As promised, here is a slide, most of which is a screenshot of a Search History in the Ovid interface as we’ve been using throughout.

To see the Search History, which is a list of the searches you’ve done in a particular session, you would normally have to show it. By default, it’s not shown like this, it just has the phrase “Search History” which you click on and you can see where to click, underneath the blue menu which starts on the far left with the words “Search”, “Journals”, “Books” and beneath that you will see a Search History entry. When you click on that, make the arrow turn down, that’s when it will show you all the searches you have done in that particular session. This screenshot was taken when I had done 10 searches as are listed there.

It will usually show you the most recent four searches you have done, so to see beyond, or to see further back, you would click off to the far right where it is circled in yellow and the word “Contract”, the word there would say “Expand” and you would click on that and it would show you all the searches you had done in that particular search session, not just the most recent four.

Of the 10 searches I have done here, the first is an example of the subject heading search.

Sometimes, when you read a systematic review, or some other pieces of work, you might see the search copied out as it would be in the Search History. If it has been an Ovid search and if the word or phrase searched on has a forward slash, like you can see in search one at the top, Intellectual development disorder/, that forward slash indicates this has been a subject heading field search.

So this was the very first search that we did when we looked to see what subject headings might match “intellectual disorders” which is what I had come to psycINFO thinking about. That is why that particular search, search no.1, the subject heading search for Intellectual development disorder, under the “Results” column you can see the number 37,641 which you may remember is the number of psycINFO records Ovid told us would have Intellectual development disorder in their subject headings.

The following two searches, so search 2 and 3, they are of exactly the same phrase but not just looking in the subject heading field.

Search number 2, where it says “.mp =” that means a keyword search and the list of field names/field labels, after that: title, abstract, heading word, table of contents… That tells you what fields have been searched and the heading word field is the subject heading field and therefore for search 2 and all the other keyword searches, that’s searching in the subject heading field and therefore intellectual development disorder as a phrase (as a keyword phrase search), has brought back 38,007. That 38,007 results will include the 37,641 for which intellectual development disorder phrase appears in the subject heading field.
We've taken the tick off against “Map term to subject heading”, done the same phrase, “intellectual development disorder” and still found the words in the subject heading field but also found more results because the search has been in other fields as well.

Search number 3, sometimes when you take exactly the same phrase again, but truncate it, you get more results. It hasn’t been the case in the particular search where I’ve done “intellectual development disorder*” with an asterisk at the end of it, to get any mention where the disorder was singular or plural. Perhaps I could have truncated development as well, that might have made a difference. But, what that [the results of search 3] indicate is that you don’t need to truncate that phrase in the way that I have because there are still 38,007 results which is the same as the search results for number 2.

There are other phrases I have thought of and search 4 is “intellectual disorder” but both words truncated [ie “intellectual* disorder*”] in case someone was intellectually disordered perhaps. As a phrase, there are only 80 results that brings back.

A little later on, in search 8, I’ve thought perhaps I could add “learning disabilities”, perhaps articles written on that topic, or where authors have described it thus, are as useful to me as those which mention intellectual development disorder. Again, I’ve truncated disabilities with a truncation symbol as a phrase search, ie “learning disab*” and it has brought me back, on search 8, 26,449 records.

In the Search History, when you have got some separate searches done, you can put them together.

So if I then want to put together all the different sets which mean the same thing for me, I want to combine together 3, 4 and 8. I don’t mind if a record mentions any one of those phrases, so I would tick where the boxes are beside 3, 4 and 8 and then towards the bottom of the screenshot, circled in yellow, where it says “Combine with: AND OR”, those AND and OR buttons, when you ticked selections from the Search History, they become active, become black, something you can use.

That’s what I’ve done to generate search 9 which is “3 or 4 or 8” and has therefore combined those three sets of results on the same concept together to bring back 62,510 results.

Finally I’ve decided I want to see which of those also mentions recidivism, which is search 6.

Really what I’m doing when I want to look at some mention of intellectual development disorder and recidivism, you can see from search 6 that there are only 8,555 records which have recidivism in their title, abstract, heading word etc and so I can’t get any more than eight and a half thousand when I look for it and something else. Which is what search 10 has done.

So from two really quite large sets of results, because recidivism [search 6] even if it is smaller, with 8,555 compared to intellectual development disorder combined set
of 62,510, those are both still large. But, when I look for a mention of both of those concepts, so “6 AND 9”, it comes down to 112.

This illustrates that you can often think broadly about your separate concepts because even when you put large sets of results together they can often come down quite quickly when you start to combine two or more concepts. So it doesn't hurt to think broadly about a particular topic because even if you get thousands of results for one of your concepts, when you look for it and something else, things will often come down quite a lot, just in terms of the result numbers that you get.

When you leave Ovid (in this particular example) your Search History will clear, so if you come back again, it will have disappeared.

You can save the steps, in this case, the ten steps, for later, if you want to, by using the “Save All” button which is at the bottom of the screenshot, circled in green.

That will take you to a “Personal Account” area of Ovid which you would create like you would for any other website which offers that kind of feature. Then if you wanted to do your search again tomorrow or next week or next month or whenever, you would come back and go to the “View Saved” link which is underlined green, at the bottom of the screenshot, and that would take you to your personal space in Ovid and you would be able to bring up this search and run it again.

What it does though is, it saves the steps, it doesn’t save the actual results that you found when you saved that particular search. So it saves steps 1 to 10 and it will run those steps again in the future when you select them against whatever databases you've chosen in the future and however those databases are then, as well. Therefore, normally, if you were running them on exactly the same databases, you would expect a search to bring back more results than you got when you ran it initially because more records have been added to those databases since you saved your search and it may be that there are more records which match the search that you have run.

So the “Save All” option saves the Search History, the steps you've done, but it is not what you would use to save the actual results that you've found for a particular search. We will talk more about [how to do] that later.