Learn how to browse indexes and subject headings when searching FirstSearch.

**Browse the indexes**

An index is an alphabetical list of words used to point to library resources. These words represent aspects of a bibliographic record, such as keyword or author. They are organized into searchable files used to locate records in a database.

Click the **Index button** to browse through the indexes for the database you’ve chosen. This function is useful when you are unsure of the spelling or format of any of your search terms. You can also use this function to find the number of records that contain your search terms.

**Browse subject headings**

Note: This function is available only for selected databases.

A subject heading is a word or group of words that describes a library resource. These subject headings are standardized and then used to classify library resources.

A preferred subject heading uses the preferred spelling and format under which many similar subject headings may fall. For example, for some databases, physicians may be the preferred subject heading for medical doctors and doctors, and is to be used instead of these other terms.

Select the **Subjects button** to browse the list of subject headings based on a term or concept. This feature is useful when you need to refine the search terms you have chosen or when you are looking for alternative search terms to broaden the scope of your search.

**The Browse Index screen**

An index is an alphabetical list of words used to point to library resources. Browse through the indexes to verify the spelling or format of any key search terms, or to find the number of records that contain a key search term.

1. Type the **term** you would like to search in the **Browse for:** input box.  
   **Note:** The index label (for example, kw:) may appear in front of any term for which you’ve already performed a search. Remove the index label if you’d like to browse for the same term in a different index.

2. Select an **index** from the **Indexed in:** drop-down list box.

3. Click **Browse.** FirstSearch displays the closest matching term in the index you’ve selected. Above and below the term are the next closest matches. To the right is the number of records that contain this term.
4. Click the **Prev button** (←) or **Next button** (→) to page through the index. When you have found the correct term for your search, you can click the **term** to select it and go back to the search screen. The term you've selected will be displayed in the Search for: box with the corresponding index label.