

## What is a library database?

I got my first uni assignment, and my lecturer told me to look at the library database for journal articles. I was like, **what's that?** But when I got to the university library, the librarian explained it to me.

She said: "First you have to get your head around what an academic journal is. These are not your dear diary journals, right. Academic journals are a collection of articles written by experts in an academic discipline; they are usually reviewed by other academics in the field, who have said it is:

- original
- important
- and of a high standard.

This means that if you use them, you are likely to get better marks than if you use Wikipedia or a random website you found on Google. In the past, journals were always printed, articles were written and collected in journals, which were published at regular intervals. Libraries collected these and filled lots of shelves with them. Then the Internet came along and changed the way journals were produced. At present, they are more often found online as e-journals.

Online e-journals are found online organised in library databases. A library database is like a bucket: each holds a collection of e-journals. Some databases hold heaps of journals in them, while others don't have that many. The university library subscribes to databases that focus on relevant subjects for its students and researchers. No single database will have all the information you need, so you need to find out which ones are best for what you're researching.

The library has subject guides that show you which databases are best for your area. It's so much easier to find information when you know where to look and why!