

So You Need a Canadian Perspective... Now what?

Ask Yourself if You Actually Need a Canadian Perspective

In many cases geography and nationality don't have any impact on the answer to the question being asked. For example, while you might be interested in *the barriers being faced by immigrant mothers when they try to enter the workforce in Canada*, many of those barriers are the same regardless of whether the context is Canadian or American.

If, however, your research topic has to do with something like the *Canadian healthcare system* or the *Canadian government* then that Canadian perspective is obviously very important, and there are ways to include it in your search strategy.

The Challenge

There are two key challenges when including a Canadian perspective in your search:

- (1) Research about Canada and documents relating to Canada make up a relatively small percentage of the overall research and documentation available on any given research topic simply because Canada has a relatively small population
- (2) In the peer reviewed literature it's rare to explicitly state the geographic context of the research being performed in an item's searchable record. This is because many researchers want to emphasize the broader applicability of their research, instead of creating the illusion that its applicability is limited geographically in some way.

These two things taken together mean that your research pool is fairly small to begin with, and that even a very thorough search that includes many synonyms to capture the Canadian perspective will miss Canadian content simply because the available research is not indexed geographically.

The Solution...?

There is simply *no good way* to isolate purely Canadian content in a search without losing at least some of the research that might otherwise be available and relevant.

However, there are several *better than nothing* ways to do it, which are described below.

Databases

When you're searching academic database, the best way to get Canadian content is by using the search filter created by librarians at the University of Alberta:

Canad* or "british columbia" or alberta* or saskatchewan or manitoba* or ontario or quebec or ("new brunswick" not "new jersey") or "nouveau brunswick" or "nova scotia" or "nouvelle ecosse" or "prince edward island" or newfoundland or labrador or nunavut or nwt or "northwest territories" or yukon or nunavik or inuvialuit OR Abbotsford or Airdrie or Ajax or Aurora or Barrie or Belleville or Blainville or Brampton or Brantford or Brossard or Burlington or Burnaby or Caledon or Calgary or "Cape Breton" or "Chatham Kent" or Chilliwack or Clarington or Coquitlam or Drummondville or Edmonton or Fredericton or "Fort McMurray" or Gatineau or Granby or "Grande Prairie" or Sudbury or Guelph or "Halton Hills" or Iqaluit or Inuvik or Kamloops or "Kawartha Lakes" or Kelowna or Kingston or Kitchener or Langley or Laval or Lethbridge or Levis or Longueuil or "Maple Ridge" or Markham or "Medicine Hat" or Milton or Mirabel or Mississauga or Moncton or Montreal or Nanaimo or "New Westminster" or Newmarket or "Niagara Falls" or "Norfolk County" or "North Bay" or "North Vancouver" or Oakville or Oshawa or Ottawa or Peterborough or Pickering or "Port Coquitlam" or "Prince George" or "Quebec City" or "Red Deer" or Regina or Repentigny or Richmond or "Richmond Hill" or Saanich or Saguenay or "Saint John" or "Saint-Hyacinthe" or "Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu" or "Saint-Jerome" or Sarnia or Saskatoon or "Sault Ste Marie" or Sherbrooke or "St Albert" or "St Catharines" or "St John's" or "Strathcona County" or Surrey or Terrebonne or "Thunder Bay" or Toronto or "Trois-Rivieres" or Vancouver or Vaughan or (Cambridge or (Halifax or Hamilton or London or Victoria or Waterloo or Welland or Whitby or Windsor) not (UK or Britain or "United Kingdom" or England or Australia)) or Whitehorse or Winnipeg or "Wood Buffalo" or Yellowknife

REFERENCE: Campbell, Sandy. Filter to Retrieve Studies Related to Canada, Canadian Provinces, and the One Hundred Largest Canadian Centres from the OVID MEDLINE Database. John W. Scott Health Sciences Library, University of Alberta. Rev. March 06, 2020 <http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/health-sciences-search-filters/geographic-filters>

This search filter is essentially just this large chunk of searchable text that you can copy and paste into most databases search boxes. The U of A Canadian filter includes the word Canada, the names of the provinces and territories, and the names of the 100 most populous centres in the country. Using it is the quickest, easiest and most thorough way to search Canadian literature that we currently have available to us.

	[your search goes here]	Select a Field ▼
AND ▼	[the search filter goes here]	Select a Field ▼
AND ▼		Select a Field

Note: Do not use the geographic limiters that are built into many database platforms. They will consistently retrieve fewer results and are mostly just not that good at their jobs.

CBCA Complete

CBCA complete is technically a business database, but it has a lot of general Canadian content as well. It also contains many types of information in addition to peer review literature, like trade journals, blogs, podcasts and wire feeds. It is a broadly good place to find Canadian content in an information landscape that otherwise tends to be dominated by American publications, research and documents.

Grey Literature

Grey literature is any literature that is produced by an organization that is not primarily a publisher, like government documents and organization reports. For more information about grey literature and how to find it, please view the video on that topic, which can be linked to [here](#).

*This handout is based on a video with the same content and content creator.
The video can be accessed through you UNB Libraries YouTube channel at: [LINK](#)*

Census and Government Data

The Government of Canada has a very robust statistics and data arm, Statistics Canada – or statscan - and much of this data is freely available online.

For example it's relatively easy to locate the census profile for a given city or town on the statscan website, and these profiles include hundreds of data points on topics ranging from individual and household income, to languages spoken, to the types and numbers of households in a region.

It's also fairly easy to use Google to search for aggregate Canadian data on other topics. For example information relating to childhood fitness and activity rates, or the population's perspectives on issues of the day, or even such things as the monthly estimates of business openings in closures in the country are all easily found online.

If you're interested specifically in locating and using publicly available information through statcan, I highly recommend doing an advanced Google search and limiting your search to the statcan domain which is statcan.gc.ca.

If you want more detailed access to Canadian census or government data, it's possible to perform a deeper dive into those publicly available files via something called a public use microdata file or a PUMF. For more information on how to do that, you can contact me and I will either assist you myself, or refer you to our data expert if your question exceeds my expertise.