

## BEYOND PUBMED: EXPAND YOUR ONLINE SEARCH

**I**n the April issue, we talked about locating free copies of veterinary articles. That prompted some questions about two of the resources we included—Dimensions and Lens. Let's take a look at those and a couple more.

### Are these different from web search engines?

Yes. Dimensions, Lens, Europe PMC and Microsoft Academic are freely available databases and differ from web search engines such as Google Scholar. One of the primary differences is that a web search engine looks for results where it can locate them and does not have stable content or reproducible results. The options for you to form the search or filter the results in web search engines are limited. The products mentioned above are databases that intentionally choose the content they search. They have more—and better—search and results options.

### What content do they find?

They can find citations to articles from scholarly journals, books, book chapters, pre-prints, conference proceedings, linked datasets, funding patents, clinical trials, patents and policy documents. They also link to full-text articles.

### Do they all do the same kind of search?

Most search tools use keyword searching, which is essentially coding or speaking to the computer and the database in its language for what we want. This is powerful. Dimensions, Lens and Europe PMC use keyword searching; Microsoft Academic does something different. It uses semantic searching, which means it interprets our language, logic, meaning, intent and context



## LIBRARIES TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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into what it can provide. Can semantic searching make a difference? Yes. Is it a good difference? That depends on whether you and it are thinking the same thing. Give it a try.

### Lens ([www.lens.org](http://www.lens.org))

Lens indexes 228 million scholarly articles and patents. You can search by keyword or use categories down the side to limit results to a variety of fields. In the Scholar search, you can choose specific fields to search. It shows you details of how it searched. It has its own subject categories, including veterinary and medical subject headings (MeSH) subjects. You can filter your results to see which have links to free full articles.

### Dimensions ([www.dimensions.ai](http://www.dimensions.ai))

Dimensions has a free version and a pay version that you may have access to if you're at an institution. It indexes 118 million items including scholarly articles, books, book chapters, pre-prints, conference proceedings, linked datasets, funding patents, clinical trials and policy documents. You can keyword search, and, interestingly, you can paste in an abstract as your search. You can filter your results to see which have

links to free full articles. Its subjects include veterinary sciences.

### Microsoft Academic ([academic.microsoft.com](http://academic.microsoft.com))

Microsoft Academic uses semantic search to give you query suggestions and tells you how it's trying to interpret your search; it doesn't tell you what it's searching. It provides topics, journals, institutions and MeSH, which takes you to the MeSH database. It sorts by saliency, which means it weighs citing sources, reputation and age of each citation to decide relevancy to your search. The results include a download button for each article that is freely available and links to articles that cite it and its reference list.

### Europe PMC ([europepmc.org](http://europepmc.org))

One of the terrific advantages of Europe PMC is that it searches PubMed and PMC. PMC holds the full text article that PubMed links to. That means Europe PMC searches both abstracts and full text in one search. It also searches Agricola, patents and more. It links to free full text and shows the search detail of how it searched. In the advanced search, you can choose to automatically include synonyms.

### What's the bottom line?

The best search is the one that gets you what you need when you need it. When you have a moment, try a search in these. Perhaps one or more of these freely available tools are worth adding to your searching toolbox. **IV**

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