



EBSCO

What does **access** mean in your library?

*How better access is
key to finding and using
trusted information*

What do we mean when we talk about access?



**Is it access to
library resources?**



**Access to the
full text within?**



**Access to more
information?**



**Or access
for all?**

In practice, each of these shapes the research journey. This guide explores four key areas where libraries can open doors that help people move toward the information they need.



Unlocking better access to resources

Can every user find the right starting point?

Content only creates value when people can reach it. Your library can license the best resources and still lose users at the point of need. When collections are spread across multiple platforms or searches return imprecise results, trusted content can feel unavailable.

Resource access begins with orientation. Users need to know where to start and which path will take them to the right content.



Research Snapshot

Access friction is measurable.

A 2023 global survey¹ asked academic library users about the barriers they encounter while searching for knowledge.



52%

said needed resources were often or very often spread across many places.

41%

said resources being spread across many places had the greatest negative effect on their work.

30%

are worried that they are unsure how to know resources exist at all.

***Every extra platform
or handoff is a chance
to lose the user.***



How do you ensure better access to resources?

Offer centralized content with a clear doorway.

EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) brings siloed library collections — both print and digital — into one, user-friendly research experience, opening the door to all your library has to offer. Basic and advanced search options support different levels of research confidence, all backed by the most robust subject indexing and rich metadata provided by our strong publisher relationships.

EDS delivers better access with:

- A clear starting point for every user
- More precise retrieval of relevant library resources
- More consistent discovery across collections

Learn more about
[EBSCO Discovery Service](#)





Unlocking better access to full text

Does discovery end with an answer?

Broken links, uncertain entitlement and confusing credentials undo the value of discovery.

If users are not easily connected to their final destination, they are more likely to abandon the trip.

A better experience depends on accurate linking, current holdings information and secure access with fewer interruptions.

How do you carve a clear path to full text?

Smoother linking. Automatic updates. One secure login.

Full Text Finder (included with EDS) connects users with your library's available content through an integrated knowledge base, link resolver, holdings management tools and Publication Finder. Automatic knowledge base updates help maintain accurate links while reducing manual work for library staff.

[Explore Full Text Finder](#)

OpenAthens Compass provides secure single sign-on access to eligible e-resources, whether users are in the library, at home or on the go. Federated authentication and managed proxy capabilities consolidate the access journey into a familiar, low-maintenance workflow across resources.

[Explore OpenAthens Compass](#)



Better access to full text delivers:

- More use from licensed collections
- Fewer confusing link menus and retries
- Less manual holdings and linking work



Unlocking better access to more information

Can users go beyond?

Exploration is at the heart of research, but disconnected metadata and linguistic knowledge barriers can limit how far users are able to go.

Access to more information does not just mean more noise. It means better routes to relevant content, related concepts and trustworthy context.

Research Snapshot

Experts emphasize the importance of “minding the gap”² between the esoteric terminology often used in library catalogs and the average user’s vocabulary and level of understanding. Repeated trial and error in the search experience for a novice user can lead to learned helplessness and lower confidence in their ability to research and learn³, which in turn can reduce performance and learning outcomes⁴.

We can combat this by connecting related terminology at all levels, lowering the barrier to knowledge, and simplifying continued exploration of related resources.



Getting access to more during the search:

Novice-friendly input does not have to mean a generic result set. EBSCO's core search functionality combines subject indexing, field weighting and relevance technology to interpret queries in context and prioritize useful results.

Optional AI-powered features build on this foundation by helping users express unfamiliar concepts, refine searches and identify related questions without replacing the underlying search process.

Learn about these features and more:

[AI at EBSCO](#)



AI-Assisted Search

AI-Assisted Search enables users to search in everyday natural language. It uses AI to rewrite a query into a Boolean-like search with equivalent subject terms, allowing users who may not know the “right” words to discover relevant content.

Suggested Search Queries

Suggested Search Queries present contextually relevant and related follow-up questions as ideas for continued research on a topic's related concepts. AI analyzes the initial query and generates related or refined searches that may be of interest.

Getting access to more after the search:

Linked data helps users move beyond an individual record by revealing relationships among people, publications, topics and institutions. The EBSCO Scholarly Graph connects these scholarly entities and powers features that help researchers evaluate influence, trace ideas and continue exploring related work.



Learn about these features and more:
Linked Data at EBSCO

Citations show where and how often a work has been cited, helping researchers trace its influence and follow the development of a topic.

References display the sources cited within a work, helping researchers identify foundational studies and continue exploring related scholarship.

Retractions flag retracted or corrected works so researchers can identify potential integrity concerns while preserving access to the scholarly record.

People Pages connect and contextualize data about authors and contributors, including their topical expertise, metrics, co-authors and works.

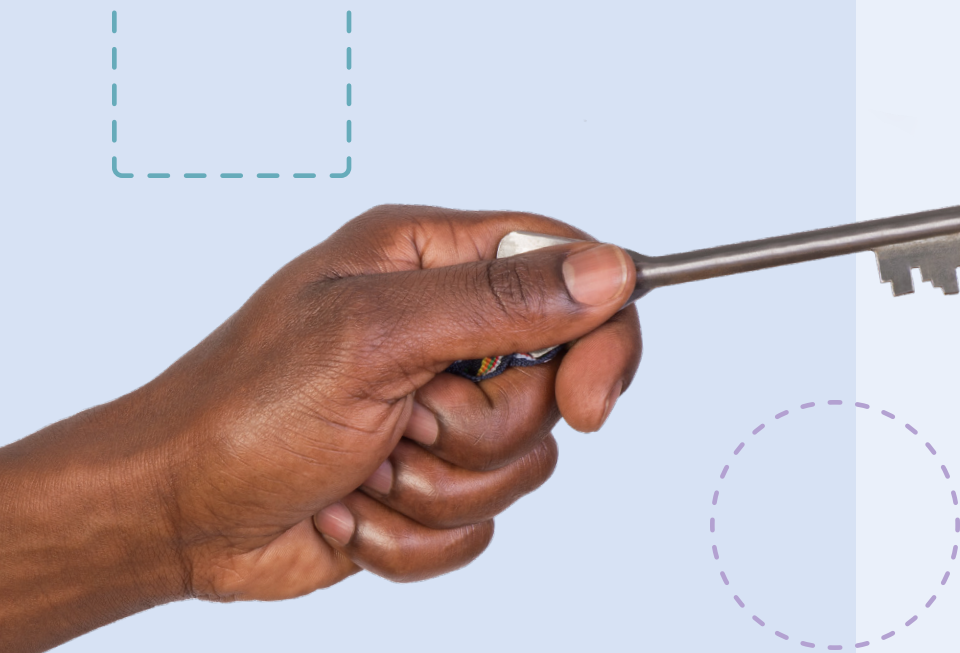


Unlocking better access for all

Can every person complete the same essential research journey?

Differences in ability, language, device, location and research experience can all shape whether someone is able to complete the same tasks as another user.

Access for all means accounting for those differences throughout the research journey. It helps users search, navigate and reach content without creating avoidable barriers.



Designed for everyone, everywhere.

EBSCO supports a range of user needs through adaptable search experiences, multilingual capabilities, responsive design and flexible authentication. Together, these features help libraries provide a more consistent experience across differences.

Different experience levels

EBSCO Discovery Service supports both basic and advanced searching, with configurable discovery options, subject mapping and natural-language pathways that help users begin with the approach that best fits their needs.

Different languages

EBSCO Discovery Service supports interface translation and content searching in more than 55 languages, helping more users begin research and navigate resources in familiar language.

Different devices and locations

Responsive design supports screens of different sizes, while flexible authentication options — including OpenAthens single sign-on — help users reach eligible resources wherever they are.

Accessibility is central to the product lifecycle.

EBSCO designs, builds and tests against WCAG 2.2 AA and relevant EU standards, commissions third-party audits, tests with screen readers and works with people with disabilities.

Accessibility is not a one-time certification. Interfaces that appear simple can still create barriers when they do not account for assistive technologies, language differences, device limitations or different levels of research experience. Representative testing and ongoing remediation help keep accessibility central as products evolve.

Learn more:

[Accessibility at EBSCO](#)



Ensuring access for all delivers:

- A clear starting point for every user
- More precise retrieval of relevant library resources
- More consistent discovery across collections

Inclusive access is both a library value and a measure of service quality.



The Connected Outcome

A strong access strategy connects every stage of the research journey. Users can enter securely, search confidently, reach full text and continue exploring through a consistent experience.

Enter

Find

Open

Explore

Your collection is only as valuable as the experience that connects people to it. EBSCO brings discovery, authentication, full-text access, and accessibility into a more seamless library experience.

Explore how EBSCO can help strengthen access across your library.



Sources:

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