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Peer reviewed

Resource Reviews

EBSCO Interface Change Up

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Cost: Per institution

Introduction

The summer of 2025 will include a change up of the EBSCO interface for many academic libraries. This article will describe many of the changes and the ‘new normal’ user interface (UI) for searching the extensive EBSCO offerings.

In order to ready our communities, some libraries have already created updated videos for their students, like this [upbeat review from Phillips Library](#) at Aurora University. The vendor’s “[Introduction to the New EBSCO-host - Tutorial](#)” states that the “interface features many

improvements including personalized dashboards, modern results lists, enhanced displays, greater citing and sharing options, and enhanced detailed record and viewer experiences.” Let’s take a look at these enhancements.

Advanced Search Screen

The search screens for both the basic and advanced search layout of the new EBSCO user interface (UI) introduce a ‘dashboard’ on the left hand side. This expandable listing includes:

- Projects (using MyEBSCO accounts)
- Saved (Folder per session or account)
- Recent Activity (Search History renamed)
- Holds & Checkouts (integrating eBook access)
- Alerts (RSS feeds)

Below the dashboard is a second section for Research Tools which features a quick link to start a New Search and the Help link which opens up [EBSCO Connect](#) in a new tab.

A twist on the new interface is the intention to link article research and borrowed eBooks access on the same platform. In the testing environment, I was able to create a MyEBSCO account that worked for both interfaces and checked out a book that is reflected under the new Holds and Checkouts feature. A single account which

consolidates EBSCO eBooks may take some getting used to for users although at first glance it seems to accommodate all saved material well for each user account.

Some evidence synthesis librarians might be worried and wondering where the PICO search has gone within the new UI. The trade off seems to include the [option to bulk download](#) up to 25,000 results, inciting a smile and a worry-free happy dance.

Comparing User Interfaces

Most items found on the classic interface in the top header or throughout the advanced search page have rotated to a new position. Please find the corresponding numbers in the older 'classic' interface (Figure 1) and the new UI (Figure 2) relocated positions.

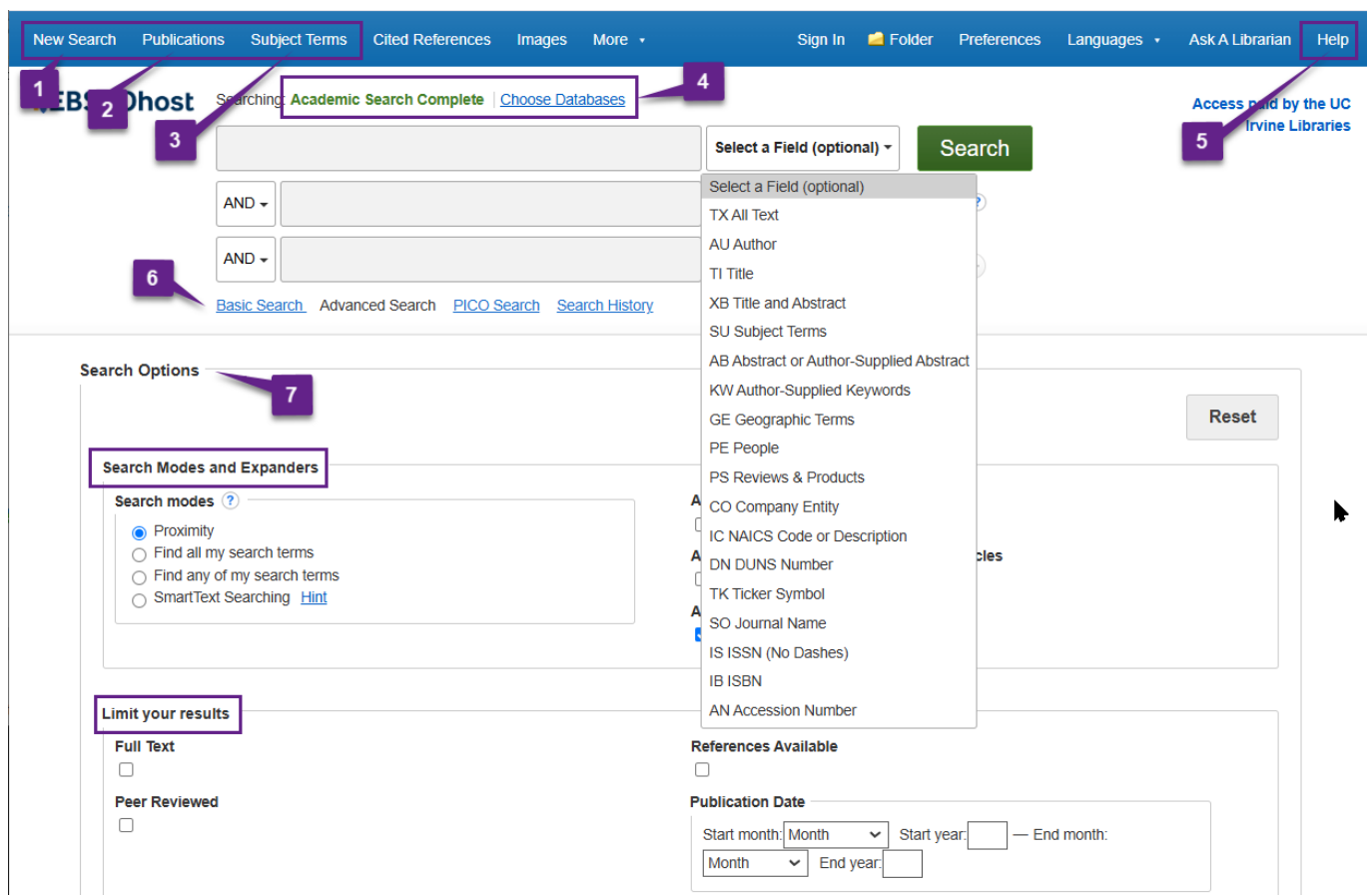


Figure 1: Advanced search screen of the classic EBSCO interface with numbered areas

1. New Search quick link
2. Publications has moved to the tabbed area
3. Subject Terms are now Subjects in the tabbed area
4. Selecting the database link will bring you to the list to edit the database selection
5. Help has moved to the left column
6. Search mode: Basic and Advanced search have moved above the search boxes
7. Search options are now spread across a tabbed display on the Advanced search page, notably missing on the new UI Basic search page. The discussion continues below on detailed changes to Search option filters.

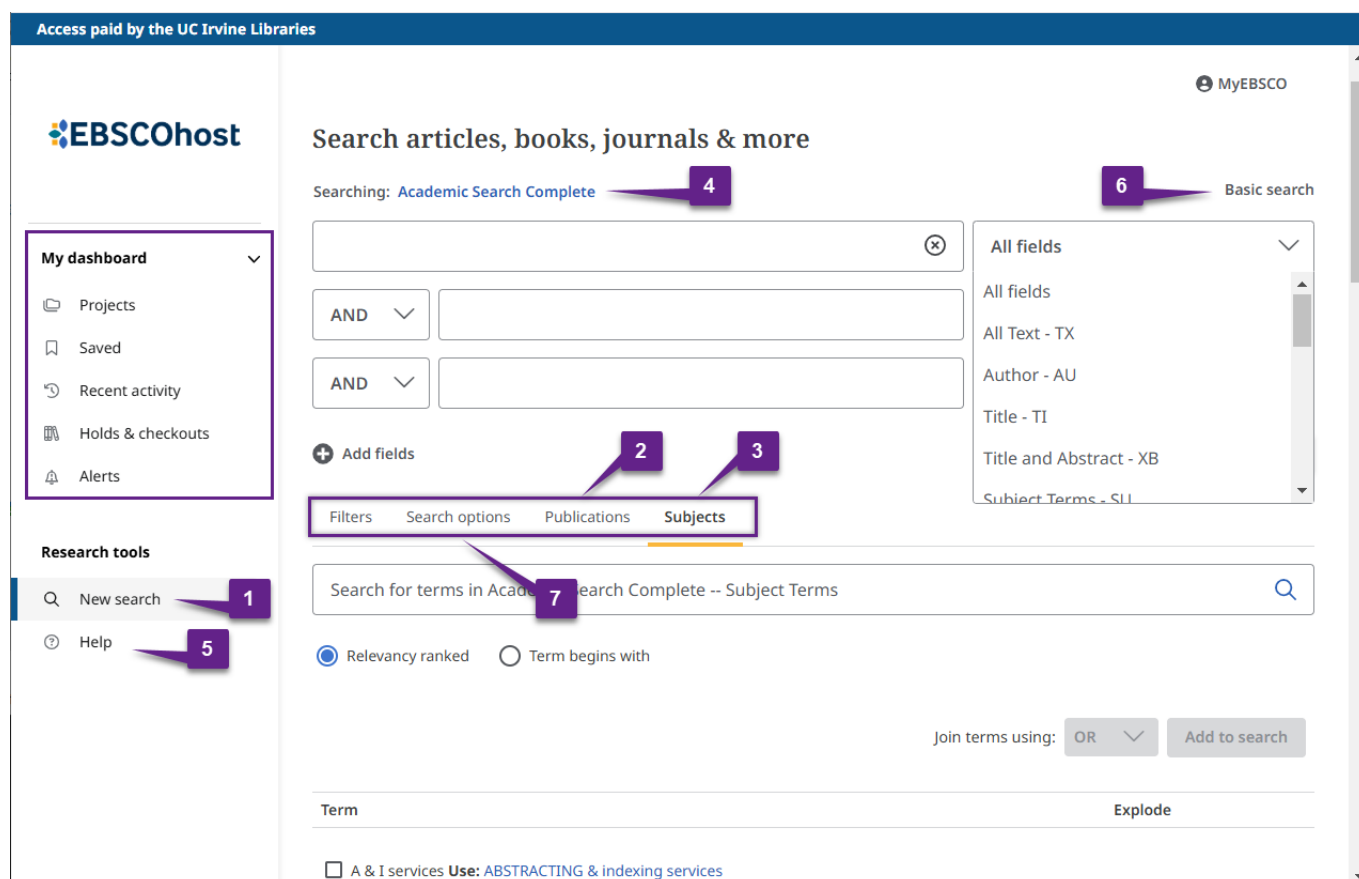


Figure 2: Advanced search screen of the new EBSCO interface with numbered areas

Filters

Initial Filters are listed in a single vertical list among several tabs beneath the search boxes. When multiple databases are selected, additional search filters are listed below each database name, such as Publication Type, Document Type, Language, ISSN, Subject, etc. depending on the databases in use.

The “Search options” tab includes the same Search modes and Expanders on how you want the database to search for your terms.

The “Publications” tab is the search for publications function, which has moved off the main header to this section in Advanced search. Users can still search directly for publications alphabetically, matching words, or by subject and description.

The “Subjects” tab has also moved down from the main header to Advanced search. Users can still search per database when using multiple databases. The “Term begins with” and “Relevancy ranked” remain, whereas “Term Contains” is no longer available.

Search Results Page

When I first used the new interface, a pop-up window appeared with a message prompting me to check a box for access to more options. The pop-up window (Figure 3) includes instructions on expanding a small menu bar to bulk cite or save the list of results. This initial pop-up option is not intuitive, as the pop-up window does not reappear with the message again. As a result, users may find it confusing, are likely to dismiss the pop-up at first glance, and not remember how to get back those features without a static information button.

The next section explores visual updates found on the search results page of the new UI (Figure 4). The image and the following list offer key insights on how to navigate these changes.

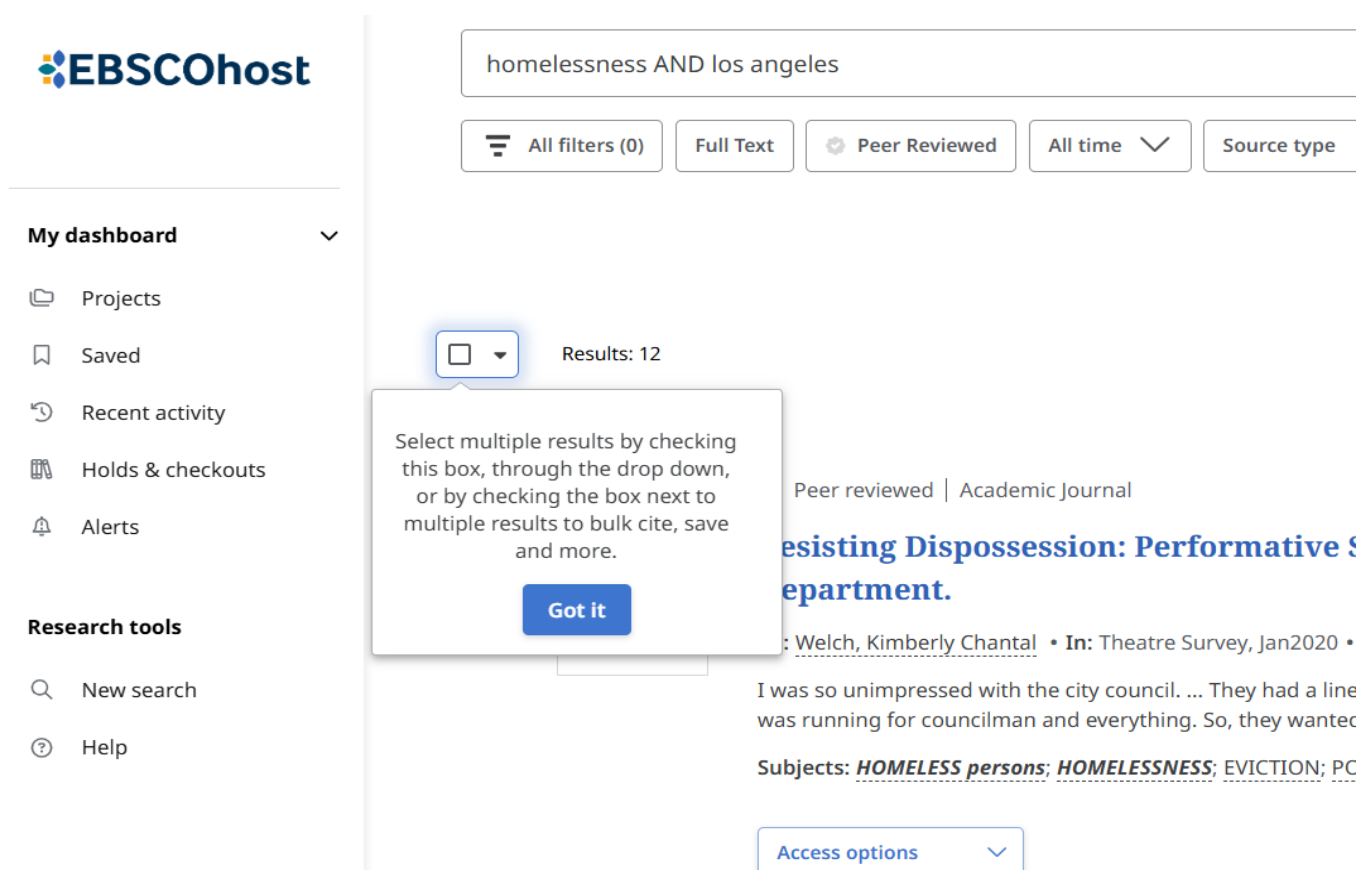


Figure 3: Pop-up on search results page

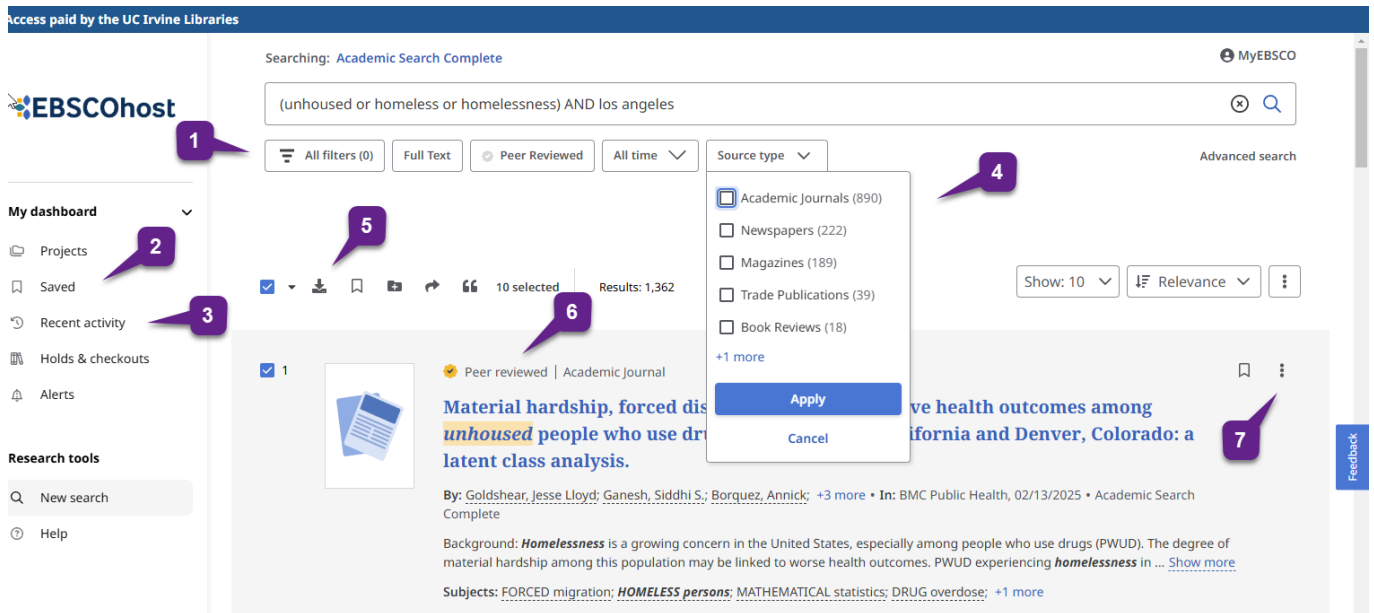


Figure 4: Search results page of the new interface with numbered areas

1. To access and apply filters, the user must click on “All filters,” which opens a pop-up window on the right side of the screen. This differs from the classic interface where the many options were visible and easily accessible on the left side of the screen.
2. In the new UI, users must create an account to save their results or specific entries. During a session, saved entries will appear in the “Saved” section of the new dashboard. To keep saved items beyond a single session, users are encouraged to sign in. Once signed in, they can also organize their saved items in the “Projects” folder for continued access and management.
3. Users must click on “Recent activity” to view or access past search histories. In contrast, the classic interface displayed this option prominently, allowing users to easily toggle between search histories.
4. The option to search by “Source type” has been made more prominent in the new interface, as it is now positioned directly beneath the search box. This is a change from the classic interface, where users had to navigate to the filters section and scroll to the “Source type” option to select specific sources for their search.
5. As previously noted, the small toolbar above the search results becomes visible in the top-left corner only when the box is checked or when the user selects an article. Selecting the checkbox allows the icons for bulk citation, saving, and sharing to appear, enabling these functions for use on the search results page.
6. In the new interface, the resource record label, in this example “Peer reviewed,” has been reduced in size and relocated from its previous position beneath the resource image. This change has altered its visibility and utility compared to the former layout, where the label was more prominently displayed under the record’s visual icon.
7. To utilize functions such as sharing, downloading, citing, and saving, users need to locate and click the three-dot menu icon on the right side of each resource record. A pop-up window will appear, displaying various options, where users can select the desired action (Cite, Add to project, Share, or Download) for the specific resource. Of course, this process centralizes multiple resource management features within a single, accessible menu for each individual item in the search results, but it is not intuitive. This design is not user friendly and may potentially cause confusion or difficulty for those attempting to utilize these functions.

Entry Page

On to the detailed record pages to examine the changes to the layout (Figure 5). In order to access additional information about the journal or authors, users can scroll down the page to find familiar, hyperlinked details. This differs from the classic interface, where the metadata was positioned at the top, with journal titles and author names readily accessible via hyperlinks. Additionally, the new UI increased the white space which makes the scrolling experience feel endless.

1. Looking at the detailed record, the citing, sharing, and saving tools are now consolidated into a streamlined, compact menu bar located on the right-hand side of the resource record, which facilitates smoother navigation.
2. If a user wants to view more information about the author, they need to scroll down to see the hyperlinked author name. If multiple authors are listed, selecting more will jump the user to additional details, including hyperlinked information about the publishers and journal name.
3. Access options and download availability are prominently positioned at the center, below the record information, allowing users to easily click the dropdown menu and choose how they wish to interact with the full text resource
4. The Related items section is a new tabbed feature that displays a list of resources on similar topics. This is valuable insight for users adding a discovery layer relevant to their research.



Figure 5: Detailed record screen on new EBSCO interface with numbered areas

Image Search

The updated interface lacks clear instructions for conducting image-only searches, which were previously available on the classic interface. To initiate an image search (Figure 6), users must select or add the Associated Press Images Collection database from the database list.

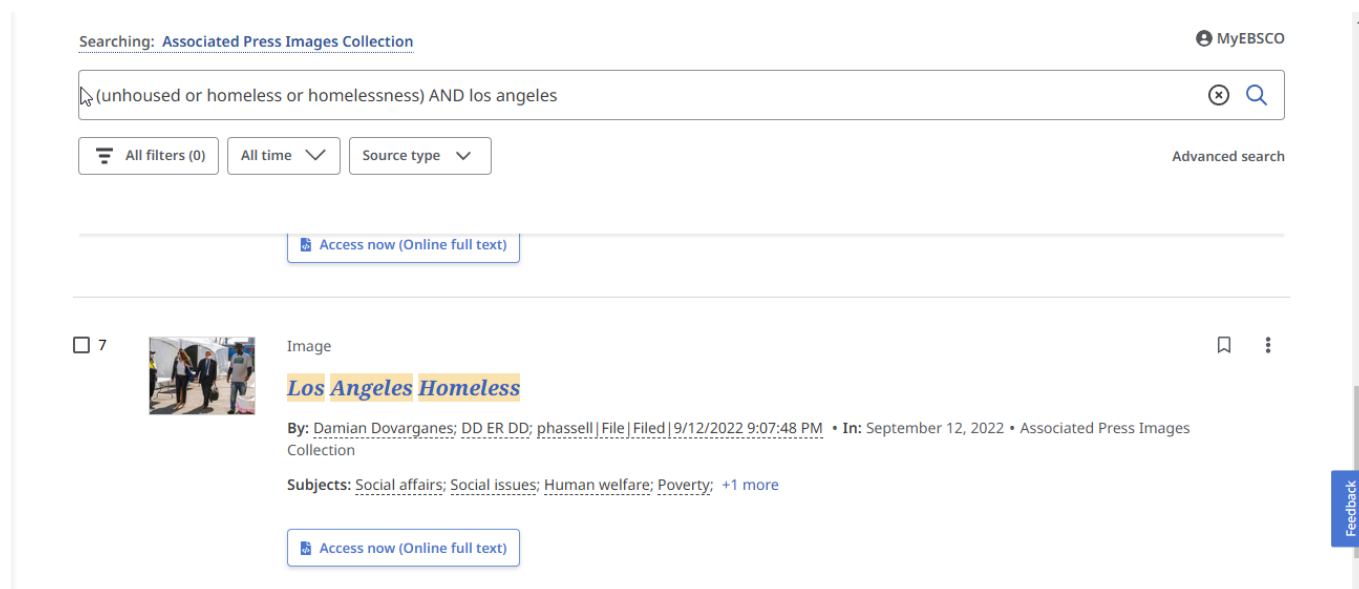


Figure 6: Image search now available via Associated Press Image Collection database

Additionally, accessing multi-modal items in search results requires users to scroll to the bottom of the page, where these items are grouped under a section labeled “More resources.” This layout poses several challenges, reducing the visibility of relevant resources and requiring extra effort to discover them. As a result, users may overlook valuable multi-modal content, potentially hindering their ability to efficiently find and utilize all relevant resources for their research. In contrast, the classic interface immediately displayed multi-modal options within the search results.

Wrap Up

While this review focuses on the visual aspects of the new EBSCO UI, there are likely deeper layers designed to enhance the experience for users, backend administrators, and account holders. Some aspects of the new layout—such as disappearing pop-ups and hover-only descriptions—may be initially confusing as we adjust to the changes. Going forward, librarian feedback is valuable and can help shape future updates and improvements.