Connect your users to FirstSearch

Learn how to provide user access to FirstSearch.

**How to connect to FirstSearch**

Your library's users can connect to FirstSearch in the following ways:

**Web browser**

Connecting to FirstSearch through the public Internet is usually a cost-effective method for libraries that have access to it. The most effective Internet access to FirstSearch is provided by standard Web browsers as described in recommended browsers. Adobe Acrobat Reader 3.0 or higher is needed with these browsers for viewing electronic journal articles and documents provided in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). If you use Netscape Navigator, install the Web browser plug-in included with Acrobat Reader to view PDF documents correctly and do not use Acrobat Reader as a helper application. Acrobat Reader is available here.

Note: To connect to the administrative module and customize FirstSearch for your users, you **must** use one of the recommended browsers. For more information about connecting to the administrative module, see [Use the WorldCat Services Administrative Module](https://help.oclc.org/Discovery_and_Reference/FirstSearch/Get_started/Manage_FirstSearch/Connect_your_user…).

**Z39.50-compatible local system**

A Z39.50-compatible local system can connect to FirstSearch so your library's users can search FirstSearch databases using the local system's procedures and commands. Implementation steps and effort vary by local system. If you choose to adapt your local system to operate as a Z39.50 client, you may incur costs related to software development.

For more information, see [FirstSearch databases](https://help.oclc.org/Discovery_and_Reference/FirstSearch/Get_started/Manage_FirstSearch/Connect_your_user…).

**Dedicated or dial-up TCP/IP**

Libraries that do not have reliable Internet access should consider OCLC dedicated or dial-up TCP/IP. Dedicated TCP/IP is a direct connection through a networked workstation. It links a campus or Local Area Network (LAN) to OCLC for access to all OCLC services. If your library does not have Internet access and uses OCLC services more than 30 hours a month, you may want to consider dedicated TCP/IP. Otherwise, dial-up TCP/IP would probably be your most cost-effective method.

Dial-up TCP/IP is a dial-access connection at 56 Kbps (28.8 Kbps is the minimum recommended speed). It lets you dial into FirstSearch and other OCLC services through standard telephone lines using Point-to-Point Protocol.
OpenAthens authentication

Overview

OpenAthens is an access management software for online, subscription-based content that provides authentication for your off-site patrons. To gain access to FirstSearch using OpenAthens authentication, add the IP address of your OpenAthens proxy server to the IP address recognition section of the FirstSearch Administrative module.

Steps

1. Sign in to your library’s FirstSearch Administrative module.
2. Select Authentication/Access > IP-Address Recognition.
3. Add the IP address of your OpenAthens server to the IP Address List.
4. Click Save Changes.

For assistance, contact OCLC Support.

How to log on to FirstSearch

OCLC supports both manual logon and automatic logon, depending on the method (web browser, Z39.50-compatible local system, or TCP/IP) used to connect to FirstSearch. Manual logon can be used with all methods. Each library that connects to FirstSearch through a Z39.50-compatible local system must provide its own logon method.

Manual logon

The following procedure describes how to log on to FirstSearch manually after having connected through a recommended browser. After logging on, users see the FirstSearch home screen, from which they begin their session.

1. Go to the FirstSearch URL shown below for your communication method.
   Internet or Dial TCP/IP: https://firstsearch.oclc.org
2. Click your preferred interface language.
3. Type your FirstSearch authorization number in the Authorization field.
4. Type your FirstSearch service password in the Password field.
5. Click Start.

Automatic logon (using IP address recognition)

Overview

You set up automatic logon for your users by using OCLC IP address recognition. You specify which IP addresses may use your FirstSearch accounts, then you add links to FirstSearch on your Web pages. The links work only for users with an IP address that you specified. For complete instructions, see About IP address recognition. When automatic login is
in place, users click the links to FirstSearch, bypass the FirstSearch logon screen, and begin their session on the FirstSearch screen that you specified when you added the link.

When you add automatic logon links to your library's Web pages, you have a number of options, including:

- You can point users to appropriate resources by creating links to specific databases or other screens within FirstSearch. For example, you can create a **WorldCat** link that takes users to a search screen for the WorldCat database, or an **Education** link that takes them to a database selection screen for the Education topic area.
- If you have multiple FirstSearch authorization numbers, you can specify, for each IP Address link, which authorization number should be used.
- You can add your library's logo to FirstSearch. If you do, your logo appears throughout each FirstSearch session at either the upper left or upper right of each FirstSearch screen, depending on where you designated it to appear. For more information, see [Add your library's logo to FirstSearch](https://help.oclc.org/Discovery_and_Reference/FirstSearch/Get_started/Manage_FirstSearch/Add_your_library's_logo_to_FirstSearch).
- You can specify the Web page that users go to when they exit FirstSearch.
- You can specify the communications method used during the session.
- You can specify the FirstSearch interface language (when English is not the preferred language).
- You can create links leading directly to individual journals within the Electronic Collections Online database. You can add the links on your Web pages or in records in your online public catalog. For example, you can create a link that takes users directly to the information screen for the Journal of Ecology. You can add these links to individual journals whether or not your library subscribes to the journals. If you do not subscribe to a journal, users cannot view abstracts or full-text articles, but they can search within the journal and view journal information, lists of issues, tables of contents, and article descriptions. (If an article from one of these journals is needed, you may be able to obtain it through interlibrary loan.)

You can place IP address recognition links to FirstSearch on non-restricted Web pages (web pages that are not behind a firewall or otherwise restricted by user authentication requirements such as logging in) because workstations authorized to use FirstSearch are identified by IP address. Each IP address (for example, 132.174.95.5) identifies a computer or other machine on the Internet. Anyone trying to access FirstSearch from an unauthorized IP address is redirected to the FirstSearch manual logon screen.

**Remote users**

Remote library users who access FirstSearch from outside the library at an IP address that you have not authorized cannot use IP address recognition. For example, users connecting to FirstSearch through an Internet Service Provider cannot use IP address recognition. Remote users must use manual logon or some other logon method provided by the library. If you have questions about remote access, contact OCLC Support.

**Summary of steps**

The following is a summary of the steps to follow to request and set up IP address recognition:

- Consult with your system administrator to note all IP addresses that should have access to your FirstSearch accounts.
- Note the authorization number for each of your FirstSearch accounts.
- Use the administrative module to add you IP addresses to your FirstSearch account (see [About IP address recognition](https://help.oclc.org/Discovery_and_Reference/FirstSearch/Get_started/Manage_FirstSearch/About_IP_address_recognition)).
- Add links to your Web pages containing IP address recognition URLs.
Proxy servers and firewalls

Overview

Your institution's network may include a firewall or proxy server. A firewall is hardware and/or software that prevents unauthorized access to or from the network. The firewall might also act as a proxy server. A proxy server might translate IP addresses used only within your network into addresses used on the Internet, or it might supply a requested Web page available in its cache (storage buffer) rather than send the request out over the Internet.

The useful services that firewalls and proxy servers provide sometimes disrupt communications between users and FirstSearch. If you suspect that a firewall or proxy server is affecting your FirstSearch users, ask your system administrator to contact OCLC Customer Support. Customer Support staff and the system administrator can discuss possible problems and solutions.

Examples of problems and solutions

The following are two examples of possible problems and solutions:

- Every FirstSearch screen sent to a user contains information identifying the specific FirstSearch session. If a proxy server supplies a FirstSearch screen cached from an earlier session, the user could click a link on that screen that sends information from an obsolete session to FirstSearch causing FirstSearch to end the session. To solve this problem, the system administrator might configure the proxy server not to cache pages from an oclc.org address.

- Proxy servers that translate IP addresses can cause problems for IP address recognition access to FirstSearch if your IP address recognition request includes IP addresses used only within your network. To help solve these problems, work with your system administrator to identify all the IP addresses that should have access to your FirstSearch account or accounts, as they will appear on HTTP connections from your network. Include those addresses in your IP address recognition request.

The Back button

Overview

During a FirstSearch session, options and buttons appear on each FirstSearch screen to show users their available choices. Encourage users to click those options and buttons to navigate FirstSearch rather than the browser's Back button and other buttons.
Examples of problems and solutions

For example, using the browser's Back button may return the user to a screen that does not contain the latest information about the user's session. If a user performs two searches and clicks the Previous Searches option, the Previous Searches screen lists the two searches. If the user performs a third search and uses the browser's Back button to return to the Previous Searches screen, only the first two searches are listed. Clicking the browser's Refresh/Reload button redisplays the screen with the latest information.

Screen reader software

WAI

OCLC works to support Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines that are supported by Web browsers. More information about WAI is available on the W3C website. The following are some HTML features that OCLC uses to support WAI guidelines. Your Web browser or screen reader software may or may not support these features:

- FirstSearch includes title attributes with items on screens to provide detailed prompts and information about where links lead.
- FirstSearch includes LABEL tags to precisely associate label information with parts of forms.
- FirstSearch includes accesskey attributes to specify that pressing Alt+S has the same effect as clicking a submit button, such as Search, Select, or Show Databases, and pressing Alt+C has the same effect as clicking a Clear button.