

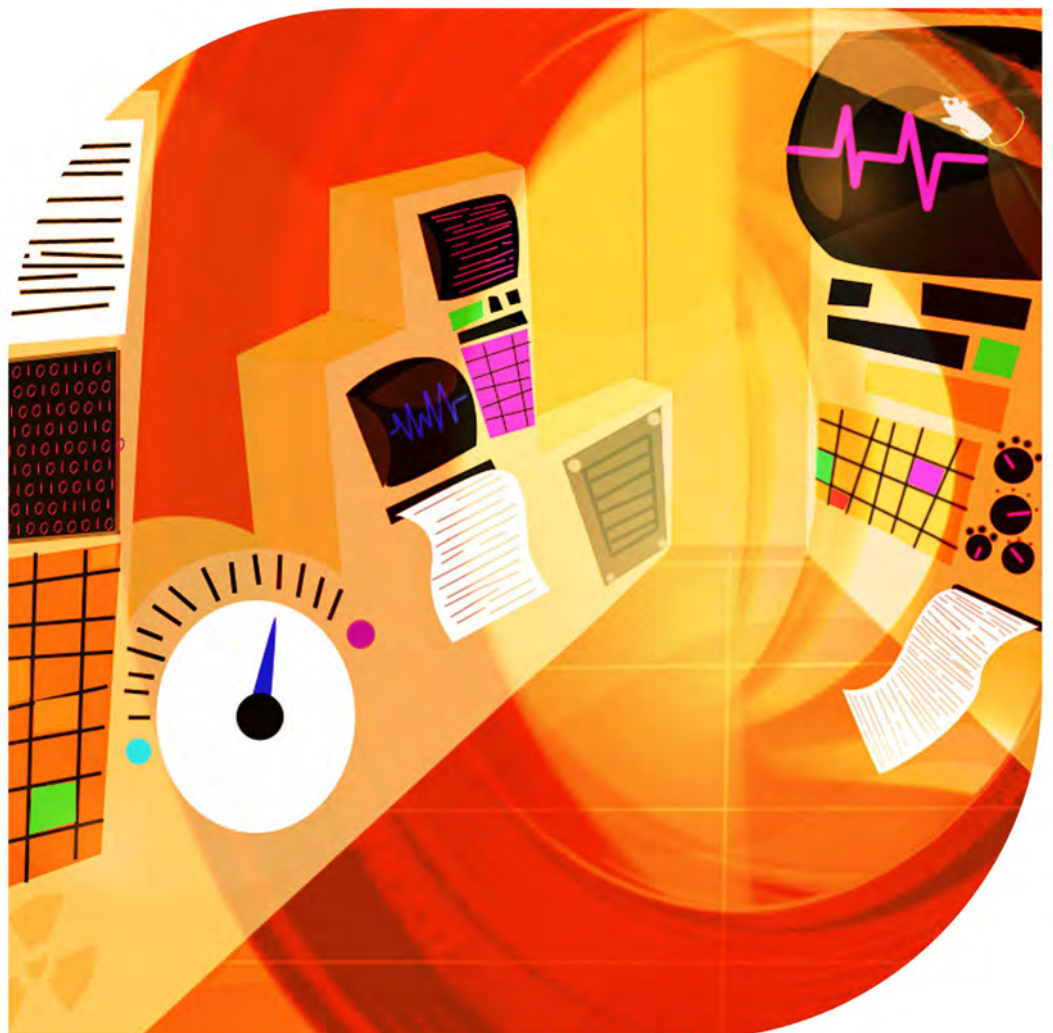
VIP Report

Product Review of ProQuest Dialog STM

In-depth, independent review of the product,
plus links to related resources

"There was information before the internet, believe it or not, and the earliest online information system from Dialog has been around since 1967 when it was created by Roger Summit. In 1972 it became the world's first commercial online service. Over the years, the product has been aimed at many industries and sectors including government, corporate, professional and education..."

April 2011



Contents

Product Review of ProQuest Dialog STM

4



In-depth review of product by experienced researcher, including screenshots and commentary

Introducing ProQuest Dialog STM	4
VIP's View	4
Sources of information and partners	5
Audience	6
Coverage and content	7
<i>Screenshot Figure 1: Start page showing industry verticals</i>	7
Types of reports available	8
Search options	8
<i>Screenshot Figure 2: Easy search</i>	9
<i>Screenshot Figure 3: Advanced search options</i>	10
<i>Screenshot Figure 4: Thesaurus help in biomedical and pharmaceutical</i>	11
<i>Screenshot Figure 5: Searching indexes</i>	12
<i>Screenshot Figure 6: Search results</i>	13
<i>Screenshot Figure 7: Search within a search</i>	13
Search results and outputs	14
<i>Screenshot Figure 8: Advanced search results</i>	15
User interface	15
Printing, downloading and exporting	16
Timeliness	16
Help and user support	16
Costs	16
Conclusion	17
Contact details	17

Other Products

18

Related VIP Product Reviews

Web Resources

20

Web-based resources relating to company

About the Reviewer

21

Biographical notes about the product reviewer

About this Report

VIP Report

VIP (<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>) publishes in-depth reports on products, vendors and user experiences relating to premium content products. The monthly *VIP Magazine*, available by paid subscription, includes news analysis and highlights from the latest product reviews. Subscribers also receive, as part of their subscription, the full product review reports published each month.

Users can also purchase individual reports and back-issues of the magazine to meet their immediate needs. The free *VIP Wires Weekly* HTML newsletter offers a regular update of the material which VIP's editorial team is reviewing and commenting upon.

To subscribe to VIP, purchase reports or back-issues or subscribe to the *VIP Wires Weekly* visit <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>

Disclaimer

Product Review of ProQuest Dialog STM (ISBN 978-1-907594-57-1) is a VIP Report published by Free Pint Limited.

The opinions, advice, products and services offered herein are the sole responsibility of the contributors. Whilst all reasonable care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the publication, the publishers cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Except as covered by subscriber or purchaser license agreement, this publication MAY NOT be copied and/or distributed without the prior written agreement of the publishers. Product names used in this report are for identification purposes only, and may be trademarks of their respective owners. Free Pint Limited disclaims any and all rights in those marks. All rights reserved.

This version of the report was published in April 2011 and was accurate as of that date.

Contact Information

Free Pint Limited
4-6 Station Approach, Ashford,
Middlesex, TW15 2QN, United Kingdom
Registered Office: Delaport Coach House, Lamer Lane, Wheathampstead, Herts, AL4 8RQ
Registered Number: 3754481

Telephone: 01784 605000
International: +44 1784 605000
Email: support@vivaVIP.com
Web: <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>



Publisher's Note

To improve the usability of VIP, we have shortened many long URLs with DigBig, a free utility that creates persistent links (<http://www.digbig.com>). When you click a DigBig URL, or paste it into your browser, you will be directed to the original URL.



Joanna Ptolomey
[View Author Biography](#)

"ProQuest Dialog is a replacement product for the array of search systems that have been available on the Dialog platform in the past such as Pro, Classic, Web and Select."

Introducing ProQuest Dialog STM

There was information before the internet, believe it or not, and the earliest online information system from Dialog has been around since 1967 when it was created by Roger Summit. In 1972 it became the world's first commercial online service. Over the years, the product has been aimed at many industries and sectors including government, corporate, professional and education.

Many information professionals and professional researchers will be familiar with the excellent content of the legacy Dialog and DataStar products; perhaps like me it was the first commercial information product on which they trained professionally.

Dialog and DataStar could sometimes be confusing, difficult and unwieldy products to understand and were not particularly user friendly. ProQuest Dialog is a replacement product for the array of search systems that have been available on the Dialog platform in the past such as Pro, Classic, Web and Select. It is a product geared towards organisations that are involved with research and development (R&D).

This new product relies heavily on customer feedback regarding what they wanted in a new, merged product. As Lynn Christie, vice president of global product management at Dialog, explains, customers want "easier precision searching, collaboration tools and presentation analysis and pay-as-you-go features".

This review does not compare ProQuest Dialog with the old versions of Dialog. It is a review based on the current ProQuest Dialog product release alone. This release is focused on scientific, technical and medical content; future releases will add intellectual property and business intelligence content and features to the service.

During this review I used a Windows 7 environment with Google Chrome browser and Internet Explorer 8.

"This release is focused on scientific, technical and medical content; future releases will add intellectual property and business intelligence content and features to the service."

ProQuest Dialog STM: VIP's View

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| ✓ Great content | ✓ Audience – appeals to different user groups |
| ✓ Timeliness | ✓ Coverage |
| ✓ Help and support | ✗ Ease of use for first timers |



Sources of information and partners

The old Dialog and DataStar products were renowned for their excellent content – quality, depth and breadth. The content in this STM release is arranged across nine vertical subject areas and covers 68 databases.

There is some duplication across the nine verticals although, as users will probably view only the verticals most pertinent to them, this shouldn't be a big issue.

Comment: The “heavy hitters” in terms of unparalleled quality and depth of content are included: Medline, Embase, SciSearch, CAB Abstracts, PASCAL, Gale Group PROMT, BIOSIS, Foodline, Derwent Drug files and Toxfile, to name a few.

Here is a full listing of sources in the verticals:

Aerospace and Defence

- British Library Inside Conferences
- Current Content Search
- Ei Compendex
- Gale Group PROMT
- National Technical Information Service
- PASCAL
- SciSearch

Automotive

- Polymer Library
- All databases from Aerospace and defence

Chemistry

- Analytical abstracts
- British Library Inside Conferences
- Chemical Business Newsbase
- Chemical engineering and biotechnology abstracts
- Chemical Safety Newsbase
- Current Content Search
- Gale group PROMT
- HSELine
- PASCAL
- SciSearch
- Toxfile

Energy and environment

- BIOSIS Previews
- British Library Inside Conferences
- Current Content Search
- Ei Compendex
- Gale Group PROMT

Engineering and technology

- British Library Inside Conferences
- Current Content Search
- Ei Compendex
- Gale Group PROMT
- PASCAL
- SciSearch
- Paperbase
- National Technical Information Service
- Pirabase
- Polymer Library
- SciSearch

Food and agriculture

- British Library Inside Conferences
- CAB Abstracts
- Current Content Search
- FDA News
- Foodline
- Gale Group PROMT
- Medline
- PASCAL
- SciSearch

Healthcare

- Adis Clinical Trials Insight
- Allied and Complementary Medicine
- BIOSIS Reviews

“The “heavy hitters” in terms of unparalleled quality and depth of content are included: Medline, Embase, SciSearch, CAB Abstracts, PASCAL, Gale Group PROMT, BIOSIS, Foodline, Derwent Drug files and Toxfile, to name a few.”

British Library Inside Conferences

- British Nursing Index
- CAB Abstracts
- Current Content Search
- Derwent Drug File
- Derwent Drug Registry
- DH Data
- Ei Compendex
- Embase
- Emcare
- Gale Group Pharma BioMed Business Journals
- HSELINE
- Incidence and Prevalence Database
- International Pharmaceutical Abstracts
- Kings Fund
- Lancet Titles
- Medline
- PsychINFO
- PASCAL
- SciSearch
- Social SCiSearch
- IMS – Company Profiles, Product Focus, R&D Focus, Drug News
- Incidence and Prevalence
- International Pharmaceutical Abstracts
- KOSMET
- Lancet Titles
- Medline
- PASCAL
- Pharmaceutical and healthcare industry news
- Pharmaprojects – discontinued, in development and launched drugs
- PROUS Science Daily Essentials
- PsychINFO
- SciSearch
- Social SCiSearch
- Toxfile

Pharmaceutical and biomedical

- Adis Trials Insight and R&D Insight and Reactions Database
- Allied and Complementary Medicine
- BIOSIS Reviews
- British Library Inside Conferences
- British Nursing Index
- CAB Abstracts
- Ei Compendex
- Embase
- EmCare
- ESPICOM
- FDA News
- Gale Group Pharma BioMed Business Journals
- Gale Group PROMT
- Gale Group Health periodicals Database

Telecommunications and computing

- British Library Inside Conferences
- Current Content Search
- Ei Compendex
- Gale Group PROMT
- National Technical Information Service
- PASCAL
- SciSearch

Audience

ProQuest Dialog is aimed at organisations and sectors that rely on high quality, up-to-date and timely information for research and development purposes. This includes, but isn't limited to, the broad industry sectors that encapsulate science, technology and medicine such as global R&D corporates and SMEs. A new academic service is being released later this year.

However, it will still be of great value to the world of business consultancy where projects usually have the variety and spontaneity that requires high quality research and news content "as and when" and "just in time". This quick two step dance is where ProQuest Dialog would fit the bill neatly.

The content is arranged by industry sector to reflect possible users as suggested in the information partners section. However, you shouldn't let that limit you as a user.

The product was designed to meet the needs of both the professional and experienced searcher and researcher, and end users. Therefore it can fit two niches – easy desktop access for infrequent or inexperienced searchers, and the specialised information/research service unit.

Coverage and content

In this release of ProQuest Dialog there are 68 databases from which to choose. The actual databases a given searcher sees will depend on his or her subscription and access rights, so in that way the product is very flexible. My review account had access to all verticals and all content.

The screenshot shows the ProQuest Dialog STM search interface. At the top, it indicates 'You are searching: 56 databases' and 'My Research (0 new) | Welcome, Joanna Sign out'. The search bar is empty, with options for 'Full text' and 'Scholarly journals'. Below the search bar, there are 'Search tips' and an 'Advanced search' link. A section titled 'Search subject areas (9)' displays six industry verticals with corresponding images: Aerospace & Defense, Automotive, Chemistry, Energy & Environment, Engineering & Technology, and Food & Agriculture. Below this, there is a link to 'Learn about the all-new ProQuest Dialog platform' and a list of links for help, training, and support. A 'Trial - Limited time only' notice states that the library is currently trialing ProQuest databases for a limited time. The footer includes 'Contact Us | Privacy Policy | Accessibility | Sitemap | End Session' and 'Authoritative answers'.

Fig. 1: Start page showing industry verticals

The subject verticals can be customised for subscribers. They can rename a vertical and customise content with databases that seem the most relevant to them and their organisation's business.

In my trial version of ProQuest Dialog, the databases have set "slice time" periods. But there is flexibility for customers to select appropriate slices of time dependent on their needs as an organisation. For example, you may only want, or need, the last 20 years from Medline, but for another organisation Medline from 1950 to the present time may be a standard requirement.

"The subject verticals can be customised for subscribers. They can rename a vertical and customise content with databases that seem the most relevant to them and their organisation's business."

Content is not limited to English language. Some documents appear in French, German and other European languages such as in PASCAL – a great overall science database with a bent towards European literature.

The ProQuest Dialog content includes high quality journal collections, and you can see many of the “heavy hitters” are listed in all the industry verticals. Industry news is important and there is an element of this in every industry vertical. R&D and regulatory reports also feature, especially for pharmaceutical and biotechnology.

Content updates vary according to the different providers but are, in the main, very speedy with no significant lag. The vendor reports daily updates from databases such as Embase. Most of the updates are either daily or weekly, with the vendor reporting rare cases of monthly updates. With ProQuest Dialog aimed at the R&D and scientific community in highly competitive markets, timely content is a must.

Geography will always play a part in terms of a user’s subscription and possible restrictions on content. The vendor reports that some content, such as government databases, may be restricted based on geography. Also some energy databases, to be added later in 2011, will have prohibited access in certain countries. However, access will come down to a subscriber’s licence and how an organisation pays for content. For a global organisation that could mean identifying the particular needs and locations of the R&D departments requiring journal collections, whilst competitive intelligence or communications may only need the industry news. There does seem to be an inherent flexibility in the design of “bolt on/bolt off” depending on how your organisation is arranged.

Types of reports available

There is no facility for creating reports as such, but the “My Research” feature allows management of content. The vendor confirms that report creation capability will be added in Summer 2011.

My Research: ProQuest has developed the use of a “My Research” space to facilitate the search process for users. It enables searches to be managed, saved and distributed in a dedicated and seamless fashion, reused and special searches to be stored – in my case this would be added search filters for sensitivity, precision and specificity.

“There does seem to be an inherent flexibility in the design of “bolt on/bolt off” depending on how your organisation is arranged.”

“My Research” could be the most unassuming and yet powerful key to unlocking the full power of ProQuest Dialog. Ignore this workspace and you could be discounting the tool that may make your searches more valuable and useful to your organisation or clients.

Comment: *Work up expert searches or filters, creating tools for extra powerful and focused search results. You have been warned; ignore this feature at your peril.*

Content is not just about “doing searches” – that is so last century. We see content and information as so much more now and, let’s be honest, who cares how big your searches are and how many records you have downloaded? It is what we do with that content that makes the difference.

We also want more “bang for our buck” and it is important that we can reuse content, and that it is meaningful to us and for sharing with others. So the documents (records), tags, lists, alerts are all as important to us as the actual search – we can share, distribute, tag and distribute with extra information.

Search options

Searching options are arranged over three levels:

1. Easy search
2. Advanced search
3. Command line search.

With each searching level, there is also the option to search vertically through an industry topic, such as pharmaceutical and biotechnology, or to select a particular content database within that vertical such as Embase.

The cross searching capability is appealing as often, even in industry verticals, there are very few content providers that have the coverage that a search may require. It is convenient to see content grouped as verticals and it has pluses for many users – from the less experienced searcher who dips in for the odd search, to the advanced searcher who knows the ins and outs of content and complex searching protocol.

“ “My Research” could be the most unassuming and yet powerful key to unlocking the full power of ProQuest Dialog. Ignore this workspace and you could be discounting the tool that may make your searches more valuable and useful to your organisation or clients.”

As well as being able to search across verticals there is the ability to search within the vertical on a couple of databases. For example, in healthcare and pharmaceutical searches I always like the combination of Medline and Embase. Whilst Medline is without doubt one of the best biomedical content databases available, it can be short on European content, and for drug interventions Embase is superb. Together they can make a fantastic “search sandwich” in biomedical sciences.

The ability to pick and choose databases is a great feature. It allows greater flexibility in using content particular to the needs or wants of a searcher and their organisation. In my experience an industry vertical collection can be a great place to start when you need to get a handle on the topic and are looking for directions in which to take your search. I always find this useful for the “quick and dirty” search option too.

When a search becomes more focused and narrow, then the searcher must have the ability to cherry pick the best resources to drill down for specificity and sensitivity. You can do this too in ProQuest Dialog.

Easy search: this level of searching is based on the consumer search engine models – like a Google interface. It is clean, straightforward and easy to use and is based around keyword searching. It is also very obvious what vertical or database you are using [Figure 2].

To explore the healthcare vertical, I used an example from a recent BBC news item – effect of Ibuprofen and other non-steroidal inflammatory agents in reducing Parkinson disease risk.

Start off with a simple keyword search that does not require users to have any knowledge of medical subject headings or conditions/drug knowledge. ProQuest Dialog suggests other keywords [Figure 2] as you enter keywords – useful if you are struggling with thinking of search terms – and it also acts as a reminder of possible connections for searching that you had not considered. The vendor reports that, in using keywords, the search system takes into account stems (or truncation) and automatic plurals and different spelling notation.

Here are some options:

- The unlimited wildcard – * e.g. Malignan* gives malignance, malignant, malignancy
- Character count card – ? e.g. ?ight gives light, might, etc.
- Combinations of * and ? can allow many variations either left or right embedded e.g. ?cat* would retrieve scatological.

The vendor reports that possible keyword suggestions of search terms are generated from other users' searches on ProQuest's academic product – used in the higher

education/university sector. Search terms used within ProQuest Dialog are not used to generate suggested terms because of the confidentiality needs of commercial customers.

One of the main issues with keyword searching, especially across many databases, is the question of different spelling. A very simple example that could cause a problem is tumour (UK) or tumor (US). The vendor reports that the ProQuest Dialog search engine references a dictionary and will return either/or spellings.

“It is clean, straightforward and easy to use and is based around keyword searching. It is also very obvious what vertical or database you are using...”

The screenshot shows the ProQuest Dialog Healthcare search interface. At the top, it says "You are searching: 27 databases (See list | Change >)" and "My Research (0 new) | Welcome, Joanna Sign out". The main header is "ProQuest Dialog Healthcare" with "Search | Advanced | Publications" below it. The search bar contains "ibuprofen parkinson" and a dropdown menu shows suggestions: "ibuprofen", "ibuprofeno", "ibuprofen gel", "ibuprofen and hplc", "ibuprofen market", "ibuprofen effects", "ibuprofen and pain", "perrigo ibuprofen", "uses of ibuprofen", and "aspirin and ibuprofen". Below the search bar, there are sections for "Allied & Complementary Medicine™", "BIOSIS Previews®", and "British Library Inside Conferences". A trial notice on the right says "Trial - Limited time only" and "Your library is currently trialing ProQuest databases for a limited time only." Below that, it says "Want to Learn More?" and lists options: "Search the online Help.", "Sign up for a training webinar.", "Discover answers to common questions at ProQuest's Product Support Center.", and "Got an uncommon question? Contact our Customer Support Team." At the bottom right, there is a "Search tip" box that says "By default, we will look for documents with all the terms entered. Use 'quotation marks' to search for exact phrases. Separate terms with OR to find any of the words entered." At the bottom center, there is a circular logo with "Discover" in the center and "INNOVATE" around the perimeter.

Fig. 2: Easy search

However, perhaps a word of caution. It is my experience, to ensure peace of mind and thoroughness, that when using keywords in biomedical searches the use of wildcards and asterisks for truncations (stemming) and replacement letters is always recommended to capture different spellings, e.g. tumo?r.

Advanced search: as I would expect, this level of searching gives more options, yet it is still simple enough for the less experienced searcher to follow and build up quite a good complex search string.

For this search I took an example using a different vertical – reed beds water treatment (Energy and Environment vertical); a search I have done before for clients.

The search interface is clean and easy to use, see [Figure 3](#). There is the ability to build up using Boolean logic (and/or commands) and search within specific fields – I searched in the abstract only. There are plenty more limiters to choose from such as source type, authors, subjects etc. If you need more search concepts, no problem, just add some rows.

Fig. 3: Advanced search options

There is also some useful help on the right hand side. Advanced searching techniques and logic, using and accessing controlled language and field codes, are all found here.

If you are an advanced searcher, then you will be familiar with controlled language searching. Some of the databases such as Medline and Embase have controlled language indexes supporting them. [Figure 4](#) shows the variety on offer via the Pharmaceutical and Biomedical vertical. Using these indexes to develop and run a search gives a more focused search strategy and precise search outcome.

"It is my experience, to ensure peace of mind and thoroughness, that when using keywords in biomedical searches the use of wildcards and asterisks for truncations (stemming) and replacement letters is always recommended to capture different spellings, e.g. tumo?r."

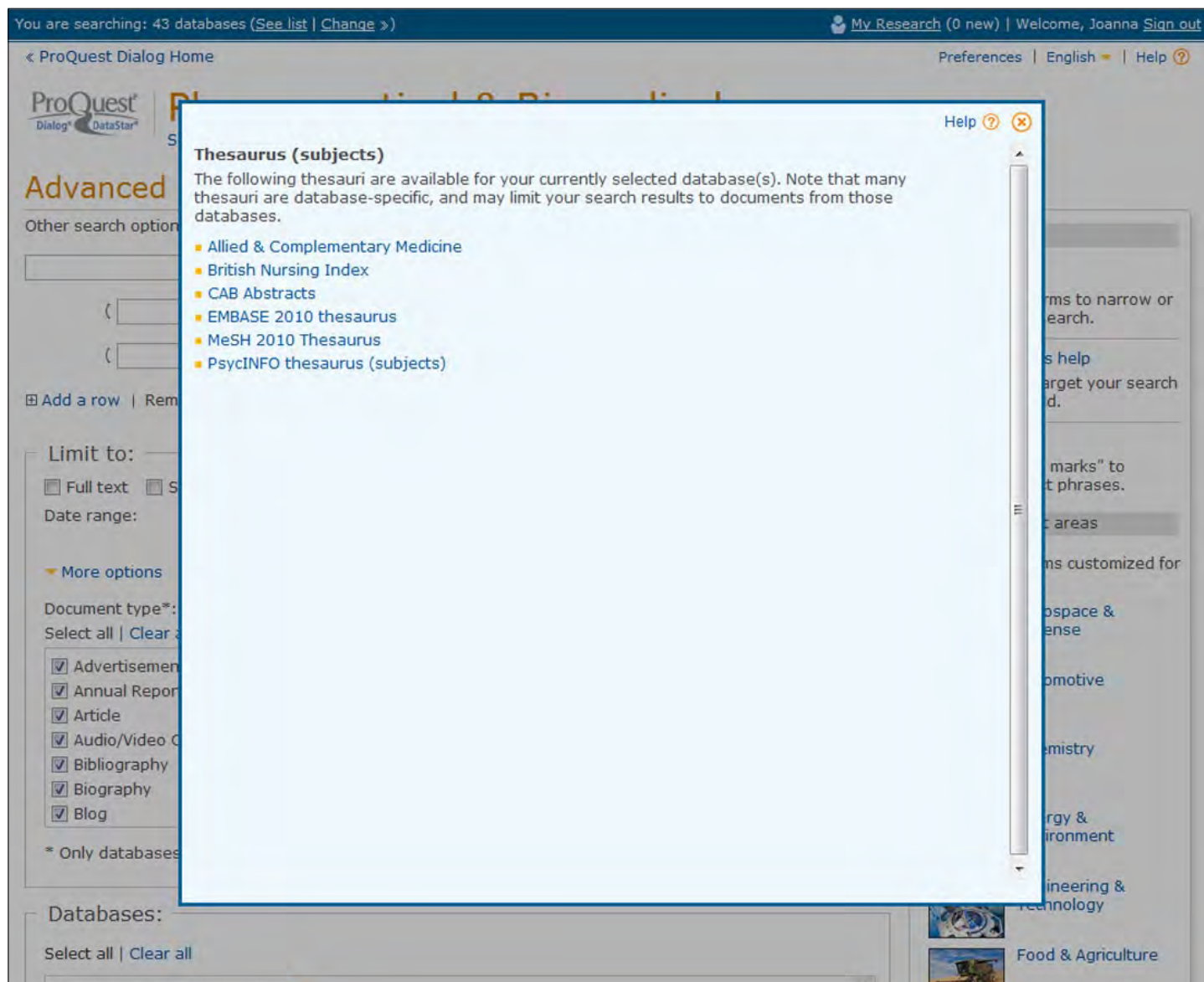


Fig. 4: Thesaurus help in biomedical and pharmaceutical

It is my experience that these databases are jam packed with calorific jewels of scrumptiousness, but in order to “eke out” the best and most useful content, my top tip is to use the controlled language thesaurus (if available) for databases.

It is easy to access the thesaurus from the advanced search page, on the right hand side. A dialogue box opens and you just pop in your keyword and search the indexes. Figure 8 shows the snapshot for Ibuprofen drug via the MeSH thesaurus in Medline. Useful information such as short description, some qualifiers (what I would call floating sub headings such as adverse effects and administration), other common names which it should be used for, some historical notes and related terms, are all there. For the advanced searcher this is all great stuff, and also what we expect from a product of this nature.

As in the “easy search” the user can limit search results by format type, language, source type, document type, and by database too. There is also the option to limit once you have viewed the results [Figure 4] and that allows users to narrow by record type – great if you only want news or journal articles. Personally I like to view the limiters after I have scanned search results – I can get a feel for what is coming back before I decide to eliminate. However, if I am doing a quick and dirty search, then I may use the limits straight away. Either method gives users flexibility.

Again there is the “search within a search” feature – always welcome and useful, although I believe it is in the wrong part of the page and would work better underneath or beside the main search bar.

If you are a really advanced searcher then you will want to make use of expert searches and filters for creaming off precise, specific and sensitive content in relation to your needs. These are described further in the "My Research" section.

Citation searching is available. It's a useful feature, but not what I would call advanced searching.

Command line searches: I like to think of myself as an "old school" searcher with the added panache of "new school" search functionality. Hence I like to be able to have a little more control, and precision, in searching using the command line system. I like being able to write in command lines and build up nesting arrangements of concepts visually by myself. For example (S1 and (S2 or S3 or S4 or S5)) and S6 or in keywords this may be (breast and (cancer or tumour or malignant or neoplasm) and surgical procedures)). ProQuest Dialog supports this type of searching.

The command line page [Figure 5] is set out well. On the right hand side of the page you can see a help box if you need to re-acquaint yourself with search tools such as a thesaurus, field codes and search tips. This is really like the "blue sheets" in old Dialog. There is extensive help here to put a search together.

Other options in searching, shown quite clearly under the search bar, are:

- modifying a search
- recent searches.

Modifying a search: this gives the opportunity to modify and refine the search form.

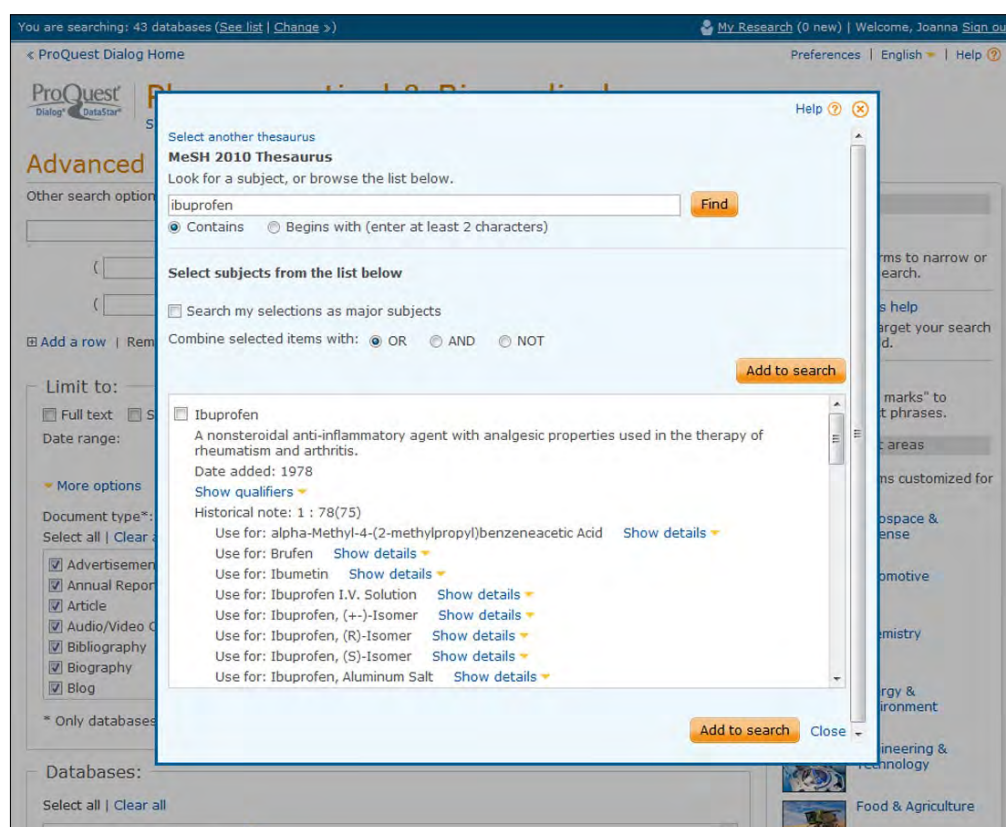
Recent searches: this allows the user to view search lines and combine. I like this page and there is the option to combine by using tick boxes and using a search box to write in set command lines. This takes into account taste and allows flexibility for the user. Personally, I prefer the term "search history" although it is a minor point.

Search within a search: I always look for the feature "search within a search". It is a great way to narrow down for a "quick and dirty" search or useful for starting a big search. Sometimes drilling down helps to find something very specific. I can then use those records as a way of building up a complex search strategy. I find this very useful when I am really stuck and can't seem to find anything useful. Complex searching sometimes needs this "backwards forwards" intuitive searching methodology from the user and you get better with practice.

"It is my experience that these databases are jam packed with colorful jewels of scrumptiousness, but in order to "eke out" the best and most useful content, my top tip is to use the controlled language thesaurus (if available) for databases."

"If you are a really advanced searcher then you will want to make use of expert searches and filters for creaming off precise, specific and sensitive content in relation to your needs."

Fig. 5: Searching indexes



Let's go back to the Parkinson/ibuprofen search results in *Figure 6* – some 642 records.

The screenshot shows the ProQuest Dialog Healthcare search interface. The search query is "ibuprofen parkinson". The results page displays 642 records. The top section includes "Suggested subjects" such as "Ibuprofen", "Ibuprofen AND Anti-Inflammatory Agents, Non-Steroidal", and "Ibuprofen AND Cyclooxygenase Inhibitors". Below this, there are three search results listed:

- 1** [Ibuprofen for Parkinson's? Anti-inflammatory drug found to cut risk by 40 per cent: Study.](#) (Mar 4, 2011). Summary: "...regular doses of **ibuprofen** can lower the risk of getting **Parkinson's** disease ...people should take **ibuprofen** to prevent **Parkinson's**, (but it ...regular use of **ibuprofen** slows the symptoms of **Parkinson's** disease.
- 2** [Ibuprofen tied to lower Parkinson's risk.](#) (Mar 3, 2011). Summary: "...Byline: CBC News **Ibuprofen** may help cut the risk of **Parkinson's** disease ...they found that **ibuprofen** users reduced their risk of **Parkinson's** (PD) by 0 ...people start taking **ibuprofen** to reduce **Parkinson's** risk or for
- 3** [Ibuprofen lowers Parkinson's disease risk.](#) (May 2010).

The right sidebar shows "Sort results by" set to "Relevance" and "Narrow results by" options including "Source type" (Scholarly Journals: 375, Trade Journals: 160, Wire Feeds: 56, Newspapers: 32, Conference Papers & Proceedings: 9) and "Publication title", "Document type", and "Keyword".

Fig. 6: Search results

Now by adding in "systematic review" as a search term I have now condensed this 621 records into 39 of some of the best evidence available [*Figure 7*]

The screenshot shows the ProQuest Dialog Healthcare search interface with the search query refined to "(ibuprofen parkinson) AND (systematic review)". The results page displays 39 records. The top section includes "Suggested subjects" such as "Systematic review", "Randomized Controlled Trials as Topic", and "Randomized Controlled Trials as Topic AND Evidence-Based Medicine". Below this, there are four search results listed:

- 1** [NSAID Use and the Risk of Parkinson's Disease Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies](#) (2009). Summary: "Brief citation Citation/Abstract"
- 2** [NSAID use and the risk of Parkinson's disease: systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies.](#) (2009). Summary: "Brief citation Citation/Abstract"
- 3** [NSAID use and the risk of parkinsons disease: Systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies](#) (2009). Summary: "Brief citation Citation/Abstract"
- 4** [NSAID Use and the Risk of Parkinson's Disease: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies](#) (2009).

The right sidebar shows "Sort results by" set to "Relevance" and "Narrow results by" options including "Source type" (Scholarly Journals: 25, Trade Journals: 13, Pamphlets & Ephemeral Works: 1) and "Publication title", "Document type", "Keyword", "Subject", and "Classification".

Fig. 7: Search within a search

My main gripe is that the “search within a search” jump link takes you to the bottom of the page to a small search box. Although a minor point I do wonder whether it could be placed closer to the main search box as, when you enter search within search keywords, you probably won't be able to see the main box. However, in terms of functionality, it works a treat.

Saving a search - My Research: in “recent searches” it is easy to view all your search history. A quick jump link saves a search, sets up an alert or creates an RSS feed. A dialogue box invites you to call the search something memorable for saved searches, alerts and RSS. It is simple to use.

All the searches will then be available in the “My Research” space – this is the powerhouse of this product and where you will manage yourself as a searcher.

The “My Research” space is where you can not only access general saved searches but organise special saved searches (expert searches) – searches you run on a regular basis that enhance searching outcomes. For example I frequently use biomedical filters in Medline and Embase – they allow precision searching for more sensitivity and specificity to particular databases such as Randomised Controlled Trials (long and short version), Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis, diagnosis, prognosis and therapy. It was easy to develop them in the database of choice then store in “My Research”.

Search results and outputs

Records come with a citation and abstract, mostly via a preview box or a jump link – you choose what you like. Where this is not available via a publisher then a “keyword in context” snapshot is provided that will allow most users to make a call regarding the usefulness of a record (look back at [Figure 7](#) to see how this looks).

The preview box (when available) for a record is very useful and gives excellent bibliographic information, but also any controlled language terms such as MeSH. Abstract information, such as an introduction, methods and results, is also shown. Previewing records is useful when building search strategies – I like to preview controlled language terms and other words assigned in likely suspects.

“Although a minor point I do wonder whether it could be placed closer to the main search box as, when you enter search within search keywords, you probably won't be able to see the main box. However, in terms of functionality, it works a treat.”

However there are some drawbacks in searching within vertical topics – there is a good chance that duplicate results can appear. The Health and Pharmaceutical verticals spring to mind immediately, as there is a crossover in content with Medline and Embase (about 50%). Normally I would deduplicate (de-dup) when running this type of multifile search.

The vendor is aware that duplication may cause problems across all the databases and at this moment in time there is no way to de-dupe – although importing the results set into a bibliographic tool will sort this problem out. A release this summer will rectify the duplication issue across the entire corpus and allow users to pull records from preferred databases (e.g Medline/BIOSIS). That gets a big “thumbs up” from me – running searches in narrow vertical multifile searches can be tiresome and very time consuming because of duplication issues.

The search results page is neat and quite straightforward [[Figure 8](#)]. There are some further suggested subjects, and this can help to broaden out the search. Each resource has been visualised in terms of type – e.g. the scholar hat pinpoints academic research and journal articles. Other includes conference paper, news feature and review.

Some records have preview buttons and this is a neat add-on – no jump link to view a record which can sometimes be a frustrating and time consuming extra step. But the citation and abstract jump links are available too.

Results can be sorted by relevance (how often keywords appear and in relation to each other) and date (oldest and newest). When searching across a wide number of databases, results can be narrowed (or filtered) easily by:

- Publication type
- Document type
- Keyword
- Subject
- Classification
- Location
- Language
- Database.

“All the searches will then be available in the “My Research” space – this is the powerhouse of this product and where you will manage yourself as a searcher.”

In terms of what you can do with search results and content this is where the “My Research” space becomes a major bonus. It is a place to get organised – not just with search results but with your saved searches and distribution.

It is likely that you will want to reuse searches either for own benefit (as an aide memoir) or because you are delivering searches to a team or client and it will be part of the project research process.

Setting up alerts and RSS feeds are very simple too; via dialogue boxes that save to the “My Research” space. It is easy to add items to “My Research” and also create tags for content. The tags can be personal to you, but could also help in building up a taxonomy (or community folksonomy) relevant to this subject area. Users may also add notes to individual records – an incredibly useful, yet simple, extra tool that I know I would use regularly. Again no jump link, just a simple dialogue box.

Lists can be shared too in “My Research” which is great news if you work as part of a research or information services team.

Searches can also be developed into widgets and sent to users; a nice add-on which may drive usability.

User interface

The interface is pared down. The functionality feels about right – although I do have minor irritations such as the “search within search”. The system has been developed with other languages in mind. At present ProQuest Dialog is available in 18 languages including many European Languages (French, Spanish, Turkish, Dutch, Portuguese, Polish) and Chinese and Arabic.

Users may set their own personal preferences for:

- Language
- Dates and how they are shown
- How results are displayed
 - Numbers by page 20, 50 or 100
 - Relevance
- By date (newest or oldest)
- Citations and export (great news if you have preferred house style or writing for a journal)
- Email
 - HTML
 - Text only.

Fig. 8: Advanced search results

The screenshot shows the ProQuest Dialog STM search results page. At the top, it indicates the search is across 10 databases. The search query is "ab(reed bed) AND ab((water treatment OR waste water)) AND ab(scotland)". The results section shows 3 results, all of which are "The application of wetland technology for copper removal from distillery wastewater: a case study (2009)". The interface includes a search bar, filters, and a sidebar for sorting and narrowing results.

“A release this summer will rectify the duplication issue across the entire corpus and allow users to pull records from preferred databases (e.g Medline/ BIOSIS). That gets a big “thumbs up” from me...”

“Setting up alerts and RSS feeds are very simple too; via dialogue boxes that save to the “My Research” space.”

There is a certain level of customisation. The industry verticals can be renamed to something more meaningful for you, the user, or the organisation. Customers also have more control in what content they choose for verticals, and in that way they can take only what they need.

I also see the “My Research” space as a great way to customise this product for users. The workspace could be explored and developed to be a highly bespoke tool and also a great indication of the value of the searches to the business overall. Creating tags, alerts and feeds (and perhaps even widgets) enables a research or information service to drive an organisation’s goals. And that is always the evidence for which we are searching.

Top level accounts are available for administrators.

At the moment there is no customisation available for billing. The vendor reports that project or sub-account coding for individual searches will be coming on stream soon with an anticipated rollout of Summer 2011. Great news for the independent information professional and researcher, but also a must for information services that have to cost code searches for projects for budgeting reasons, and also for gathering evidence of value.

Printing, downloading and exporting

The user can organise and share content in the “My Research” space. Results can be:

- Added to a folder
- Shared to a list
- Deleted
- Emailed
- Printed
- Cited
- Exported
- Saved as a file.

For a regular or experienced searcher, having this workspace to manage filtered content is without a doubt what will make this product much more usable, manageable and valuable. But it also works for the less experienced or infrequent user.

“At present ProQuest Dialog is available in 18 languages including many European Languages (French, Spanish, Turkish, Dutch, Portuguese, Polish) and Chinese and Arabic.”

Timeliness

The databases are updated frequently – many daily. The vendor reports that there is a very small number that are updated monthly or quarterly. From my own experience major databases such as Medline, Embase and BIOSIS are updated on a par with other prominent providers.

Help and user support

The main help key is the top right hand side of the page, next to languages and preferences. It is comprehensive and provides a good amount of background and “how to” information as you move around the different parts of the product.

Comment: *What I particularly like is, when you click on “Help”, it starts at the menu page relevant to the section you are in. No more scrolling down through screeds of information to find the answer.*

Information is available on any controlled language indexes. I have provided some guidance on how this works in the “Advanced search” section.

More general support is offered in many locations around the product, and is very prominent on the front page:

- Search for online help
- Sign up for webinar
- Discover answers to common questions
- For uncommon questions – contact customer support (email).

There are little question marks dotted around the pages so look out for them – your cursor highlights a dialogue box with extra information such as “what is meant by the term scholarly journal?” These little extras, though not essential, are useful and I like the attention to detail.

Costs

An organisation can choose to give all or some of its users access to all databases on a transactional basis, or it can limit access to those databases for which the organisation has a flat-rate subscription. The vendor says indications are that customers will most often choose to give all users access to flat-rate content, and limit transactional access to the entire corpus to their information professionals as a way of controlling costs.

Costs vary by number of relevant users at the customer site and with the levels of customisation, so the vendor can provide pricing upon request. Access is also available on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Conclusion

In some ways ProQuest Dialog is an extraordinary product. It is quite amazing that it has only taken two years of development to get to this point.

The potential access to content is astounding and on a parallel with the old Dialog system, but with much better flexibility, manoeuvrability and equality of accessibility (for different user groups and levels of users).

It also has great possibilities and value with the development of the "My Research" space. Just in case you missed how many times I mentioned this throughout the review then let me say, I REALLY do like it. This workspace allows the filtered content to break free to become valuable knowledge supporting organisational goals. It can be shared, distributed and tagged in a way that all searchers expect today.

This new version will tick the boxes for all in terms of equality of access – the old Dialog was complicated, difficult to handle and, in the wrong hands, could be an expensive disaster, even for experienced searchers.

This new version is inviting in its make-up. It attracts inexperienced or infrequent searchers and can satisfy them, but has the in-built mechanics to make the experienced searcher satisfied with the experience. There is a lot to take in and, although it is easy to use, not all users will be able to use it effectively right away. It will take a while perhaps to feel confident with the full power users will have at their beck and call to access and filter content. Working out how to harness the power of "My Research" fully may also take some time, particularly for newer users.

An experienced searcher may not like the format of the industry profiles and multiframe searching across them. It will depend on your level of experience, the narrowness of focus of a search question, time available and search output (quick and dirty or sensitive and precise). This also highlights the good and bad points regarding use of controlled language and thesaurus in vertical searches – they are not easy, nor do they work across different databases. But I am splitting hairs and if you are specialised you will get to know your narrow focus needs and how to handle them.

This product does not seem exciting and cutting edge – but don't let that put you off. The content is excellent, it has an inviting format and you can do more with the output. It works for experienced and novice searchers. My only caveat – as a user, spend some time getting know what you can fully achieve with ProQuest Dialog. Love it, spend time with it, and get to know its power, and it will love you back.

Contact details

For general enquiries about products and services, the contact options are:

- From the website via this form: <http://www.dialog.com/contacts/forms/member.shtml>
- Via email to this address: customer@dialog.com
- Via phone in the US at 1-800-3-Dialog or using this link to find numbers for other locations around the world: <http://www.dialog.com/contacts/>
- The management team is listed here: <http://www.dialog.com/about/biographies/>

"From my own experience major databases such as Medline, Embase and BIOSIS are updated on a par with other prominent providers."

"An organisation can choose to give all or some of its users access to all databases on a transactional basis, or it can limit access to those databases for which the organisation has a flat-rate subscription."

"Working out how to harness the power of "My Research" fully may also take some time, particularly for newer users."

"The content is excellent, it has an inviting format and you can do more with the output. It works for experienced and novice searchers."



Other Products



The following products reviewed by VIP may provide comparable coverage:

If your VIP subscription covers the issue in which the product was reviewed, you can log in to your [FreePint Master Account](#) to access the issue, or contact support@freepint.com for assistance.

Content was accurate as of the date of publication (listed).

Scopus and Web of Science

Review published June 2009: <http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/1385>

	Scopus	Web of Science
<i>Excellent help menus in-situ</i>	✓	Could do better
<i>Alerts, feeds, RSS</i>	✓	✓
<i>Author identifier tool</i>	✗	✓
<i>Easy to navigate and use</i>	✓	✓
<i>Flexibility for searching via abstracts</i>	✓	✓
<i>Export to bibliographic tools</i>	✓	✓

Overall, I like both Web of Science and Scopus and, in some ways, they are equally matched. In fact, as a professional researcher, I feel they both perform equally well across content, ease of use, managing output, and results and customisation such as saving searches, alerts and RSS feeds. But they feel different, and they have unique features that set them apart and make them perhaps more appealing to different user groups.

The aim of this review is not to declare 'a winner' as they are not exactly the same in content, and are perhaps aimed at slightly different markets and audiences.

An important distinction is that Web of Science is a citation index too, in a standardised, searchable form. This allows for a little more functionality for a cited reference search, allowing users to effectively and completely identify materials in that they are not limited to the Times Cited (or Cited by) links that exist on source records.

I like Scopus. It is easy to use and navigate and a user can quickly get to grips with how to use the system. It has very good help menus and the interactive sessions are excellent. The content is good and I like the blurring of topics that are not always necessarily found together. For example, health sciences (especially clinical and health improvement) are very much linked to social policy and environmental issues such as poverty, inequalities (gender, class, mobility, housing, age). They are also very much linked to technology and aspects of physics (eg instrumentation), chemistry (eg antimicrobial dressings) and indeed engineering (eg prosthetics). I really like the way that it managed to cope with these searches. This is a good all-round database and seems versatile.

A neat feature of both Scopus and Web of Science is that you can search on the abstract - and why would this be so important? Although this review is about citation searching, the reality is that sometimes we (as users) will not always have a complete record to start with. For example, I have lost count of the number of requests I have had from users to track a particular article with very vague details of authors, exact title and year. This allows for more flexibility in searching via the abstract, so it provides a little extra information and you don't have the extra step of finding the

complete record from somewhere else first. I can see I would have used this a lot when I worked for a consultancy in the corporate world.

I was also impressed by Web of Science. In some ways, it is a slightly more 'clunky' system, if you are unfamiliar with the ISI Web of Knowledge interface, but it also allows for more precise searching capability. It has more layers to it, which can be good, but this can be off-putting to certain less experienced users. It may take a little longer to get to grips with its full potential, but when you do you can see it is quite a powerful tool to have. Like Scopus, it has all the benefits of being able to manipulate the results and use in the best way you see fit, and the content is excellent. It seems to be very much aimed at peer-reviewed high impact academic material and I can see that it would neatly fit into the academic setting, where the ability to track your (or organisation's or department's) research output is very important, and also to allow you to keep up with the competition. I would have used this greatly when working as a clinical librarian in the acute and academic field, where research output, grant funding, and tracking innovation and 'gold standard' evidence is key to survival.

Without the specifics for costs provided by the vendor, which do you choose? My advice is to go for what will suit your unique environment and business. Consider your areas of interest, what other systems you already employ, your main user group. Both databases provide all the basics, and the extras; it is a question of what will sit better with your needs.

From my own experience working in the public and private sector, I can see that I would have felt entirely comfortable in using both Web of Science and Scopus. These are examples, but Web of Science would be incredibly useful in an academic setting where citation analysis is a very important tool in career development and departmental funding. It is also a very important feature in gathering clinical evidence in the health sector, where building on the hierarchy of clinical evidence is key to getting research grants and building up 'gold standard' body of evidence such as Cochrane Meta Analysis and Systematic Reviews.

I was delighted with Scopus's flexibility and usability, and would have been comfortable using it whilst working in the consultancy sector, where having crossover in topics is a useful and handy tool and reflects the cross-disciplinary world in which consulting organisations find themselves. In this sector, trade journals are also very important as evidence and markets. In addition, it is less important to have a citation index spanning so far back in time, so having the ability to go back only 10 years is not such a great issue.

BiomedExperts.com

Review published May 2010: <http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/1650>

✓ <i>Timeliness</i>	✓ <i>Coverage - Excellent and appropriate</i>
✓ <i>Great content</i>	✓ <i>Audience - Don't be fooled by the name, this has mass appeal</i>
✓ <i>Costs - free</i>	✗ <i>Help and support</i>

Log in to your FreePint Master Account to access past reports covered by your subscription:

Visit <http://web.freepint.com/> to log in, and select 'Publishing Module'.

Email support@freepint.com if you need assistance.

Non-subscribers can purchase back issues using the links above.

If your subscription does not cover a report you need, you can purchase it at special subscriber rates.

Contact support@freepint.com for further information or assistance.

Web Resources

Find additional information and insight relating to this product through the following FreePint Family resources:



VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>

- Press releases from this company can be found on the VIP Wire: <http://web.vivavip.com/forum/Wire/>
- Editorial commentary covering this company can be found at the VIP LiveWire: <http://web.vivavip.com/forum/LiveWire/>

[Subscribe to receive the VIP Wires Weekly](#), a free update of the latest commentary from our editors, plus current press release headlines.

Find additional product reviews in back issues of VIP Magazine or in VIP Reports by visiting <http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/vip/>



About the Reviewer

Joanna Ptolomey is a freelance information consultant and analyst. Joanna started her career in information as a librarian in the NHS before moving to a worldwide consultancy group to work in business information. Prior to working in libraries and information Joanna was a planning engineer in the construction industry for 10 years. She is currently Chair of the Scottish Health Information network (SHINE) and is a board member of the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), the independent advisory body to the Scottish Government and Scottish Ministers on library and information matters. You can follow Joanna's blogs on [Twitter](#) and on Facebook.

Subscribe to VIP

Upgrade to a VIP Subscription

If you make, support or advise on content purchase decisions, or if you do business in the content and information arena, credit your report purchase towards a VIP Magazine subscription.

You get VIP Magazine (PDF) every month, with feature stories, industry commentary and highlights from our product reviews, plus two or more in-depth product reports to add to your collection. VIP also regularly conducts User Surveys to gather benchmarking data about what premium content users are using – or not – to meet their organisation's needs.

To upgrade to a subscription, please complete the form below and return it:

Fax: UK: 01784 605555 (International: +44 1784 605555)

Or simply email your request to: support@vivavip.com

Name:	_____		
Company:	_____		
Title:	_____		
Telephone:	_____		
Email address:	_____		
Best time to reach:	_____		
Interested in:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Single site	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-site (up to 5 locations)	<input type="checkbox"/> Enterprise (unlimited locations)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<input type="checkbox"/> Please also send me information on how FUMSI (http://www.fumsi.com/) can help us Find, Use, Manage and Share Information at work			

The FreePint Family

FreePint[®]

Sites, resources and community to support business information professionals worldwide. The free twice-monthly FreePint Newsletter keeps you informed about everything relating to the FreePint Family.

<http://www.freepint.com/>

VIP

VIP publishes in-depth unbiased product reviews on premium products, plus analysis of what's happening in the information industry, to support senior information professionals. Increase the value of even the tightest budget with VIP resources and guidance.

<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>

 **fumsi**[®]

Practical articles, reports and resources to help everyone in your organisation Find, Use, Manage and Share Information at work.

<http://www.fumsi.com/>

jinfo

Jinfo offers searchable databases of current information-related vacancies and upcoming events - conferences, workshops, webinars, etc. Free to search; cost-effective to advertise vacancies and events.

<http://www.jinfo.com/>

DocuTicker

Our editors help you find high quality, free PDF reports on the web, published by government agencies, universities, think tanks and other public interest groups.

<http://www.docuticker.com/>

Resource Shelf

Our contributing editors monitor and report on changes in free, freemium and premium sources. Updated daily, ResourceShelf is free!

<http://www.resourceshelf.com/>