

# Selecting a Database

In order to select the most appropriate database it is important to know exactly what information you are looking for. These suggestions are only one method for the selection of appropriate databases but include elements that are be present in any attempt at database selection. If we ask a number of questions about our topic this will help us to sharpen the focus of our research and also help in database selection.

- What is the broad subject or subjects of the topic.?
- Do you want information relating to a particular geographic region for example information on Europe or the US?
- Do you want information relating to the current year. Do you want: historical information for example information relating to ten years ago.?
- Is it important that the information is obtained immediately? Can you wait a number of weeks for it.?
- If you require immediate access then a full-text database is probably the best choice?
- Are there any other notable aspects of the topic that are important.

Once you have identified important aspects of the topic you can then match these with the database or databases that are likely to provide the information you require. The diagram below represents this process of database selection.

## How to Select a Database

### Topic Attributes

Main subject content
Geographic Focus
Time focus
Language required
Immediate access or within a few weeks.
Other vital aspects.

If there is a match between  
topic attributes and database  
attributes choose the database.



### Database Attributes

Main subject content
Geographic coverage
Time coverage
Language coverage and limiting by language.
Database type, Index : Index+Abstract, Fulltext.
Other useful aspects.