

Finding Alternative Energy/Renewable Energy Information in the Library

This resource guide will help you get started in finding information about alternative energy and related topics.

The best place to start your research is in the CQ Researcher or Issues & Controversies databases.

Electronic Resources

CQ Researcher

From the library home page (<http://www.tmcc.edu/library/>) click on Do Research, then Electronic Resources, and then [CQ Researcher](#) in the **Current/Controversial Issues** section of the page. Type “alternative energy” into the search box. You will see results something like the image below:

Search Results

[Save to Favorite List](#) | [Save Search](#) | [Modify Search](#) | [New Search](#) | [Save E-mail Alert](#)

Results 1 - 30 (of 251) for your search on "alternative energy":

Save	Score	Title	Section	Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	100	Energy Efficiency	Entire Report	5/19/2006
<input type="checkbox"/>	91	Alternative Energy	Entire Report	7/10/1992
<input type="checkbox"/>	86	Alternative Fuels	Entire Report	2/25/2005
<input type="checkbox"/>	71	Energy Security	Entire Report	2/1/2002
<input type="checkbox"/>	70	Energy Policy	Entire Report	5/25/2001
<input type="checkbox"/>	69	Renewable Energy	Entire Report	11/7/1997

Notice that the article titles give you other related topics such as “alternative fuels”, “energy policy” and so on. “Renewable Energy” is a very good search phrase This is very helpful as it quickly offers up a list of search terms for you to use in expanding or narrowing your search. Notice that the dates are sometimes older (as is the case for the Alternative Energy article). The article still has quality information, it’s just a bit out of date.

These articles are about 25 pages long and have an overview of the topic, statistics, background, and additional sources about the topic. They are an excellent starting point.

Issues & Controversies

Another great database to try. Like CQ, [Issues & Controversies](#) offers in-depth articles about social and political topics. This database is also linked out of the **Current/Controversial Issues** part of our Electronic Resources page. Try the same search in *Issues*, and notice the difference in search results.

Title	Show All	Date
1. Key Events in the History of Renewable Energy (sidebar)		May 25, 2007
2. Notable Recessions in U.S. History (sidebar)		March 21, 2008
3. An Overview of Renewable Energy Sources (sidebar)		May 25, 2007
4. Engineers Seek to Capture the Power of Ocean Currents (sidebar)		May 25, 2007
5. The 'Dirty Dozen' (sidebar)		July 23, 1999
6. How Will Electric Utility Competition Work? (sidebar)		April 03, 1998
7. Hydrogen Power		January 16, 200
8. Fuel Prices		July 28, 2000
9. Hydroelectric Energy		April 16, 2004
10. Global Warming		December 08, 1
11. Update: Global Warming		April 13, 2007
12. Ethanol Fuel		July 21, 2006

Within these results, you can see even more specific subtopics in the area of *alternative energy*. You find articles about ethanol, hydroelectric energy, and things called “sidebars” which are parts of larger articles.

These articles also contain statistics, background information, and additional readings.

Once you have the overall picture of alternative fuels, you are ready to find magazine, newspaper articles, books and web sites about the topic.

Oxford Digital Reference Shelf/Oxford Reference Online

These databases have some excellent information on this topic. For best results, search “renewable energy” in these databases. Click [Oxford Digital Reference Shelf](#) or [Oxford Reference Online](#) to begin your search. You have to click down a few layers to get to the encyclopedias.

In Oxford Reference, click Earth & Environmental Sciences, then click on the **Encyclopedia of Global Change** (available in both databases). It has good coverage of *Renewable Energy*, *Hydrogen* as an energy source, and an excellent discussion of the use of resources by humans.

In the Oxford Digital Reference Shelf, the **Encyclopedia of the Modern World** has a good article on *Energy*, as well as information on *Global Warming* and related topics.

EBSCO

EBSCO is one of our full-text magazine, journal and newspaper collections. It has several thousand titles and has some full-text coverage going back to at least 1975. As opposed to the general sources we searched above, EBSCO can provide current and very specific information on a variety of topics. In the **General Magazine and Journal Collections** section of our Electronic Articles page, click on EBSCO, then EBSCOhost Web, and then on the Continue button.

When building a search in EBSCO, you want to be fairly specific. Just entering “alternative energy” will find thousands of articles. You don’t want that! You want to try specific phrases to find information to fill in details from the overview you got in the CQ and Issues databases.

For example, you might want to focus on the cost of alternative energy as opposed to fossil fuels. Try a search phrase such as “*alternative energy and cost and fossil fuel.*” This finds about 20 articles, several of which are excellent. The sources include government reports, journals and magazines. (See the screen shot below):

The screenshot displays the EBSCO search interface. On the left, a sidebar titled "Narrow Results by" offers various filters: Source Types (All Results, Periodicals, News), Subject (Thesaurus Term, Fossil fuels, Renewable energy sources, UNITED States, POWER resources, ENERGY conservation, ENERGY industries), and Publication (Publication, Publication Type). The main search results area shows "All Results: 1-10 of 21" and "Page: 1 2 3 Next". The search criteria are "alternative energy and cost and fossil fuel" with "Options set" and "Alert / Save / Share" options. The results are sorted by "Relevance". Three results are visible:

- Advanced Energy Technologies: Key Challenges to Their Development and Deployment: GAO-07-550T.**
By: Wells, Jim. *GAO Reports*, 2/28/2007, p1, 15p, 1 diagram, 1 graph; (AN 24272545)
PDF Full Text (288KB)
Add to folder | Relevancy: ██████████
- Advanced Energy Technologies: GAO-08-556T.**
By: Gaffigan, Mark E.. *GAO Reports*, 3/5/2008, p1, 20p, 1 chart, 4 graphs; (AN 31190516)
PDF Full Text (397KB)
Add to folder | Relevancy: ██████████
- The case for alternative energy: Mining for trouble: Sago explosion demonstrates that fossil fuels cost human lives.**
Countryside & Small Stock Journal, Sep/Oct2006, Vol. 90 Issue 5, p63-66, 4p; (AN 21933349)
PDF Full Text (2MB)
Add to folder | Relevancy: ██████████

You can sort results by relevance (as in the example above) or find similar articles using the Subjects on the left side of the page. These can help if you get too many results. Clicking on a relevant heading can help you narrow your search. In our example above, we created a very targeted search and thus had a good result list to work with.

Most articles have a magnifying glass symbol next to the title. Move your mouse over these to see abstracts for articles. If your search terms do not appear in the abstract or as a Subject Term, you probably want to move on to a more relevant article.

Books

You also may want to find a few books to support your research. Under **Do Research**, click the *TMCC Online Book Catalog* link. Type in “*alternative energy*” and be sure to enclose the phrase in quotes. This tells the system you want items with that exact phrase, and NOT either word *alternative* or *energy*. Quick example – the keyword search *alternative energy* finds 894 items. Some are very relevant, but very messy results! The keyword search “*alternative energy*” finds **12 items**, all of which could be relevant to your search. Once you get the call number for the book, you can find it on the shelf and see if it will work for you.

Web Sites

In the case of alternative energy, there are some excellent federal web sites out there. You can also browse the many alternative energy industry websites for information as well. Listed below are a few to get you started:

- **Renewable and Alternative Fuels Basics 101** - http://www.eia.doe.gov/basics/renewalt_basics.html. This set of links from the federal Energy Information Administration outlines various alternative sources of energy including solar, biomass, wind and geothermal.
- **Renewable and Alternative Fuels U. S. Data** - <http://www.eia.doe.gov/fuelrenewable.html>. This page has statistics on alternative energy sources – usage, capacity and generation.
- **The American Wind Energy Association** - <http://www.awea.org/>
- **American Solar Energy Society** - <http://www.ases.org/>
- **The Alternative Energy Network** - <http://osen.org/>. Alternative energy, news, blogs, and more.