

communication research databases us

Navigating the Landscape of Communication Research Databases in the US

For students, scholars, and professionals immersed in the dynamic field of communication, access to reliable and comprehensive research materials is paramount. Understanding the various communication research databases available in the United States is crucial for uncovering cutting-edge studies, historical trends, and diverse perspectives. These digital repositories serve as invaluable tools for academic inquiry, informing everything from media analysis and public relations strategies to interpersonal communication theories and digital media's societal impact. This article will guide you through the essential communication research databases in the US, detailing their scope, unique features, and how to leverage them effectively for your research needs. We'll explore major academic databases, specialized collections, and resources crucial for understanding the multifaceted world of communication studies within the American context.

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- Key Features and Benefits of Using Communication Research Databases
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Understanding the Importance of Communication Research Databases for US Scholars

In the United States, the study of communication is a vast and evolving discipline, encompassing various theoretical frameworks and practical applications. From the intricate workings of mass media to the subtle nuances of interpersonal interactions, effective research relies on access to a wealth of scholarly work. Communication research databases are the backbone of this academic endeavor, providing organized access to peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, conference papers, and other scholarly outputs. They enable researchers to identify existing knowledge, build upon previous findings, and contribute new insights to the field. Without these curated collections, the process of literature review and knowledge acquisition would be significantly more challenging and less efficient for anyone engaged in

communication studies within the US academic landscape.

These databases are not merely repositories; they are gateways to understanding the theoretical underpinnings and empirical evidence that shape our comprehension of how humans communicate. Whether you are exploring the impact of social media on political discourse, analyzing the effectiveness of advertising campaigns, or delving into the psychological aspects of communication, these resources are indispensable. They allow for a deep dive into specific research questions, facilitating the identification of key scholars, seminal works, and emerging trends within the US context.

Key Features and Benefits of Using Communication Research Databases

The utility of communication research databases in the US extends far beyond simple information retrieval. These platforms offer sophisticated tools designed to enhance the research process. Many provide advanced search functionalities, allowing users to filter results by publication date, journal, author, and specific keywords or subject headings. This precision is vital for narrowing down vast amounts of information to the most relevant studies.

Furthermore, most databases offer features such as citation tracking, which enables researchers to see who has cited a particular article, thereby uncovering related research and building a network of scholarly influence. The availability of full-text articles, abstracts, and sometimes even related multimedia content further streamlines the research workflow. Many platforms also offer features like saving searches, setting up alerts for new publications, and creating personalized bibliographies, all of which contribute to a more efficient and productive research experience. The curated nature of these databases also ensures a higher degree of reliability, as they primarily house peer-reviewed and academically vetted content.

Major Communication Research Databases in the US

When conducting communication research in the United States, several key databases stand out for their comprehensiveness and relevance. These platforms are often subscribed to by academic institutions across the country, making them accessible to a wide range of students and faculty. Their breadth and depth are crucial for anyone seeking to explore the diverse facets of communication studies.

Academic Search Premier and Academic Search Complete

Developed by EBSCO Information Services, Academic Search Premier and its more comprehensive counterpart, Academic Search Complete, are multidisciplinary databases that include a significant collection of communication journals.

These databases offer a vast array of full-text articles from scholarly journals, magazines, and newspapers, covering a wide spectrum of communication topics. Researchers can find content on media studies, public relations, advertising, journalism, interpersonal communication, and organizational communication. Their extensive coverage makes them an excellent starting point for most communication research projects in the US.

Communication & Mass Media Complete (CMMC)

Produced by EBSCO Information Services, Communication & Mass Media Complete (CMMC) is arguably one of the most important and specialized communication research databases available in the US. It provides comprehensive coverage of journals, books, and other sources in communication and media studies. CMMC indexes over 250 full-text journals and includes abstracts and indexing for an additional 1,000 publications. This database is a go-to resource for in-depth research on topics ranging from media effects and communication technology to cultural studies and political communication. Its specialized nature ensures a high level of relevance for communication scholars.

JSTOR

JSTOR is a widely respected digital library that provides access to a vast archive of scholarly journals, books, and primary sources. While multidisciplinary, JSTOR offers extensive collections in the humanities and social sciences, including numerous journals crucial for communication research. Its strength lies in providing access to the backfiles of many important scholarly publications, allowing researchers to trace the historical development of communication theories and practices in the US. Researchers often use JSTOR for its deep historical perspective and its coverage of foundational communication journals.

ProQuest Central and Communication Databases

ProQuest offers a suite of databases that are highly valuable for communication research in the US. ProQuest Central provides broad access to a wide range of academic journals, newspapers, and dissertations. More specifically, ProQuest's dedicated communication databases, such as ProQuest Communication Studies, offer curated collections of scholarly articles, conference proceedings, and dissertations focused on communication and media studies. These resources are particularly useful for identifying current research and scholarly conversations within the field, including a significant amount of American-centric research.

Web of Science and Scopus

While not exclusively focused on communication, Web of Science and Scopus are powerful bibliometric databases essential for comprehensive research. They index a vast number of scholarly journals across all disciplines, including top-tier communication journals. Their key advantage lies in their citation

indexing capabilities, allowing researchers to track the influence of specific articles and identify highly cited works. For communication scholars in the US aiming to understand the impact and reach of their research, or to identify leading researchers in specific subfields, these databases are invaluable. They provide a global perspective but are critically important for assessing US-based research output and impact.

Google Scholar

Google Scholar is a freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines. While it lacks the curated authority of subscription-based databases and can sometimes include less rigorous sources, it offers unparalleled breadth and ease of access. For communication researchers in the US, Google Scholar can be a useful tool for discovering a wide range of content, including articles, theses, books, abstracts, and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities, and other websites. It's an excellent supplementary tool for initial exploration and identifying less commonly indexed works.

Specialized Databases for Niche Communication Areas

Beyond the major multidisciplinary and communication-specific databases, several specialized resources cater to particular subfields within communication studies in the US. These databases delve deeper into specific areas, offering unique content and perspectives crucial for highly focused research.

PsycINFO

Managed by the American Psychological Association (APA), PsycINFO is a premier database for psychological research, and it's highly relevant for communication studies, particularly in areas like interpersonal communication, mass media effects on psychology, political psychology, and health communication. It indexes scholarly articles, books, and dissertations, providing a rich source of empirical research that explores the psychological underpinnings of communication processes. For US-based communication scholars examining behavioral aspects, PsycINFO is an indispensable resource.

ERIC (Education Resources Information Center)

ERIC, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, is a vast online library of education research and information. While its primary focus is education, it contains a significant amount of content relevant to communication research, especially in areas such as educational media, instructional

communication, communication pedagogy, and the role of communication in learning environments. Many US universities subscribe to or provide access to ERIC, making it a vital resource for research within educational contexts.

Business Source Complete

For communication research related to advertising, marketing, public relations, and corporate communication, Business Source Complete (also an EBSCO database) is an excellent resource. It offers a wealth of information, including scholarly journals, trade publications, and market research reports. This database is particularly useful for understanding the business applications of communication strategies and analyzing the communication practices of US corporations and industries.

PubMed and MEDLINE

While primarily focused on biomedical literature, PubMed and MEDLINE are crucial for health communication research. They index articles related to public health campaigns, patient-provider communication, the dissemination of health information, and the impact of media on health behaviors. Given the significant focus on public health in the US, these databases are essential for scholars exploring health-related communication issues.

ACM Digital Library and IEEE Xplore

For research at the intersection of communication and technology, the ACM Digital Library and IEEE Xplore are vital. The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) provide extensive collections of research papers, conference proceedings, and journals on computing, engineering, and technology. Communication scholars interested in digital media, human-computer interaction, telecommunications, and the societal implications of new technologies will find these databases invaluable for understanding technological advancements and their communicative impact in the US.

Tips for Effective Searching within Communication Research Databases

Maximizing the effectiveness of your research within communication databases in the US requires strategic searching. Simply entering a few keywords might yield overwhelming or irrelevant results. Employing advanced search techniques can significantly refine your output and lead you to the most pertinent scholarly work.

Begin by understanding the specific search syntax of each database. Most platforms support Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to combine or exclude terms, allowing for more precise queries. For instance, using "social media AND politics" will yield results containing both terms, while "social media

OR digital platforms" will broaden your search. Quotation marks around phrases, like "public relations," ensure that the exact phrase is searched, preventing results where the words appear separately.

Utilize subject headings or thesaurus terms provided by the database. These controlled vocabulary terms are assigned by indexers and can help you discover articles that might not use your exact keywords but are conceptually related. Exploring the subject headings associated with relevant articles you find can reveal new search terms to try.

Filter your results strategically. Most databases allow you to limit your search by publication date, document type (e.g., peer-reviewed articles, dissertations), language, and even specific journals. For historical research, you might broaden your date range; for cutting-edge trends, you might focus on the last few years. Remember to leverage the "cited by" feature to find newer research that builds upon foundational studies.

Save your searches and set up alerts. Many databases allow you to save complex search queries so you can rerun them easily later. Setting up email alerts for new publications that match your search criteria ensures you stay up-to-date with the latest research in your field, a crucial aspect of staying current in the fast-paced world of communication studies in the US.

Accessing Communication Research Databases

Accessing the wealth of information within communication research databases in the US primarily occurs through academic institutions. Universities and colleges typically subscribe to a wide array of these databases, providing access to their students, faculty, and researchers as a core part of their library services. This institutional access is generally granted through IP authentication on campus or via a proxy server when accessing remotely.

For individuals not affiliated with an academic institution, access can be more challenging. Some public libraries may offer limited access to certain databases, though this is less common for highly specialized academic resources. For independent researchers or professionals, purchasing individual subscriptions is an option, but these can be prohibitively expensive. Therefore, leveraging the resources of a local university or college library, even as a visiting patron if permitted, is often the most practical way to gain access to these critical communication research tools in the United States.

It is also worth noting that some databases, like Google Scholar, are freely available to everyone. Additionally, many academic journals now offer open-access options, meaning their content is freely available to all readers, regardless of institutional affiliation. While open-access is growing, a significant portion of the most impactful and current communication research in the US remains behind paywalls, underscoring the importance of institutional access.

The Future of Communication Research Databases

The landscape of communication research databases is continually evolving, driven by technological advancements and changes in scholarly publishing. The future promises even more integrated, user-friendly, and comprehensive resources for US-based researchers. We can anticipate a greater emphasis on data accessibility, with databases potentially offering direct links to datasets used in published studies, fostering greater transparency and replicability in research.

The integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning is likely to play a more significant role, offering more sophisticated search algorithms, personalized recommendations, and even tools for analyzing research trends and identifying emerging areas of inquiry within communication. Furthermore, the growth of open-access initiatives and institutional repositories will continue to democratize access to knowledge, complementing the traditional subscription-based models.

As the field of communication itself expands to encompass new media, digital platforms, and global communication networks, research databases will need to adapt by incorporating a wider range of content, including social media data, multimedia analysis tools, and interdisciplinary research from fields like computer science, sociology, and political science. The ongoing development will ensure that these essential tools remain at the forefront of facilitating and shaping communication scholarship in the United States and beyond.

Conclusion: Mastering Communication Research Databases in the US

Mastering the use of communication research databases in the US is an essential skill for any serious student or scholar in the field. By understanding the scope and unique features of major platforms like Communication & Mass Media Complete, JSTOR, ProQuest, Web of Science, and Scopus, as well as specialized resources, researchers can efficiently uncover the most relevant and impactful studies. Effective searching, utilizing Boolean operators, subject headings, and advanced filters, is key to navigating these extensive collections. Leveraging institutional access through universities remains the primary gateway to these invaluable resources. As these databases continue to evolve with technology and the expanding nature of communication studies, staying informed about their capabilities will empower researchers to contribute meaningfully to the field within the United States and on a global scale.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the most prominent communication research databases currently in use in the US?

In the US, leading communication research databases include Communication &

Mass Media Complete (CMMC), PsycINFO, Sociological Abstracts, Web of Science, Scopus, and increasingly, interdisciplinary databases like ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global and Google Scholar for broader coverage.

How do communication scholars in the US typically leverage these databases for literature reviews?

Communication scholars in the US typically use these databases to identify seminal works, track the evolution of research topics, discover emerging trends, find relevant methodologies, and identify key researchers in their field. They often employ Boolean operators, subject headings, and citation chaining to refine their searches.

What are the key differences in coverage between major communication research databases available in the US?

CMMC offers extensive coverage of communication journals, including many niche and regional publications. PsycINFO is strong in communication psychology and interpersonal communication. Sociological Abstracts excels in media sociology and cultural studies. Web of Science and Scopus provide broader, multidisciplinary coverage with a strong emphasis on citation tracking across various fields.

Are there any emerging trends in communication research databases that US scholars should be aware of?

Emerging trends include the increasing integration of qualitative data repositories, advanced AI-powered search functionalities for semantic understanding, and platforms that facilitate interdisciplinary research by connecting communication studies with fields like computer science, public health, and political science.

How do university libraries in the US decide which communication research databases to subscribe to?

University libraries in the US typically make subscription decisions based on factors such as faculty and student demand, the scope and quality of the database's content, alignment with curriculum and research strengths, cost-effectiveness, usage statistics, and the recommendations of subject librarians and faculty advisory boards.

What are the advantages of using specialized communication databases versus broader academic search engines for US researchers?

Specialized communication databases offer more targeted and comprehensive coverage of communication scholarship, including access to a wider range of journals, conference proceedings, and dissertations specific to the field. They often have more robust indexing and subject-specific thesauri, leading to more precise search results and a deeper understanding of the discipline's nuances compared to general academic search engines.

How can a researcher in the US maximize their search results within a communication research database?

To maximize search results, US researchers should utilize advanced search features, experiment with different keyword combinations and synonyms, employ truncation and wildcards, filter by publication date and document type, and leverage the database's thesaurus or controlled vocabulary. Furthermore, understanding the database's specific indexing practices and exploring cited references of key articles is crucial.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to communication research databases in the US, with descriptions:

1.

Navigating the Communication Landscape: A Guide to U.S. Research Databases

This book offers a comprehensive overview of the most essential databases for communication scholars in the United States. It covers foundational resources in mass media, interpersonal communication, rhetoric, and digital media. Readers will find guidance on effective search strategies, database evaluation, and understanding the scope of each resource.

2.

Digital Communication Archives: Unlocking U.S. Online Data for Research

Focusing on the growing field of digital communication, this title delves into databases that house vast amounts of online content. It explores archives of social media, websites, digital news, and other internet-based artifacts. The book provides practical advice on accessing, analyzing, and ethically utilizing this often-complex data.

3.

Historical Foundations of U.S. Communication: Accessing Archival Databases

This volume guides researchers through historical communication databases, offering insights into primary sources and their digital preservation. It highlights collections related to broadcasting history, print media archives, and the evolution of communication technologies in America. The book emphasizes how to leverage these resources for in-depth historical analysis.

4.

Quantitative Methods in Communication Research: Utilizing U.S. Survey and Statistical Databases

Designed for researchers focused on quantitative approaches, this book explores databases containing survey data and statistical information

relevant to communication. It covers resources from academic institutions, government agencies, and polling organizations. The text provides practical examples of how to use these databases for hypothesis testing and data analysis.

5.

Qualitative Communication Research: Databases for Textual and Discourse Analysis in the U.S.

This title caters to qualitative researchers, exploring databases rich in textual and discourse data. It focuses on collections that support the analysis of interviews, focus groups, speeches, and written texts. The book offers strategies for identifying and working with these qualitative resources within the U.S. context.

6.

Media Effects Research: Leveraging U.S. Databases for Content and Audience Analysis

This book focuses on databases crucial for understanding media effects, covering both content analysis and audience reception. It explores resources that house television programs, film scripts, news articles, and audience measurement data. Researchers will learn how to use these databases to investigate the impact of media on individuals and society.

7.

Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication: U.S. Databases for Relational Research

This volume is dedicated to databases relevant to the study of interpersonal and intercultural communication within the United States. It highlights resources focusing on relationship development, conflict resolution, and cross-cultural interactions. The book guides users in finding and utilizing data that sheds light on the complexities of human connection.

8.

Strategic Communication and Public Relations: Databases for Industry Research in the U.S.

Geared towards professionals and academics in strategic communication and public relations, this book explores databases vital for industry analysis. It covers resources related to advertising, marketing, corporate communication, and public opinion. The text offers practical insights into using these databases for competitive analysis and campaign evaluation.

9.

The Evolving Landscape of U.S. Communication Research: A Database Compendium

This comprehensive compendium provides an updated look at the diverse range of communication research databases available in the U.S. It categorizes resources by specialization and offers critical evaluations of their

strengths and weaknesses. The book serves as an indispensable reference for anyone seeking to conduct rigorous communication research in America.

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