Get started with FirstSearch

Find information to get started with FirstSearch and customize, search, promote, and monitor FirstSearch.

Overview

The information in this quick reference can help you customize FirstSearch to make it work best for your library and its users. All you need to get started right away is your OCLC FirstSearch authorization and password, which were provided in your welcome letter. Go to https://firstsearch.oclc.org to logon.

Keeping up-to-date

The following Internet lists provide important news and information about the FirstSearch service:

- FirstSearch-L
- Z39.50FS-L

You and your users can subscribe to these lists by using the OCLC Internet List Subscription Request form.

Or, to subscribe via email, send the following message to listserv@oclc.org:

subscribe <name of listserv> <your first name> <your last name>

Customize FirstSearch

Use the administrative module to customize FirstSearch to meet the needs of your users and staff. Logon to the administrative module with your FirstSearch authorization and administrative password at https://firstsearch.oclc.org/admin.

For more information, see Customize FirstSearch.

Search FirstSearch

FirstSearch offers a variety of search modes to fit every user, from Basic to Expert:

- Set the default search mode to Basic, Advanced or Expert to best suit your users’ needs. Basic offers the simplest and quickest options while Advanced lets users structure a more precise search. Expert is a command line mode designed for experienced searchers.
- Create Custom Topics to help your users locate the best databases for their needs.
- Combine WorldCat and up to 2 other databases into a virtual database so patrons can search them all at one time.
Watch a video

A brief look at OCLC FirstSearch (2:19)
This short video provides an overview of FirstSearch service.

Promote FirstSearch
For more information, see Promote FirstSearch.

Monitor FirstSearch usage
Log on by entering your FirstSearch authorization and administrative or statistics password.

For more information
The OCLC® Web site provides a wealth of online information about FirstSearch, including an overview of the service, links to complete documentation, ordering information and more.

Information on the Electronic Collections Online database includes lists of participating publishers and available journal titles.
For more information about FirstSearch, contact OCLC.