alternative spellings
You can use a wildcard symbol to search for alternative spellings of a word e.g. organisation and organization. If you do a search such as organi*ation, it will search for all possible spellings, thus reducing the number of searches you need to use. Again, this symbol may vary between different databases so remember to check the help or guidance section of that particular database.