Search the Central Index and Remote Databases in WorldCat Discovery

Find information about resources available from central index metadata from multiple content providers and resources available via remote access to a subscription provider’s site.

About

Databases and collections are accessible in WorldCat Discovery via a central index of metadata from multiple content providers or via remote access from a subscription provider’s site. The content provider determines whether their database is represented in the central index or as a remote database.

Central Index

The central index is a rapidly growing collection of metadata for licensed resources built from databases provided to OCLC by various content providers. When searching these databases, WorldCat Discovery queries its central index and returns records matching the search terms.

Note: Content providers are required to give OCLC certain metadata, but they are not required to provide all their metadata for centrally-indexed databases. This may cause differences in the results returned in WorldCat Discovery compared to searching the provider platform directly.

Remote Databases

The metadata for remote databases is contained on the database provider’s platform. When searching a remote database from WorldCat Discovery, the search is performed via a federated connection to the providers’ platform and results are then returned to WorldCat Discovery.

Note: Providers may not always support the same indexes in the federated version of their platform as they do in the native platform, which may lead to discrepancies between the search results returned in WorldCat Discovery and results from searching the provider platform directly.

How to search available content

Consult the available collections and databases to see whether a database is included in the WorldCat Discovery central index or is searched remotely.

When a search is conducted against both centrally-indexed and remote databases, the search query is submitted to the OCLC central index and the content provider platform.
Matching records from the central index databases and from each of the remote databases are combined into a single set of matching records. The chosen relevance algorithm is then applied to the combined set of records to rank them in the WorldCat Discovery results display.

For more information and configuration options, see:

- Choose the default sort on search results
- Configure licensed content and databases

Remote database recommendations

After a search is entered, if your institution has configured remote databases for your institution, WorldCat Discovery displays those database recommendations at the top of the search results screen. Each remote database result displays the name of the database and approximate number of search results. To view remote database results, click on the box. The database will display the search results in its native interface in the browser.

Central index results appear below the remote database suggestions.

If your institution provides access to remote databases:

- OCLC recommends including a maximum of ten remote databases in your default setting.
- Review your institution's remote database access credentials in OCLC Service Configuration > Metasearch Content > Default Databases and Licensed Content to ensure they are up to date.
- If your database access credentials and proxy URL settings are accurate, no additional changes are necessary. Existing remote database configurations for remote searching will remain active.

Watch a video

Configure and use remote databases through WorldCat Discovery (6:36)

This video describes how to configure and search remote databases through WorldCat Discovery.