

Finding Information about Terrorism-related Topics in the Library

Finding information about terrorism is easy. Finding what you need is a challenge. Terrorism is a very broad topic, with lots of possibilities. So first, we need to focus the search. Are we researching the prevention of terrorism, the history of terrorism, the reaction of the United States to 9/11, military tribunals, or civil liberties and terrorism?

Let's say you want to research the impact of terrorism and the response to it on American civil liberties.

You would probably want to begin your research with *CQ Researcher* or *Issues & Controversies*. These databases both have excellent coverage of the topic. At the Library Home Page, click on Do Research and Electronic Resources.

Electronic Resources

CQ Researcher

CQ Begin by searching CQ Researcher with the phrase *terrorism and civil liberties*. You will see a result list something like the picture below:

The screenshot shows the CQ Researcher search results page. On the left is a navigation menu with options like 'Advanced Search', 'Browse by Topic', and 'Your Profile'. The main content area is titled 'Search Results' and shows a list of results for the search query 'terrorism and civil liberties'. The results are displayed in a table with columns for Score, Title, Section, and Date. The first result is 'Civil Liberties Debates' with a score of 100, dated 10/24/2003. Other results include 'Combating Terrorism' (score 87, dated 7/21/1995), 'War on Terrorism' (score 84, dated 10/12/2001), 'Civil Liberties in Wartime' (score 62, dated 12/14/2001), and 'Homeland Security' (score 36, dated 9/12/2003).

Score	Title	Section	Date
100	Civil Liberties Debates	Entire Report	10/24/2003
87	Combating Terrorism	Entire Report	7/21/1995
84	War on Terrorism	Entire Report	10/12/2001
62	Civil Liberties in Wartime	Entire Report	12/14/2001
36	Homeland Security	Entire Report	9/12/2003

Notice that the article titles has civil liberties themes and that there is also broader coverage, such as the article *Combating Terrorism*. Notice that the dates are somewhat older. With this topic, this is significant, because laws concerning civil liberties and terrorism are constantly changing. The key thing in CQ Researcher is to get the overview of the debate. Later you can find the most current information in EBSCO.

Click on *Civil Liberties Debates* and you will see a 30-page article with an introduction, background and statistics about the topic. At the beginning of the article, on the right side of the page, is a box with Related Topics and Related Reports. Click on these links to find more information.

Armed with this information, and a good set of key words (this article includes keywords such as *civil liberties*, *terrorism*, *Patriot Act*, *Guantánamo Naval Base*, *military tribunals*, and *enemy combatant* you can then search EBSCO or ProQuest for current or historical news articles about the topic.

EBSCO

EBSCO is a database with several thousand magazines and journals, many with full-text coverage. It's the place to search for more current information once you have a firm topic and several key words to search with.

Say you're interested in finding information about the impact of the Patriot Act on civil liberties. You would click into EBSCO and type the phrase *patriot act and civil liberties*. You'll retrieve a list that looks similar to the sample below:



The screenshot shows a search results page from EBSCO. On the left, there is a sidebar titled "Narrow Results by" with a "Subject" section. The "Subject" section is expanded, showing a list of related subjects: "UNITED States", "CIVIL rights", "TERRORISM -- Prevention", "AMERICAN Civil Liberties Union", "UNITED States. Patriot Act of 2001", and "NATIONAL security -- United States". A "More »" link is at the bottom of the list. The main content area shows search results for "patriot act and civil liberties". At the top, it says "All Results: 1-10 of 192" and "Page: 1 2 3 4 5 Next". The search results are sorted by "Relevance". The first result is titled "1. [The *Patriot Act* *Civil Liberties* and War/Freedom from Unfair Searches](#)". Below the title is a magnifying glass icon. The author is "By: Cecere, Joanne K.. School Library Journal, Jul2006, Vol. 52 Issue 7, p120-121 (15 pages) (21455642)". There are two icons for "HTML Full Text" and "PDF Full Text (157KB)". There is also an "Add to folder" icon and a "Relevancy: *****" bar. The second result is titled "2. [The U.S.A. *Patriot Act* of 2001: Balancing *Civil Liberties* and National Security](#)". Below the title is a magnifying glass icon. The author is "By: Forman, Jack; Grabarek, Daryl. School Library Journal, Feb2005, Vol. 51 Issue 2, p12-13 (1411111111)".

Notice that the phrase Patriot Act occurs in some of the titles. This could mean the articles are probably relevant to your search. Notice also the bar on the left side of the screen. These are related subjects that might help you narrow your search even more.

Move your mouse over the magnifying glass/paper icon at the end of one of the article titles. Notice how an abstract, or summary, of the article pops up. Reading the abstract is a quick way to see if the article will work for you. If you want to see the whole article, simply click on the PDF Full Text or HTML Full Text icons in the pop-up box (see example, next page):

rFILE Premier

ivil liberties

Visual Search

All Results: 1

Results for

1. [Civil Liberties](#)
 By: St...
 HTI...
 Add to folder

Title: The USA Patriot Act and Civil Liberties (Part II).
Source: Problems of Post-Communism
Date: 2004
Subjects: CIVIL rights,CONSTITUTIONS,PRESIDENTS,...
Abstract: Part II. Focuses on the Patriot Act and Civil Liberties in the U.S. Tension between the president's obligation to defend the Consti and the fundamental freedoms conveyed to U.S. citizens throug Constitution.
[Full Citation](#)

2. [The USA *Patriot Act* and *Civil Liberties* \(Part II\).](#)
 By: Zeljak, Cathy. Problems of Post-Communism, May/Jun2004, Vol. 51 Issue 3, p69-71, 3p; (AN 13472655)

Books

Another good source of information is in books. The library has hundreds of books about the various aspects of terrorism. Books usually contain quality information and often package the information in an easy-to-use format.

At the library home page, click Do Research and then TMCC Online Book Catalog. You might be tempted to do a quick keyword search. But you will probably find far too many items (see below):

Database Name: Elizabeth Sturm Library

Search Request: Keyword = terrorism

Search Results: Displaying 1 through 25 of 483 entries.

Find This: terrorism	Find Results in: Keyword
25 records per page	

We got 483 results, basically every book and video with the word ‘terrorism’ somewhere in the item’s record.

A much better way to search is using the Keyword using AND option to connect two keywords or concepts. See the difference when we search *terrorism* “*patriot act*”:

Database Name: Elizabeth Sturm Library

Search Request: Keyword = terrorism "patriot act"

Search Results: Displaying 1 through 19 of 19 entries.



The screenshot shows a search interface with a green header bar. On the left, it says "Find This:" followed by a text box containing "terrorism 'patriot act'". On the right, it says "Find Results in:" followed by a dropdown menu showing "Keyword using AND". Below this bar is a grey bar with a dropdown menu set to "25 records per page" and a "Submit" button. A black arrow points to the "Keyword using AND" dropdown menu.

Notice that we put quotes around “patriot act” to force it to be a phrase for searching. Now we have only 19 results and most of them deal with free speech, the Patriot Act, terrorism and civil liberties.

Title Long	
Free speech / John Boaz, book editor.	
<i>Library Location: Reference</i>	<i>Call Number: KF4772.Z</i>
USA Patriot Act of 2001 : balancing civil liberties and national security	

Once you get a *Call Number* and a *Library Location*, you can find the book or books you’re looking for.

These tips should help you find what you need, fast!