



MEDLINE searching made easy

Physicians who have been intending to search MEDLINE from their home or office but haven't had time to investigate Internet locations will find that the CMA's new OSLER service makes things easy. Through OSLER (Ovid Search: Link to Electronic Resources), a free service available exclusively to CMA members, physicians can search MEDLINE, AIDSLINE, CancerLit and HealthSTAR, and receive online assistance from a CMA medical librarian. Go to www.cma.ca/osler to register, or call 800 457-4205 for the required activation code and user name. Users will be asked to enter their user name and the password they created during online registration each time they search OSLER.

Idle time/time out

OSLER's search interface was created by OVID Technologies. If you do not interact with the system for 15 minutes or longer after logging on, OVID will automatically log you off to free up a spot for other users. If this happens you will lose all searches done during the session; to prevent this click on Save Search History. Searches can be saved for 24 hours or permanently.

Remember to log off when finished to allow access to other CMA members — just click the Logoff icon on the right corner of the toolbar. If you forget to do this a message appears from OVID after 15 minutes stating "idle time exceeded" and asks that you re-enter an OVID user ID and password. **Please note:** do not type your CMA user name and password at this point; you must close the site and re-open it.

Searching for an author

OVID allows searches from many angles. To find a recent article by **J. Ogilvie** about the psychological impact of **scoliosis**, start by establishing a set of articles by the author. Select the Author icon from the toolbar; type in **Ogilvie J** and click Perform Search. A list of Ogilvies will appear, and beside each is a number indicating how many citations are indexed for each author. **Ogilvie J** is listed, but there are others with the initials JA, JM and JW. Since authors often use different initials from article to article, it is impossible to know which of these is "your Ogilvie." Select all of them by clicking on their individual tickboxes, and hit Perform Search. On the Main Search Page the Search History box now shows that all the J. Ogilvies have produced a total of 16 articles; this is the first search statement.

Linking authors to a subject

The next step is to link the articles by Ogilvie with the subject **scoliosis**. Type the term into the Keyword box and click Perform Search. When prompted, choose Focus for articles in which scoliosis is the major subject and choose to Include All Subheadings to retrieve the maximum number of articles. Click Continue to complete the search. When the Main Search Page appears, you will find that 477 articles about scoliosis have been retrieved. This is the second search statement.

To combine the results, type **1 and 2** in the Keyword box, without using quotation marks or number symbols. This tells OVID to find any articles containing both Ogilvie

J (or JA, JM, JW) from your first search and scoliosis from the second. Click Perform Search and the result will be a single citation — exactly the one you want. In this instance, the author wrote as J.W. Ogilvie.

The 2 search steps are important. If you had looked only for scoliosis and Ogilvie J, the reference wouldn't appear because the author used a second initial. Another approach is to do a series of searches and then combine the sets using the Combine icon in the toolbar.

OSLER Tip of the Month

The **Purge** function is a new OVID feature that lets users reduce all or some of the search statements in the Search History box on the Main Search Page. While searching, OVID shows only the last 4 Search Statements in order to keep the Main Search Page uncluttered. Once there are 5 or more lines in your Search History Box, all can be viewed on screen by clicking the button called Expand Search History. If some of those search statements have zero results, tidy up the list by typing **..pg 3** into the Keyword box and hit Perform Search; this removes search statement 3 and renumbers the set. To clear away every search statement type **..pg all**; to remove a series of statements type in **..pg 2,3,4**, and so on. This useful new command allows users to retain only the search strategies that resulted in successful searches.

Email questions or comments about OSLER are welcomed. Send them to cmalibrary@sympatico.ca or phone 800 663-7336 x2255 for OSLER support. — *Deidre Green*, OSLER support librarian