ISNI Database Organisation Search Guidelines

This document outlines how to systematically locate all records within the ISNI database related to an organisation. For general guidelines on how to use the ISNI search interface, consult ISNI search guidelines here.

1. Looking for an organisation by name

There are two indexes, the name index (NA) and the name word index (NW).

1.1 Name Index (NA)

The NA index is more precise and is useful for finding all names. For example, if you enter

NA: university of warwick or NA: ‘university of warwick’

You will only retrieve the ISNI record for the university and not any of its units.

If you include a truncation mark at the end of the search string using either the * or ? symbols you will retrieve all names commencing with your search string, i.e. all units and subdivisions (as long as they include the parent as the first part of the name).

1.2 Name Word Index (NW)

The NW index is a keyword index and will find all instances of a name with the search word or words anywhere in the name. The NW index is useful for finding names containing uncommon keywords. If two or more words are given for an NW search an implied “and” is assumed and all names containing the words in any sequence and with intervening words will be returned. For example:

NA: University of Warwick 1 hit (precise search)
NA: University of Warwick* 159 hits (all records starting with University of Warwick)
NW: University of Warwick 166 hits (all records containing these name words)

Therefore searches can be tailored, depending on the level of recall and precision required.

2. Additional Search Tips

1.1 Omit legal suffixes

It is recommended to omit legal suffixes such as Inc, GmbH, PLC, Ltd etc. from the search as their use may be inconsistent among ISNI sources. For example:

Brain Products GmbH should have the GmbH replaced by a truncation mark (* or ?) to find all versions of the record. In the name index (NA) if the string is not complete or you suspect that it may not be
complete, it is necessary to include the truncation mark. For example the search string “Brain products” returns no result. In this example, the NA index is the best index to use because the words “brain” and “products” are fairly common so retrieval by the NW index will produce too many hits. Using the NA index, the search string “Brain Products*” will find the name and all other existing instances that also begin with the string in the main name form.

1.2 Finding Departments and sub-divisions

Using truncations marks * or ? after the organisation name will assist with locating any associated departments and subdivisions. For example:

To find the departments within Durham University use the NA index. The string “Durham University” without a truncation mark will find the top level record for the university without any of its departments and subdivisions. “Durham University*” or “Durham University?” will find all records starting with the string, i.e. departments.

1.3 Using quotation marks

If a name contains words common terms such as ‘and’ it is necessary to surround the search phrase with single or double quotation marks to ensure the search is successful. For example:

To locate the Department of Energy and Climate Change use the term “Department of Energy and Climate Change”.

Note when using the SRU search API that only double quotation marks (ASCII 27) should be used. This is because the standard itself allows the optional use of single quotation marks that do not necessarily denote a phrase. For this reason to avoid searching errors the single quotation marks are systematically removed by the API server.

1.4 Example searches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation name</th>
<th>Possible searches</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brain Products GmbH (using the web interface)</td>
<td>NA: brain products*</td>
<td>Efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA: brain products GmbH</td>
<td>Risk of retrieval failure, e.g. for record Brain Products Ltd or for Brain Products GmbH Gilching (location of head office ... as per LC/NACO record)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NW: brain products</td>
<td>May retrieve too many incorrect results because keywords are common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham University</td>
<td>NA: Durham University</td>
<td>Precise search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA: Durham University*</td>
<td>Retrieves c.46 hits for name starting with Durham University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NW: Durham University</td>
<td>Retrieves c.314 hits including University of Durham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of</td>
<td>NA: Department of Energy and Climate Change</td>
<td>No retrieval because string contains AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and Climate Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA: “Department of Energy and Climate Change”</td>
<td>Successful and precise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.5 Data Nuances and Retrieval

ISNI data is derived from many sources and the ways that name forms and coding conventions differ among the sources can affect retrieval. For example:

“Brigham Young University Provo Utah” is an example of an anomaly where the location of the organisation has been appended to the name string and not coded separately.

When anomalies like this occur, NA search without a truncation mark will fail. To ensure all name variants are located, it is recommended to always follow a zero result search by a search with truncation or a search using the NW index.

### References

For more information on using the SRU API, consult ISNI SRU search API guidelines [http://www.isni.org/filedepot_download/139/382](http://www.isni.org/filedepot_download/139/382)

For more information on using ISNI search, consult ISNI search guidelines [http://www.isni.org/filedepot_download/139/383](http://www.isni.org/filedepot_download/139/383)