

STN SEARCHING TIPS

General

STN academic accounts are available during the following time periods (all times given in U.S. Eastern Time and military time):

- 01:00 Sunday --> 05:00 Monday
- 17:00 --> 05:00 the following day - Mondays-Fridays
- 17:00 Friday --> 22:00 Saturday

Charges are generated in three ways:

- Hourly connect charges
- Search terms
- Display hits

The best way to minimize charges is to have a well-conceived plan before you log on (see below). However, there are some additional tips to avoid unnecessary charges:

- If you need to regroup, either use “log h”, which logs you off, but holds the session for an hour, or park in a charge-free zone by entering “file stnguide”.
- To see if a search term is valid, use the expand function (“e”). This returns your term as E3, with variations before and after. To generate a hit list, you still have to search, for example:

=> s E3

- To see if your hit list is what you want before displaying, scan through first, for example:

=> d scan ti

This scans through the titles of your hit list, allowing you to get insight into how best to refine your search.

Strategy

Cast a wide net. Your first goal is to be as comprehensive as possible. There are a few tips to help you in this process:

- Be aware of alternative spellings (colour vs. color; sulphur vs. sulfur; etc.)
- Search for synonyms (synthesis vs. preparation; cyclization vs. ring closure; etc.)
- Use truncation freely (synthe? = synthesis, syntheses, synthetic, etc.)

Make sensible refinements. There are many ways to refine your search. For example:

- By author: s L1 and deckert?/au
- Most recent: s L1 and 1998-2002/py
- Reviews: s L1 and review/dt
- By exclusion: s L1 not keyword

Again, it is better to map out your strategy before you log on. Sometimes trouble formulating a good literature search term points to a more fundamental issue of project definition.

The Sequence

Log on. To log on, navigate to the Chem 587 web page and click on “STN Online”. Enter your account name and password distributed in Junior Sem. Enter lower case ‘i’ in the Academic Port field. When you get into STN, enter ‘y’ to acknowledge you understand this system is for academic use only. You should then see the command prompt (=>).

To search for a compound. Navigate to the Registry File by typing:

```
=> file reg
```

If you know the CAS registry number (a handy reference is the Aldrich catalog), this is the quickest way to find the compound, for example:

```
=> s 100-01-6/rn
```

If you don’t know the CAS-RN, and if the name is straightforward, you may search this way. Beware that name searches are notoriously tricky. It is usually best to put the name in quotation marks, like so:

```
=> s “4-nitroaniline”/cn
```

A workaround is often to use a molecular formula:

```
=> s C6H12O2/mf
```

Recognize that this usually returns more than one compound. You can then do a “d scan” to find the compound you’re looking for, then do a name search.

Remember that the Registry file only contains compounds—no references. To find literature references, you have to navigate to the Chem Abstracts file:

```
=> file ca
```

You may then refine your search as needed.

To search for references. Navigate to the Chem Abstracts File by typing:

```
=> file ca
```

If you’re looking for references to a compound or compounds found in the Registry File, you must search on that list number in the CA File. For example:

```
=> file reg
registry file entered
=> s 100-01-6/rn
L1      1 100-01-6/rn
=> file ca
chem. abstracts file entered
=> s L1
L2      7342 L1
```

It is important to remember at this point that only an L-number (i.e., L1, L2, L3, etc.) contains any “hits”. Each L-number is only valid in the database in which it was generated. In the example above, L1 was generated in the Registry File. Once we crossed over into the CA File, we had to search L1 to generate L2, an L-number now associated with CA.

Refining the references. Much of the art of literature research is in the selective refinement of a set of references (the so-called “hit list”). There are no fast rules for this process—it simply involves a lot of brain-power and logical thinking. For some tips, please see the Strategy section on the first page. As a general rule, you want to pare your references down to 20 hits or less before you display them. This list should contain as few unwanted hits (i.e., noise) as possible.

Displaying the references. Personal preferences vary, but one efficient way to display a hit list is in the following manner:

=> d L3 cbib abs 1-20

What this is saying is that I want to display (d) the hit list L3 in the compact bibliography format (cbib), and also show the abstract (abs), and I want to show hits 1-20. You will be asked to confirm your intention to display more than one hit. This is a safety measure designed to prevent the unwitting display of thousands of hits (once you say ‘yes’ you’re committed) and racking up quite a bar tab at the Café STN.

Once you display the references, don’t waste your connect charges perusing them online. Log off (log h) & review them, then log back on if necessary. Before you log off, though, it is useful to review your search by displaying the history (= > d his) to make it easier to retrace your steps later.

To finish up. Log off STN by typing the command:

=> log h

This will save your session for an hour, in case you want to do some last-minute refinements. Once you are logged off, you want to save your results. To do so, click on:

Retrieve Transcript

In the lower left quadrant of the web page. The next screen shows a list of your STN sessions, with the most recent on the top of the list (note dates and times of sessions). Under formats, click on:

RTF
EXE

Save the .exe file to an appropriate place (the gator directory, for example). When the file transfer has completed, navigate to the .exe file and double-click on the icon. In a couple of seconds, a new .rtf file should appear in the same folder. This is your transcript, which can now be edited by Microsoft Word.

Your transcript can now be transferred by FTP or e-mail to a secure location. You may want to rename your transcript file to be more descriptive (e.g., coldfusion.doc).

SEARCHING SCI FOR CITATIONS

Once you navigate to the Science Citation Index Site, choose **Full Search**

- Choose **Cited Reference Search**
- Click on the “**list**” link to the right of the **Cited Work** field
- Find the journal of interest; note the exact abbreviation
- Click on **Leave Help**
- Enter the last name of any of the authors, followed by a wild card (*)—do not use commas
- Enter the journal abbreviation exactly as it appeared on the list above—do not use periods
- Enter the year (four digits) the article was published
- Click on **Lookup** (do not hit “Enter”)
- A list will appear with all papers that match the criteria you entered. If the list is too large, try to refine it—this is usually accomplished by including the first letter of the first name of the author, or by using one of the authors with a less common name. Also note that the list will include citations that are the result of typographical errors (for example, p. 2692 instead of p. 2962)—you should include these.
- Put a check mark next to the correct article(s)
- Click on **Search**
- A list will appear with all papers that cite the journal article you entered. Clicking on the link will provide an abstract of the paper, and all bibliographic data.