Grouping EBSCO Databases by Subject Area - Best Practices

This article features best practices for directing your users to those databases that meet their research needs.

Overview

General research users—such as public library patrons, or students—do not always make the connection between a database name and the subject areas the database may cover. Grouping databases by subject area helps end users reach the databases that best suit their research needs.

Until now, EBSCO has defined which databases belong to a group, and how those groups are named. The library administrator can now customize database groups by subject area, and customize the names of the groups. This lets you place your EBSCO resources into groups and label them to meet the needs and interests of your library patrons.

Searching by Database Group

The library administrator decides whether the library’s databases will be available by individual database name or within database groups.

To search within database groups:

1. From the search screen, the patron clicks the **Choose Databases** link, marks the check boxes to the left of the group of databases desired to search and clicks **OK**. The database names can be displayed when holding the mouse over the preview icon next to the group names. (More than one group and/or database can be selected.)
2. The user can then enter search terms, select limiters and/or expanders, and click **Search**. The Result List displays.

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**Grouping Databases by Subject Area – EBSCOadmin**

It is not necessary to include all databases within customized groups. They may appear as standalone databases, or in the EBSCO default groups that have been set to “Show.”

**To enable database groups:**

1. Under **Customize Services**, click the **Searching** sub-tab.

2. Scroll down to the **Choose Databases/Subject Screen Settings** area.

3. Set the **Group Databases by Subject Header** radio button to **Yes**. (When set to No, your databases are listed by database name in the drop-down list.)

4. Click the **Modify** link to the right of **Customize Group Databases by Subject**.

5. On the Customize Database Groups Screen, you can use the EBSCO default groups or create new groups.

**To create a new database group:**

1. On the Customize Database Groups Screen, click the **Add a Group** link. The **Add a New Group Screen** appears.
2. **Group Caption** – enter the group name in the text-entry field. This is the group name that will appear in the **Select a Group to Search** drop-down list on EBSCOhost.

3. **Add Databases to your Group** – the databases to which the library subscribes are listed. Mark the check box to the right of each database that you want to include in the group. (You must select at least one database to include in the group. Also, you can include a database in more than one group.)

4. Click **Continue**. You are brought to a screen displaying your new database group and databases added to it.

5. Click **Go Back** to return to the Customize Grouping Databases by Subject screen.

**To modify the group you created:**

1. **Order** – enter the order in which the group should appear in the databases drop-down list on EBSCOhost.

2. **Group Captions** – to change the description of the group, select the appropriate language and enter the new description in the text-entry field.

3. **Show** – to have the group appear in the databases drop-down list, mark the Show check box. (If you have “Group Databases by Subject Header” set to Yes, you must set at least one group to Show.)

4. Click **Submit** to confirm your changes. (If you want to change which databases are included in the group, click the **Go** link in the **Edit Databases** field.)
To edit which databases are included in a group:

1. Click the Go link in the Edit Databases field.

2. Click the X for any database you would like to remove from the group.

3. Click Add Databases to Group to add more databases from the profile to the group.

4. From the list of available databases, mark the check box to the right of each database that you want to include in the group.

5. Click Submit. You are returned to the screen displaying your database group and databases added to it.

6. Click Go Back to return to the Customize Grouping Databases by Subject screen.

To edit an EBSCO default group:

1. On the Customize Database Groups Screen, locate the database group that you want to change. Make your changes in any of the fields listed below.

2. Order – to change the order in which the groups appear in the databases drop-down list on EBSCOhost, enter a different order number in this field.

3. Group Captions – to change the EBSCO default description of the group, select the appropriate language and enter the new description in the text-entry field.

4. Show – to have the group appear in the databases drop-down list, mark the Show check box. (If you have “Group Databases by Subject Header” set to Yes, you must set at least one group to Show.)
5. Click **Submit** to confirm your changes.

**Note**: You cannot change the databases assigned to an EBSCO default group.

**How to Maximize the Group Databases Functionality**

This feature is considered most valuable for general use researchers and, therefore, most likely to be used in the public library, school library, or even university library setting on profiles set up for undergraduate students. These researchers do not always make the connection between a database name and the subject areas the database may cover. Grouping databases by subject area helps end users reach the databases that best suit their research needs.

If the library already has online resources grouped by subject area on the library web site, you can use those same group names to direct users to the appropriate EBSCO resource. The EBSCO default groups available in EBSCOadmin can also be used. You can change the name of an EBSCO default group, but not the databases associated with it.

However, among more sophisticated researchers, for whom database names may be quite meaningful (e.g., users of *PsycINFO*, *CINAHL*, *MEDLINE*, etc), librarians will likely still want to set up profiles that stop at the Choose Database screen and do not offer a general subject area drop-down list on the search screens.