

## Common Types of Searches

The following information is true in most cases in most databases you will encounter. Some databases offer other types of searches as well.

### Keyword

- An uncontrolled vocabulary search
- most dynamic type of search, because it searches in most of the fields in a book or periodical article catalog record
- allows use of any word or words (except common stop words), phrases, names, places, etc.
- will produce list of records related to the terms entered in the search -- usually **about** something or someone.
- best search to perform when you need information **about** something

### Author

- requires that you know what author you are looking for
- must enter at least the last name of an author
  - if it is a common name like "Smith" you will also need to provide a first name and possibly even a middle initial/name if first name is also common, such as "John Smith."
- searches the author fields in catalog records
- produces list of books, articles, etc. **by** the author you searched
- best search to perform when you know who the author is and need to see what is available by that author

### Title

- requires that you know the title or at least part of the title you are looking for
- may enter entire or partial title
- searches the title fields in catalog records
- produces list of books with titles exactly or at least similar to the terms you searched
- best search to perform when you know the title of the item and need to see if it is available or what editions or formats are available for that title.

### Subject

- a controlled vocabulary search
- requires use of words, names, places that match subject terms established by the Library of Congress, also known as "subject headings."
- may enter all or part of a known subject heading
- produces list of items **about** the subject you searched
- if search is on an author, list of items is produced both **about** them and **by** them
- like the keyword search, is a search you can do when you need information **about** something or someone.