FirstSearch

FirstSearch* contains several databases that are useful for legal research:

- ArticleFirst (abstracts & tables of contents of law journals)
- ECO (Electronic Collections Online)—index of online scholarly articles
- GPO Monthly Catalog (US government documents)
- Legal Periodicals (Index to Legal Periodicals & Books)
- NetFirst (cataloged Internet sites with legal content)
- PAIS (articles & books concerning public affairs & policy issues)
- Periodical Abstracts (from general and academic journals)
- WilsonSelectPlus (business and law article index—some full text)
- WorldCat (catalog of books—more than 40 million records)

*As of this writing, this Web-based licensed database is available to all Michigan libraries via AccessMichigan and a grant administered by the Library of Michigan. Consult a reference librarian to determine if your local library is a registered user, or check https://www.mel.org/accessmich/ to see if you can gain access.

Practice Exercise:

1. Log onto FirstSearch from the database links at the Law Library Home page http://www.law.msu.edu/library; be prepared to enter your MSU Pilot ID and password.
2. Select the Legal Periodicals database
3. Submit a search for "tax policy"
4. You should locate more than 900 records
5. Explore some of the records, noting the descriptors (subject headings) assigned to each. These identifiers or subjects can be subsequently searched.
6. Next try an "Advanced" search (link in the blue toolbar on the left)
7. Change from a keyword search to a descriptor phrase search and submit "tax policy" (see graphic below). Further limits by date, material type and language are possible.
8. By searching the descriptor field instead of merely keyword searching, you will get fewer hits, but they will be more precise. The descriptor links can also be followed from within records.
9. When viewing a record, you may choose to print or email the record for later reference.

10. You may also click on the link “Libraries that Own Item” to determine local holdings.