1 GETTING TO KNOW THE ONLINE WORLD

1.1 GETTING TO KNOW THE ONLINE WORLD

GOAL

Participants will acquire a basic familiarity with selected Web and EPIC resources, build confidence to make use of such resources in their work and leisure activities and be given an initial exposure to some of the current online developments.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Appreciate the power of deploying online resources to fulfil information needs
- Recognise the relevance and value of selected websites and databases in a New Zealand library context
- Receive exposure to the content of a number of EPIC databases.
- Begin to appreciate the distinctions between freely available websites and subscription databases (to be further developed in later sessions)
- Be encouraged to undertake further training or explore resources.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Trainers will ask potential participants PRIOR to attendance:

- How many hours a week they would spend 'online' (for any purpose)?
- If they use EPIC or other database resources frequently or occasionally? If so could they name 3 databases they regularly use?
- When would they opt to use a database as opposed to website for information request?

If the trainer is confident in the potential participants' understanding as reflected in their response to these questions, then they could omit the opening components and proceed straight to selected sections of the 'tours' or just the final exercise (1.1E: comparing websites vs. databases) as a refresher activity.

TRAINING CONTENT: GETTING TO KNOW THE ONLINE WORLD
DURATION OF SESSION: 65+ MINUTES (BUT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO BRIEFER SECTIONS)

Content	Duration	Key Points	Practical
Session Objectives	3 min	Present a 'sampler' of riches of the online world and convey their potential value to end users or staff.	
The Web and its content	25+ min	What is the 'Web' vs. Internet? What is a website composed of? Websites - vast range of content and types. Examination of some of library interest. Includes example of a 'Web 2.0' type sites and collaborative Web communities. Both mirror and differ in part from print world; key distinctions are ease of publishing, currency and the powerful feature of (hyper) linking to any other point in the Web – the interrelatedness of it all.	Participants asked to open a (local?) library website page of diverse links. Elicit thoughts and clarify as to what is Web vs. Net? Consider the range of sites: what kinds of websites are there? And what purposes do they fulfil? Participants led through a brief online tour of some indicative sites as per Handout (1.1 *The Web*) looking at: ▪ Sites to help find stuff ▪ Reference Information sites ▪ News Media sites ▪ e-Government sites ▪ Web 2.0 sites Dependent on facilities trainers could: **1**. Lead participants though a 'tour' of sites, providing commentary and asking participants to carry out the directed searches and brief result evaluation (singly or in pairs depending on PC availability) OR (less effective but if insufficient PCs): **2**. Present this 'tour' by live demonstration (PC+DP to screen) and ask participants to evaluate the search results. In either context greater engagement could be achieved by asking participants to describe for each site (after viewing) how they might use it in their study or for personal interests. Some insight may also be gained from asking participants to try and relate (and compare) each site to a standard print reference work.

			Conclude by asking participants how they feel Web resources differ from print? [impressions only].
Databases and digitised resources	25+ min	Loosely used term but in general compared with websites: ▪ Databases open only to subscribers; ▪ Content more closely related to print or based on print originals ▪ More structured searching and browsing ▪ Greater assurance of authority or quality of information. But there are many freely available Web 'databases' of various forms	Participants look at item in typical 'full text' database (**ANZRC**?). Elicit differences in structure cf. website. Quick 'tour' (from your library links page) of EPIC databases with a sample directed searches and commentary as per Handout 1.1 (*Databases*) section. Presentation options dependent on available facilities as per *Web* section above. Again ask participants to describe for each resource how they might use it for study or personal interests. Elicit impressions from participants of differences in content + structure cf. websites during this 'tour'.
Comparative search of Web vs. database	10 -18 min	Summary of some of the key concepts and distinctions presented in the session. Note lack of useful &/or authoritative websites Note ready access to full text of quality articles + greater ease of selecting material in databases	Hand out **Exercise 1.1E**: participants to complete in 8 min max. Once completed ask for comment on different sorts of info retrieved and comparative ease of finding. Pass out **Handout 1.1** + Summary **listing of EPIC Databases.**
Recap	5 min	Summarise what has been covered as per Session *Objectives* (p.1). Note *EPIC Databases* handout provides sample searches for them to start exploring resources (but stress as an awareness, <u>not</u> a training exercise)	Ask if any questions on concepts or resources presented. Indicate which future sessions will develop themes and content for any questions on detail.

EXERCISE 1.1E COMPARATIVE SEARCH OF WEB VS. DATABASE

A Y12 student asks you to help find sources for an essay on "the issues of wind power" (ie. the benefits and problems of this energy source). Carry out a search for relevant sources on the Web (using *Google*) and then in the database *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center* with the given search statements. Complete the questions, spending no more than 3-4 min for each resource.

Resource	**No. of Hits/Results?**	**Type and origin of sources?** (on first page only)	**How well do sources meet the student's needs?** (presentation of issues, clarity, reading level, clear source and citation…?)
The Web ***Google*** search on: *"wind power" issues*			
Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center Search on: *"wind power"*			

1.1 GETTING TO KNOW THE ONLINE WORLD – A QUICK TOUR

This section gives a taste of some of the riches of the online world, taking a look at selected resources we can use to satisfy study queries, keep up with what's going on in the world or find professional or personal information of interest. In particular we will take a closer look at the information resources provided through the NZ libraries consortium 'EPIC' and start to consider if and how they might be distinct from other resources of the 'Web'.

THE WEB

First up we need to clarify a few key words as many online terms are quite loosely used and can create confusion.

The 'Web' (shorthand for the World Wide Web or 'www') is not the same thing as the 'Internet' (or sometimes just the 'Net'). The Web is the vast collection of pages, documents and files linked together by the various bits of software that keep it running (i.e. the information bit of it all) while the Net is the world wide connection of computers and computer networks and all the cables, wireless links etc that provide the infrastructure over which we can 'surf' the Web. The Web is in effect a service run over the Internet - and not the only one - another you will be familiar with is 'email'. The key concept that has driven the very rapid growth of the Web, is its capability to create links from one page or item to another, wherever they may be in the Web. These connectors are termed 'hyperlinks' reflecting the power of this feature.

The Web, the information component, is what we want to focus on rather than the technology behind it - though it helps to have an understanding of how some of this works when it comes to evaluating what's possible, and what's happening when things don't quite connect. We will look at the core tools and processes in the next session but, in brief, the Web while having a huge range of content, is essentially a collection of Web pages, generally grouped into 'websites'. Each page will have its own Web address (or 'URL') but with a common ('root') URL for the site. The main or 'home' page of the site will provide this root address.

These websites comprise a range of types and content so diverse that it is impossible to readily categorise them. They mirror the print world in that they cover the full spectrum of interests and inclinations from the highly scholarly to the utterly trashy, from weighty to whimsical - including corporate, governmental, community, directory, news, archive and personal homepage sites, as well as those set up to enable us to search or systematically browse websites or pages. This diversity has been increased over the last few years, with the emergence of a range of sites employing newer Web tools that enhance our capability to collaborate, communicate, socialise and generally interact (with each other or with organizations) in more meaningful or intimate ways. This development, both a technological and a social phenomenon, has been characterised as 'Web 2.0' (as opposed to the original generation '1.0' Web). Such tools are also influencing education environments at all levels as it becomes more feasible for students to more actively manage their learning content and readily collaborate at a distance with tutors or other students - not to mention produce, share, and comment on student-created material.

The pace of development of the Web and related Net based services is such that it's challenging to keep up with new services, issues, and opportunities. One current trend for example is the mass digitisation of content, particularly of existing print sources, adding to the already significant amount 'born digital' through electronic publishing. These developments are transforming the information landscape and with it the ways in which learning takes place.

The rapid growth of the online world is also inevitably accompanied by increasing safety and security concerns. The widespread use of the Web for commerce and pleasure creates openings for scams, identity fraud, cyber-bullying, exposure to pornography and other risks. Such activity is probably no more prevalent than in the 'offline' world but it does provoke the need for education of young or new users of Net services on the inherent dangers.

Let's consider a few examples from these millions of websites:

SITES THAT HELP YOU TO FIND RELEVANT SITES

Small in number but, given recent estimates of the total number of websites worldwide at around 150M+, very key players in it all. These are of two basic types: *search engines* that allow us to search the Web by key words and phrases, and *directories* (and their relatives '*portals*') that list a selection of sites in categories that we can browse through. Some sites provide both services. Many bigger websites incorporate search engines to assist finding content within their site. Two such key tools for NZ librarians are:

Google – www.google.co.nz

Google is one of the Web's most highly regarded search engines both for its scope of coverage and ability to deliver relevant results. We will look more closely at how it works in later sessions but its core approach is to search for Web pages that are frequently linked to, and then place them at the top of the lists of hits that are found by keyword search counts. In this way it seeks to make use of the massed assessments of other website creators and providers.

As well as a general Web search facility Google provides a lot of specialist searches – *Images, News*, and *Books* are all useful. Google *Scholar* searches for academic material while Google *Directory* allows you to browse through selected, recommended Web pages on a huge variety of topics. These types of searches can be accessed via the 'tabs' (top of the search screen) or by clicking the *More*▼ tab. Skills and strategies for effectively searching Google will be covered later.

Try simple keyword searches on:
possum control and then ***Treaty of Waitangi***

and consider how relevant are the top listed sites?

Te Puna Web Directory - Webdirectory.natlib.govt.nz

A good example of a straight directory site, this National library compiled tool is an excellent way of browsing and searching for NZ and Pacific Island sites of established interest or quality. Every site listed has been evaluated to ensure that it's genuine and persistent. Because you can browse down from broad to specific categories, directories enable you to search for relevant sites without having to guess the correct keywords. *Te Puna Web Directory* gives excellent access to government and academic websites, as well as commercial sites providing useful information, and is strong in its coverage of community organisations. It can be used to complement Google searches for comprehensive searches of NZ information.

Go to the ***Subject*** listing, select the ***History*** category then have a look a look at the range of sites listed under ***Maori : History & Whakapapa*** and the useful annotations that describe each one.

REFERENCE INFORMATION SITES

There are a number of popular sites that are the digital equivalent of Library reference collections – dictionaries, encyclopaedias, handbooks & manuals etc. Some of these are 'digitised' versions of well-known print resources while others are 'born' digital and have no print equivalent. Two of the latter of great value are:

Wikipedia - www.wikipedia.org

A useful resort on just about any subject, *Wikipedia* remains controversial because of the way in which it compiled. It harnesses the enthusiasm of thousands of voluntary contributors to give us what is perhaps the largest co-operative collection of information ever created - anyone who signs up can create new entries or edit existing ones. This collaboration is managed by 'wiki' software, one of the new 'Web 2.0' tools that facilitate online interaction. *Wikipedia* is often cited as an example of the potential power of these emerging technologies.

The advantage of this method of production is that there are fewer limits to size and the range of topics compared with a more conventionally produced encyclopedia. It can also be much more up-to-date than other (especially print) sources, making it a good source for current events, politics, technology and popular culture.

The downside of this open approach is that entries vary hugely in quality or length, are more vulnerable to charges of bias than conventional sources and can be highly unstable. At their worst they can be subject to deliberate disinformation or capture by special interest groups. Entries on controversial topics have been a battleground between competing points of view. You can however check the *History* tab for an entry to see how often it has been edited and what these changes have been.

Students find *Wikipedia* valuable for the sheer amount of and the ready access to information. Google searches often rank a *Wikipedia* article high in the results given the number of links it has to other sources. However it should be used with caution and information cross-checked where feasible. Due to their tendency to change over time there is also a real problem in citing *Wikipedia* articles as sources.

Try searches for:
tsunami and then ***Moeraki boulders***

and see what you think of the quality and currency of the articles.

There are (confusingly) other reference resources that also deploy the Wiki technology. They range from projects to create online non-fiction books for younger kids (*Wikijunior*) to parodies of *Wikipedia* (eg. *Uncyclopedia*!)

Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand - www.teara.govt.nz

Our new national encyclopedia provides excellent, very readable coverage of NZ past and present, but is still a work in progress and not due for completion until 2013. While there have been some print spin-offs, *Te Ara* it is a resource created and at its fullest online. Articles are written by recognized experts and accessible to the general reader with 'short story' versions of articles for a younger audience. It is internationally recognized as a model of its kind.

To date, *Te Ara* provides strong coverage of New Zealand history, traditional Maori topics (including iwi histories), natural resources, plants and animals and the geography of some regions. Information on relevant historical figures in the *Dictionary of NZ Biography* is also linked to.

Try searching for:
tangaroa and then ***masterton***

Have a look at the range of information provided and consider how easy it would be to quickly source all this in print form?

NEWS MEDIA SITES

The rapid growth of the online world has pushed a number of media organizations (newspaper, radio, TV…) to move to establish a Web presence, concerned that some of their audience have been leaving the traditional media to get more of their news, entertainment and classifieds online. Initially many of these sites were just limited versions of the traditional print product but most now have a distinct format and lot of material (or links to it) not found in the print or broadcast media. Many have built up related 'e-commerce' sites for employment, accommodation or travel or have acquired less formal commercial sites such as *Trade Me* to retain market share lost by the print classifieds.

A few examples:

The BBC – www.news.bbc.co.uk

One of the world's largest public broadcasters, the *BBC* has adopted the Web as another means of 'broadcasting'. Google-style searching produces results on a wide variety of topics including news stories, longer factual pages and material specifically for primary and secondary students on the *Schools* section (www.bbc.co.uk/schools). It maintains its reputation as a trusted and reasonably balanced news source even on more controversial issues.

It can be valuable as a source of reliable and accessible articles for secondary student assignments and is generally more focused than the results of a Google Web search.

Explore for example:
- *Country Profiles* (link in left bar) and select **fiji**
- or the viewpoints on ***genetic engineering***.

Stuff - www.stuff.co.nz

Stuff is fairly typical of the modern news media website. Note the range of expected content as reflected in the 'tabs' on the middle menu bar (News, Sport, …Tech, Lifestyle), but also the more recent introduction of less formal 'blog' content to the right ('blogs' are Web 'logs' or informal public diaries), and the range of related commercial or advertising funded services linked to on the top menu bar (*Trade Me*, a map service, *Rugby Heaven* etc.)

Try searching for information on a current topic such as:
biosecurity
and note the extent of coverage.

E-GOVERNMENT SITES

Sites established by central or local government to deliver services, information, forms etc to citizens or residents - part of the massive move by governments to provide services 'electronically' and so often termed 'e-Government'.

Department of Conservation – www.doc.govt.nz

Many government agencies now provide not only a host of information about their services and roles through their websites but also a wide range of useful educational material. And, given that it comes from official sources, the information generally carries some authority. DOC is typical of this, taking their mission to provide information on NZ's natural resources seriously, but also accessibly. The site has a good search engine (use the search box at the top) or you can browse down from broad to specific topics via the *Conservation* or *Regions* categories.

Try searching on:
"***marine reserves"***
Note the information available, links to other sources and if time, play one of the video clips.

Many other agencies provide similarly useful information on their websites. The relevant ones can be found though the 'uber' site for NZ central goverment:

New Zealand Govt.nz - http://newzealand.govt.nz/

With the huge growth in online 'publishing' of government material the task of getting access to official information is in some ways easier (its immediately accessible and takes up no shelf space) but in others more elusive (you have to have some online 'smarts' to find it). The *Govt.nz* site provides for keyword searches on any topic, or a directory (*Browse*) approach to finding a service or a government agency (the *A-Z of Government Agencies*). Note also the *About New Zealand* tab on the top bar that provide useful quick access to frequently asked information and the *Images* and *News* tabs on top of the search box that allow you to limit your search to these aspects if that's all you need.

Much government information can also be found through Google.

Try a search for:
national anthem
and if time play one version of the Anthem sound files.

WEB 2.0 SITES

There are millions of examples of Web 2.0 (sometimes called the 'social Web') sites ranging from the huge and very pervasive 'social networking' sites such as *Bebo* or *Facebook* to small personal blogs read by 3-4 people. While very diverse they have in common that they are applications that use the Web as the 'platform' (rather than a PC), they often harness the 'wisdom of the crowd' by enabling any/many users to contribute, classify or comment on content, and they typically don't see themselves as finite works but as resources in continual development.

Derek's Blog - http://blog.core-ed.net/derek

Blogs ('Web logs')are one of the success stories of the Web 2.0 phenomenon. Derek's is an example of a professional blog set up to act as an information and discussion forum for anyone interested in following a particular field of interest – in this case the "use and impact of technology in education, and of the future of education in general". The items (or 'posts') are mainly written by Derek Wenmoth but he often puts up others' contributions or ideas and anyone is free to comment. It is a bit more

sophisticated than some in that includes a search engine to enable searching through the extensive, archived posts.

Click on ***Cybersafety*** in the *Category* links to the left and view the range of posts on the topic including comments.

There are search engines or portals dedicated to keeping tabs on the world of blogs such as *Technorati* and *Google Blogs*.

Flickr - www.flickr.com

Flickr describes itself as an "online photo management and sharing application" and epitomises a Web 2.0 approach and tools. Central to this is the 'sharing' facilities – while you can usefully upload, store and organise all your digital photo sets. You can also set up groups of friends or family to share them with (saves emailing large files) or alerts to notify you when others add photos, and make comments on other's images. As well you can 'geotag' your photos so that their location can be searched for via *Flickr's* World Map. These sort of search features built on a fast growing total collection of many millions of photos mean that *Flickr* also serves as free image bank for educational projects – and generally of a higher quality than those available via Google Images.

Search on ***nepal schools hillary*** and view the range of personal photos, note how each photo has 'tags' (topic headings) assigned by the owner, and the different views you can select from the collection. Click on the photo you most like and note the detail provided, and that 'members' (its free to join) can add comments.

LibraryThing - www.librarything.com

One of the best-known 'social networking' book sites, this is a wonderful example of the emerging collaborative power of the so-called 'Web 2.0'. Users (known as 'thingamabrarians') informally catalogue their personal collections, post reading lists and generally discuss bookish things with others with like books. You can search the entire database of over 28M books by title, author, or 'tags' (descriptors) assigned as books are entered into 'libraries'. A 'similar libraries' feature enables searches for other people who share many books with your library. A 'Book Suggestions' feature provides recommendations for similar titles and 'Groups' lively discussion on many matters.

Click on the *Search* tab and try a 'Works' search for the title:
The Changeover ***(or a book of your choice)***
And then select the top link to view the typical tags, ratings and other features.

DATABASES

A loosely used term, databases come in all sorts of guises. Essentially they are computer software that creates structure to collections of data of some sort, making it easier to store and retrieve information. In the library world we often talk about 'bibliographic' databases - ones that organise records about books and other library materials such as our library catalogues. These once only used to describe books and tell us where to find them but, as it became cheaper to produce and store information online, they have started to also link to digital versions of the whole ('full') text of what the record described - the actual magazine, newspaper or encyclopaedia article or even images, sound or video clips and other 'multimedia' objects.

It is these sort of (largely) full text databases that are being supplied to NZ libraries under affordable terms by the 'EPIC' consortium. Currently some 20+ databases provided by six different database vendors, they comprise a rich repository of organised knowledge, most of which bears a close relationship to print resources. The great advantage over print forms however is that they are always there on the digital 'shelf' and available 24/7 from work or home. And, given their size and scope there is no way the average NZ library (outside of universities) could hope to purchase let alone find space to store the print equivalents.

While the term is applied to all sorts of collections these days, the characteristic of library type databases is the very organised 'field' structure of the individual records that describe or link to an item. Open a record on a typical EPIC database (such as *MasterFile Premier* or *General OneFile*) and you will see 'fields' listing the author, title, date, publisher etc of the item. There are others where the structure is less obvious though it is still there underpinning it all - as in *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* or the *Oxford Art* and *Music* databases.

While such databases are accessed via the Internet and use Web technology they are generally not part of the 'visible' Web searchable by conventional search engines. For commercial and technical reasons they are out of reach - hidden or 'invisible' to search engines. We will look at these distinctions in more depth in later sessions. There are however many databases or database-like resources, that are free and available on the Web and we will look at a couple of these after a brief orientation to the EPIC resources.

EPIC DATABASES

The following provides a brief experience of the content of selected EPIC resources. A fuller descriptive listing of each available database follows to provide a reference and familiarisation resource. Note that some smaller or specialist libraries have only selected packages.

GENERAL

Encyclopedia Britannica Online – Library Edition

In a Web dominated information world, EBO provides an interesting point of comparison with *Wikipedia* as there has been a very public debate over the comparative quality and accuracy of the two works (see s1.3). While it is less able than its free rival to cover every topic and respond as fast to developments, it is much less vulnerable to the charges of bias and amateurism that are leveled at *Wikipedia*. Students can use *EBO* articles with the certainty that the material is reputable and informed and more readily accepted by teachers. The inclusion of more elementary ***Student*** (suitable for lower secondary students) or ***Junior*** (upper primary students) versions provide solid collections of material for younger age groups or those with

lower reading levels. The *EBO* is generally more current than the print sets and includes a significant amount of additional material such as images, video clips, selected magazine articles tailored to reading level, and links to quality websites.

Try a search on:
iceberg
and compare the coverage in the full, *Student* and *Junior* material, then explore the related Web sites, magazine articles and multimedia.

General OneFile

While *EBO* covers well what is expected of a general encyclopedia it does not provide material to a specialist level and can lack currency in some topics. EPIC includes some large, multi-topic databases that can fill these gaps allowing students and others to do research to a broad or high level. EBSCO's *MasterFile Premier* is one such resource - very useful for social and political issues. *General OneFile* (formerly *InfoTrac*) is broader still - millions of articles from popular to the specialist, including current events, economics, education, environmental issues, health, literature and art, science, social issues, sports, technology, and other topical areas. Source material is principally journals, newspapers and newswires most of which are full text, though some of the NZ magazines in particular give only the 'citation', not the full article. NZ titles are being added but overall NZ coverage is still limited.

Try a search for:
hybrid cars and design
and look at the range of material under the *Magazine, Academic* and *News* tabs.

NEWS MEDIA

Australia/New Zealand Reference Centre

Sourcing news media articles for student assignments is a constant and growing need. While many of the EPIC databases include newspaper and current event magazines, *ANZRC* is distinctive for its extensive coverage of NZ media – most major newspapers (except for the ODT) and a range of topical, professional and trade magazines including *Time Sth Pacific, Metro* and *North & South*. While most are full-text some, such as the *NZ Listener*, are citations only. The NZ newspapers are covered for the last 9 -12 years.

Try a search in *ANZRC* for:
ruapehu and lahar
and note how current the articles are, then use the *Sort By* feature (top right) to provide a Relevance ranking.

Other very useful sources of international news media are *Opposing Viewpoints RC* and *General OneFile*.

ARTS & LITERATURE

The arts and literature can be very demanding of library resources and few libraries have the capacity to build really comprehensive print collections. Some of the EPIC databases can provide greatly enriched resources for these areas.

Oxford Art / Oxford Music Online

These two databases are online collections built around the very reputable Grove Art and Grove Music reference works. They a more than this however - *OAO* for instance

includes links to large fine art image banks and museum and gallery sites. The scope of 'art' is wide, covering architecture, landscape design and traditional arts and crafts. There is limited coverage of NZ artists but useful material on Pacific arts. The access to quality images of art works (more reliable than Google Images) is a strength.
OMO's strength is classical music; while sound on jazz it is weaker on popular genres. Content includes biographies, musical history, instruments and links to websites. Quite limited in coverage of NZ music however.
Both databases have 'browse' approaches where you can search for lists of artists or performers under specific movements, genres, or time periods.

Try a search in *Oxford Art Online* for:
dada
to see typical material. Then explore the illustrations through the *Images* tab.

Literature Resource Center

Finding background on authors, plot outlines and critical reviews of novels, plays, poetry etc. has been made easier in part by the mass of free Web information but much of it is very informal and not always acceptable as a supporting credible, cited sources. *LRC* caters well for this need, providing various means of access including searches by content type, genre, themes, author nationality or gender. Reasonably global in coverage, though inconsistent for NZ literature - well established or award winning authors are present but coverage may be incomplete.

Try searching for information on:
Maurice Gee and note what's available under each tab.

Then try a *Title* search for: ***Catch-22***

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ProQuest Science Journals

Smaller libraries cannot afford the luxury of a good collection of quality science journals so *PQSJ* forms a valuable addition to the EPIC suite. There are over 300 titles in full text and another 100 or so with just citations. Some prestigious titles like *Nature* however, have up to a 12 months embargo before full text is provided. *PQSJ* covers a wide range of sci-tech issues from ageing, climate change, GM food or obesity, to environmental impacts and conservation. Articles are sourced from mainstream journals of both popular and research levels. There is reasonable coverage of many issues of NZ concern.

Try a basic search on:
biofuels or ***Kakapo***
and compare the type of coverage under the *Magazines* vs. *Scholarly* tabs.

Other databases with useful sci-tech content include *General OneFile, Opposing Viewpoints* and *MasterFile Premier*.

TOPICAL ISSUES

Students are often required to research and consider a range of perspectives, particularly on topical or contentious issues. One database that caters well for this need is:

Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center

A rich resource for anyone looking for information on topical issues – from drugs in sport, to nutrition, media violence, genetic engineering and a host of other current issues. While it draws mostly on US examples and sources, the arguments and ideas can generally be applied to the NZ context. The source material is from social issue books or encyclopaedias with additional material from magazines, newspapers and selected websites. The *Viewpoints* essays are particularly useful for providing a distinct argument or perspective. Very useful for debaters, students or teachers needing material illustrative of opinion and evidence on major contentious topics.

Try searching for information on:
crime victims or ***global warming***
and note the material available under the various tabs.

Other useful topical resources for younger ages are the *Discovering Collection and Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. The big multi-topic databases, *General OneFile* and *MasterFile Premier* also provide a wealth of material on these sort issues though not organized quite as handily as *OVRC*. *Contemporary Women's Issues* can be a useful source for researchers wanting in-depth material on issues that affect women in today's world.

WEB 'DATABASES'

For contrast a couple of freely available Web 'databases':

Matapihi www.matapihi.org.nz

An online database that searches across significant digital collections held by NZ libraries, archives, museums and galleries such as Alexander Turnbull Library, Auckland Museum, Te Papa and the Film Archive. It provides ready access not only to thousands of pictures, but also sound recordings, movies and historical texts. It covers a wider range of topics but is most useful for national and local history, the natural environment, historical figures and events.

Try browsing through one of the *Showcase* categories such as:
Sporting New Zealand
and note the wide range of material. Click on one of the 'thumbnail' images and view the detail provided. Note also that you can order a copy of the item.

Amazon www.amazon.com

One of the first big online shopping services, Amazon began as an online bookstore but soon branched out to other products like CDs and video games. It is at core a huge database of products with accompanying reader reviews, and of course purchasing information. Many of its features have been copied or taken as a model for more user friendly online services - library users have been known to question why online catalogues can't provide the apparent simplicity and range of features of *Amazon* and similar online bookstores. Can be useful for quick checks on the bibliographical details of books not in library catalogues.

Try searching for:
elizabeth knox
open the first record and note the information and reviews provided.