



# Database Discovery Exercise

Three to four students will be assigned a specific database. The team will have [thirty minutes] to discover the features of the database and learn how to use it. During our class meeting [date], each team will teach the rest of the class how to use its database. Each team's Database Discovery presentation will be evaluated by the team's classmates as well as by the instructor. Your final grade will be [a combination of these grades.]

Each presentation should take approximately [ten to fifteen] minutes. Every team member is required to actively participate in his or her group's presentation. [You may wish to meet with your team outside of class to prepare your presentation and any visual aids or handouts that you will be using.] The Database Discovery worksheet below will guide you in your discovery and help you structure your presentation.

## A SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION WILL:

- ◆ Include information on the database's content, design, time period covered, audience, search capabilities (basic and advanced), and retrieval options.
- ◆ Include demonstrations and discussion of each item listed above and completely address the questions on the Database Discovery worksheet below.
- ◆ Be flexible--you should be able to explain any unexpected search results or problems that might crop up during your presentation and recover from them if they occur. [Include attractive and informative visual aids and handouts.]

**Suggestion:** Find the *help* or *about* or *news* screens for the database. This is where you can find answers to many of the following questions.

## PART ONE: DATABASE DESCRIPTION

*(Spend no more than 5 minutes discovering this information.)*

- ◆ What is the name of your database?
- ◆ What organization is responsible for providing access to the database? (This is often called the "database vendor")
- ◆ What organization is responsible for creating the database? Is this the same or different from the database vendor?

**Hint:** Often a database will be created by a professional association, for example the American Economic Association creates the database **EconLit**. **EconLit** is then offered to subscribers through different vendors, each with its own interface. So a library can subscribe to **EconLit** through the organization OCLC, which calls its search interface FirstSearch. Or it is possible to subscribe to **EconLit** through the company Cambridge Scientific Abstracts. This organization calls its search interface CSA Internet Database Service. Yet another vendor that carries **EconLit** is EBSCO Information Services, through their software named EBSCOhost.

- ◆ Find an overview or explanation of the database. Tell us what the database is all about.
- ◆ What subject areas or disciplines does the database cover?
- ◆ Who do you think would be the most likely users of this database? Think of as many different groups as you can and list them in order of most likely to use. Explain your answer.