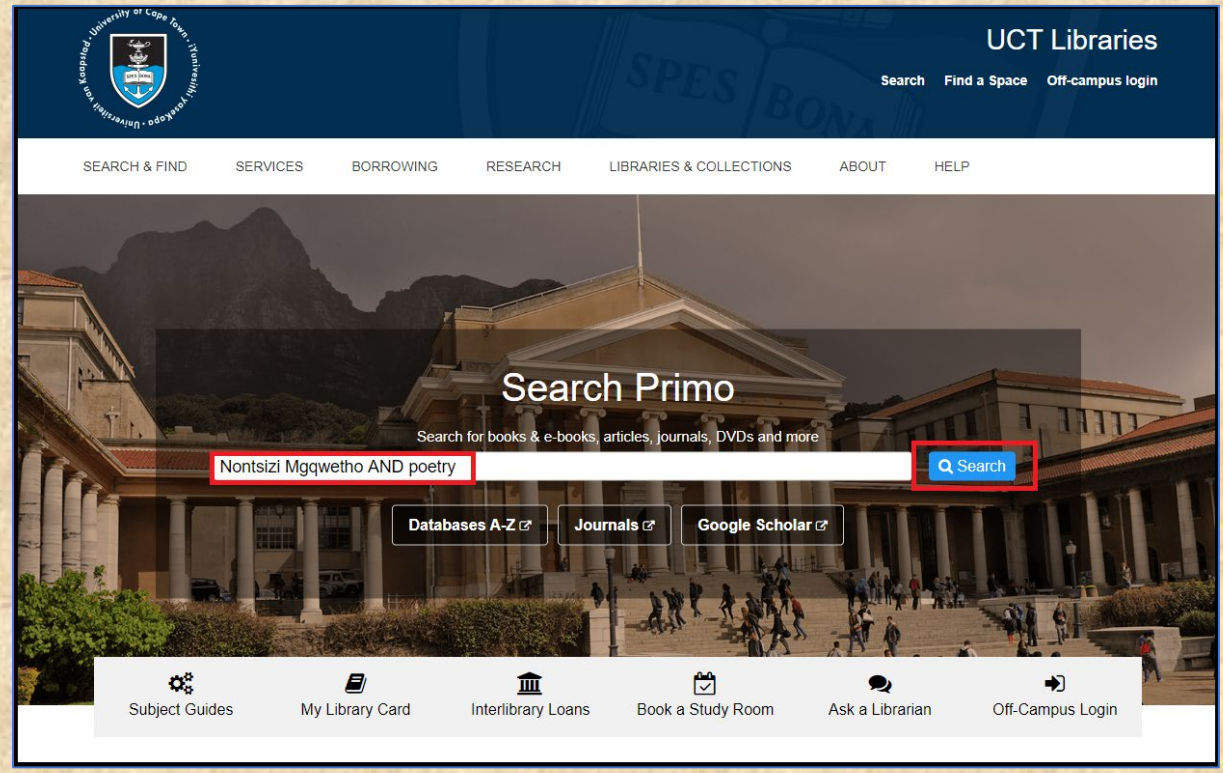
PRIMO: the Basics of finding electronic materials on the UCT Catalogue

PRIMO is a tool for searching across the UCT library book catalogue, including Electronic Books, as well as a selection of our databases of full text journal articles, all with one query.

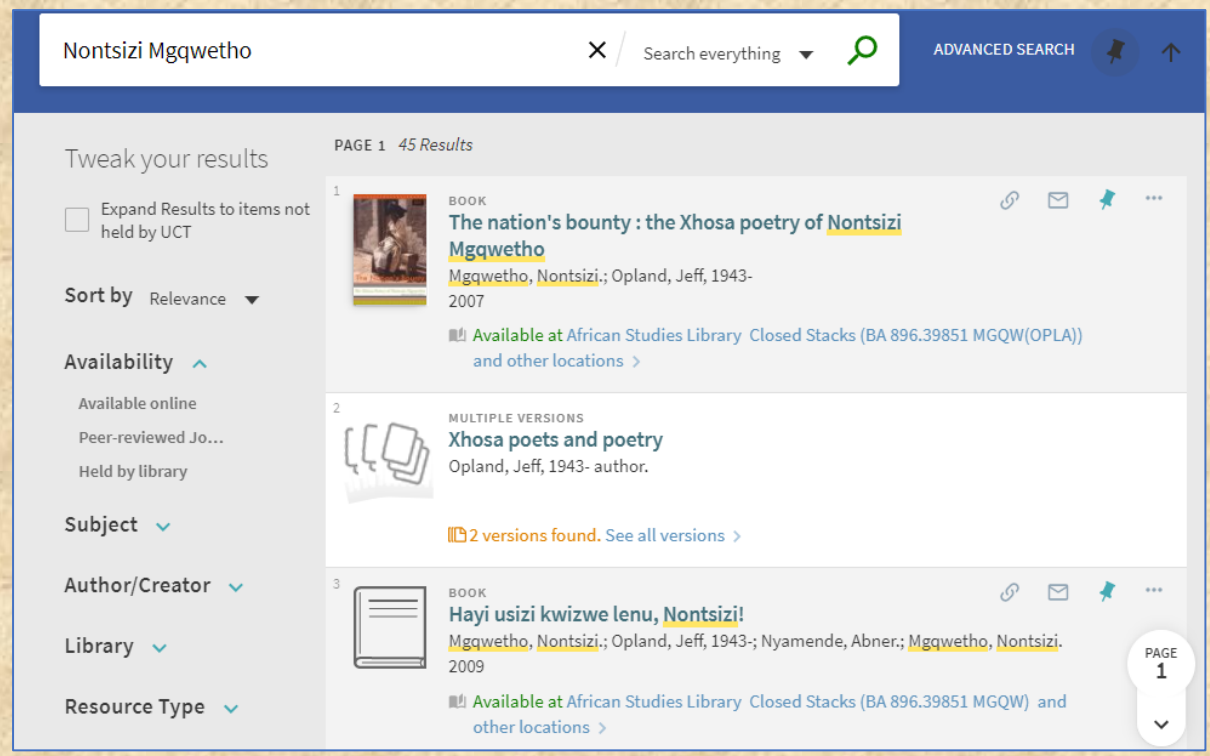
You can find it on the library homepage at www.lib.uct.ac.za

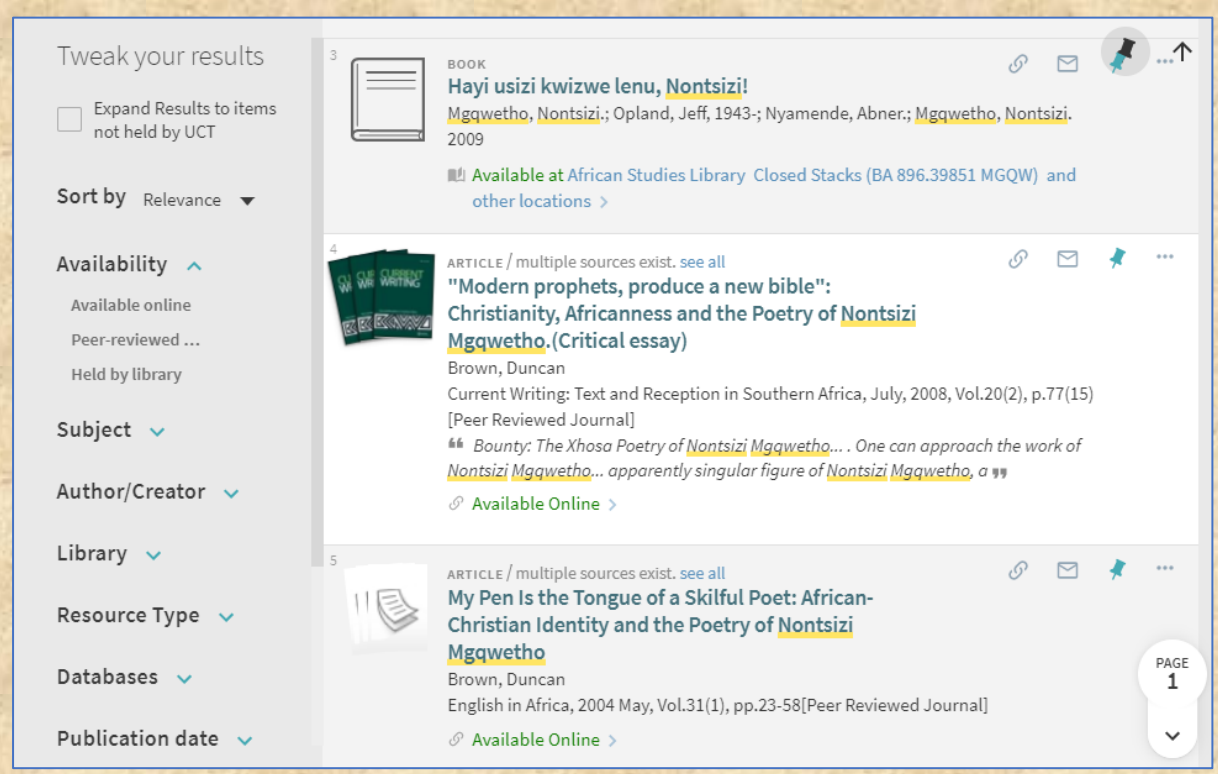


In this example I am going to do a search in my own favourite discipline, the Sociology of Literature – (the study of literature *as a reflection of its society*), and a very nice topic for bridging both the Arts and the Social Sciences it is too.

I am going to look for a particular author – Nontsizi Mgqwetho.

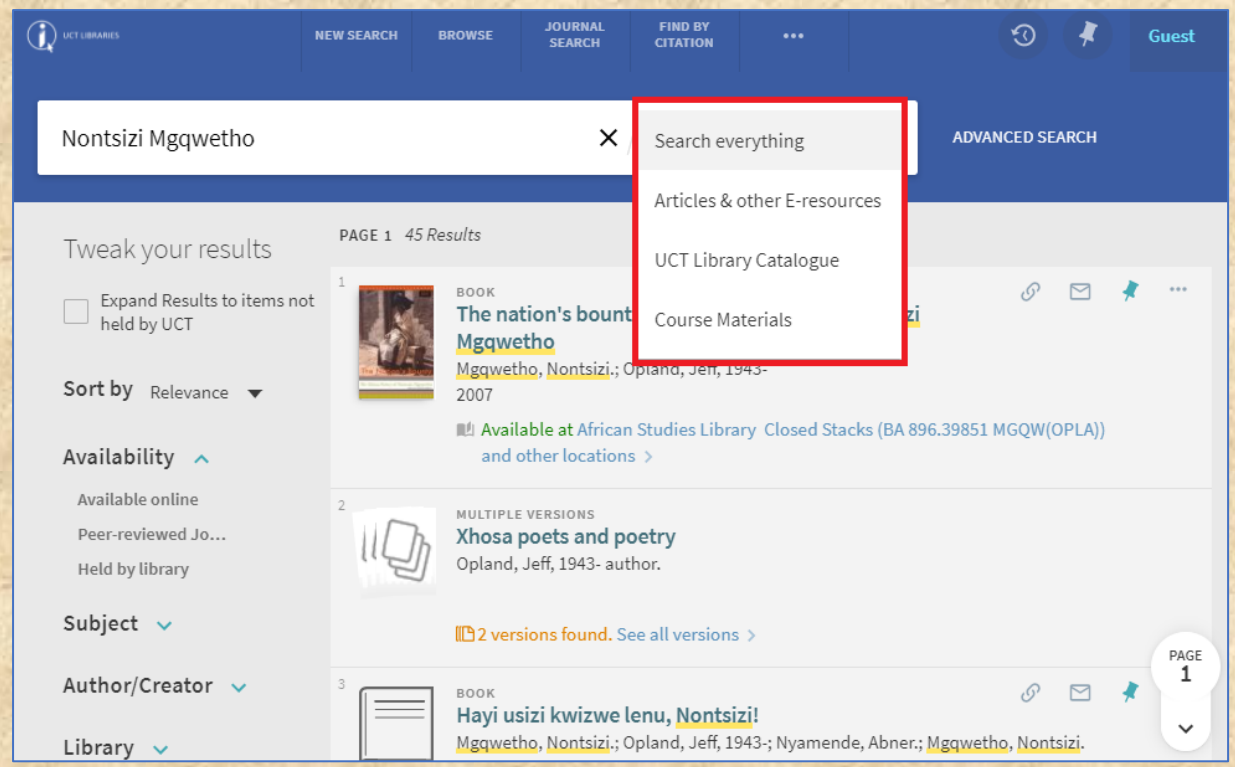
This quick search brings up the physical copies of books that we have of her work, as well as and electronic books and articles *about* her work. ☺



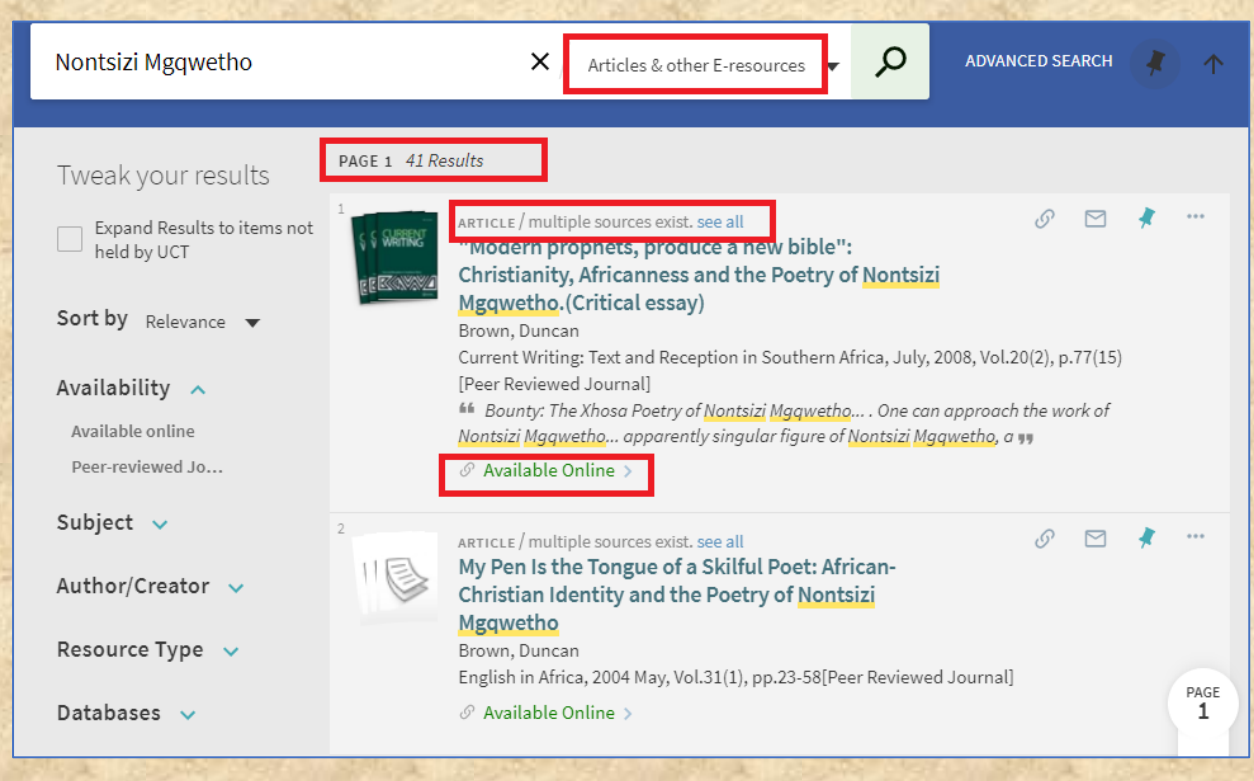


Clicking on the TITLE of the top record takes me to the records for the printed books and gives me the shelf number so I can find them on the shelves: It says the book is available at the African Studies Library and other locations.

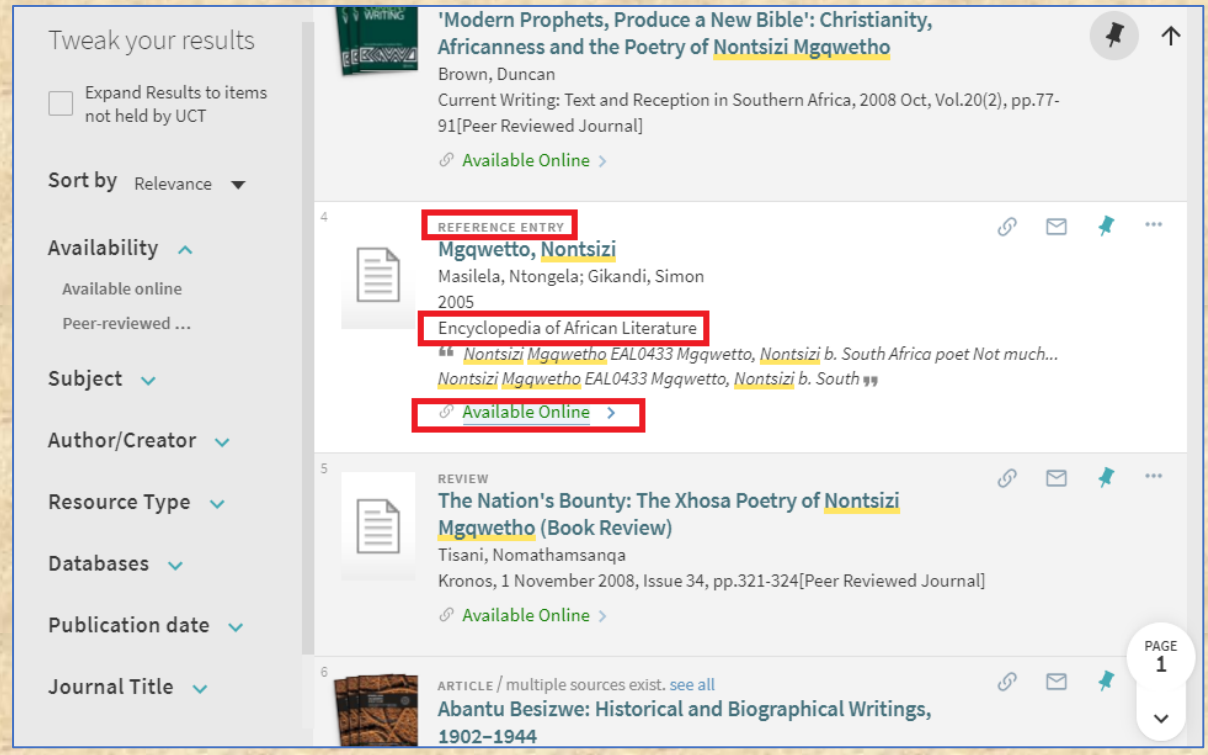
BUT - on the search screen you can use a drop-down arrow to search only for electronic journal articles or electronic books or reference works.



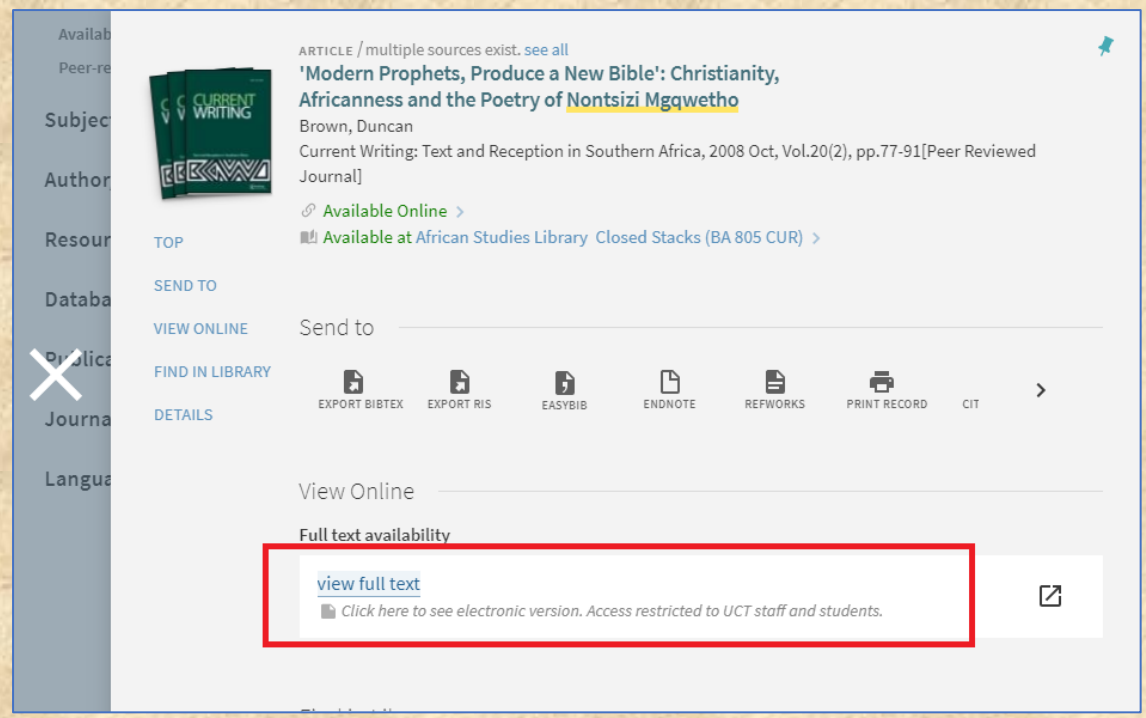
In this example, restricting the search to Articles & other Electronic Resources, the top results are for electronic journal articles…



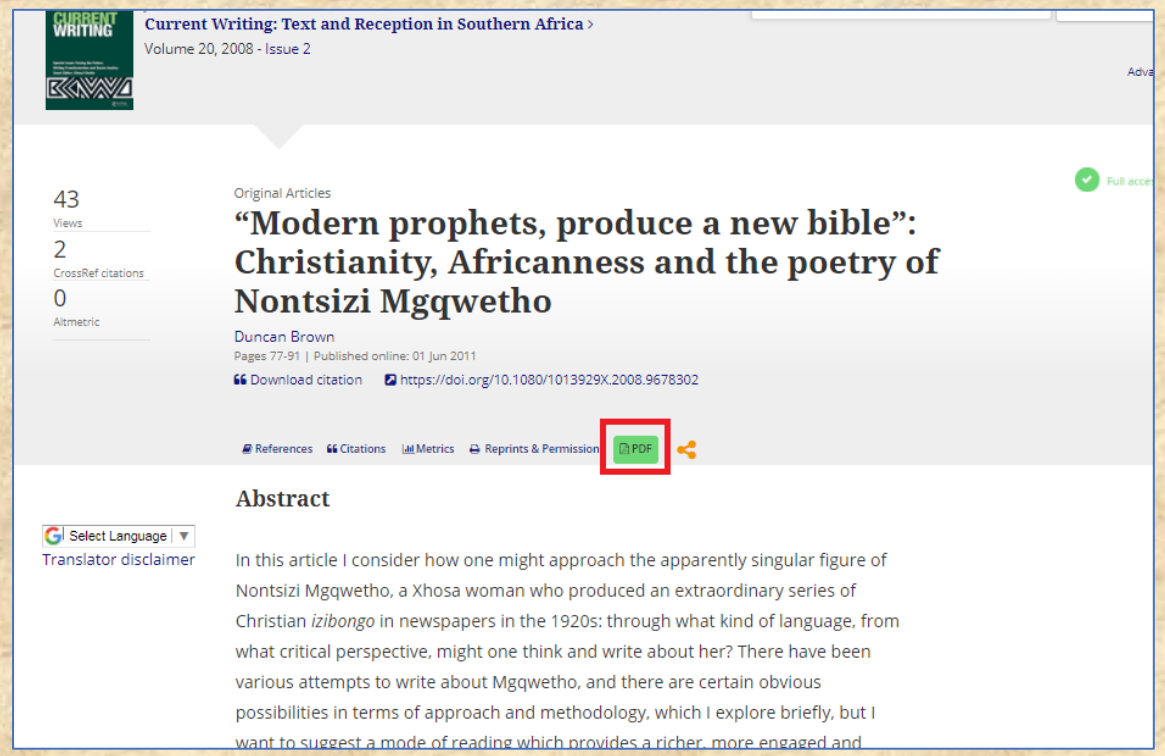
And further down we have an electronic encyclopaedia entry for her, also available online.



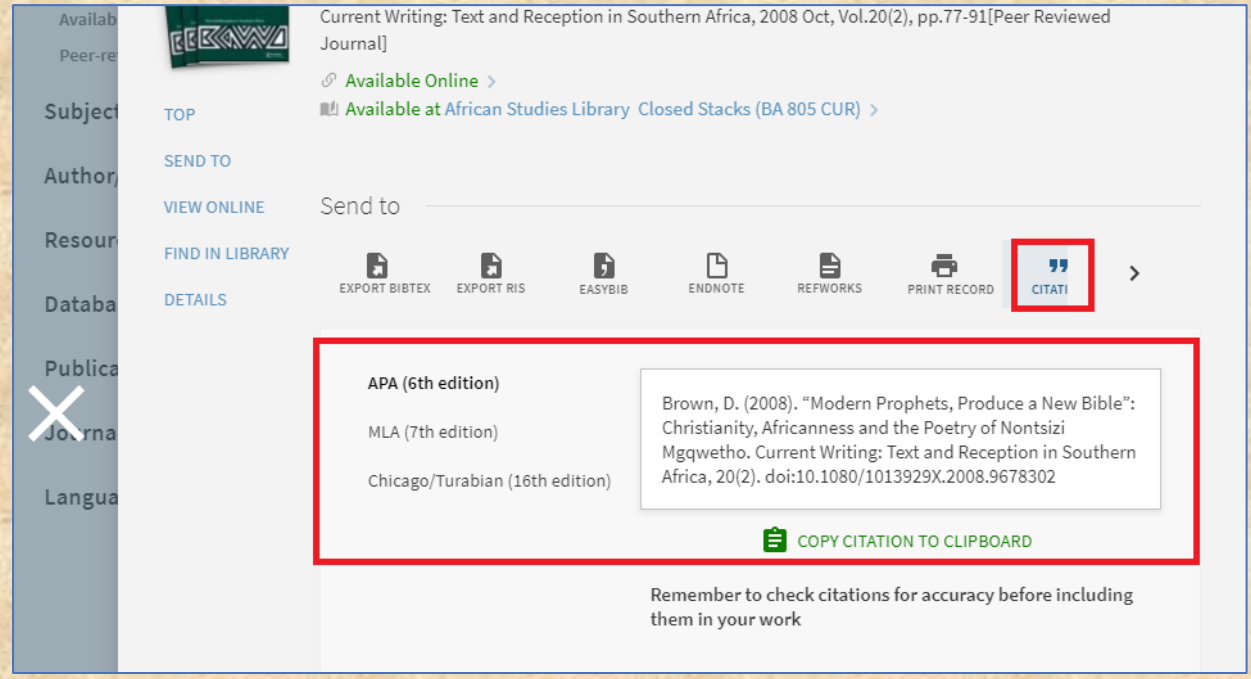
If I click on the title I will be taken to a full record for the article or electronic book, and a link to the database on which it lives:



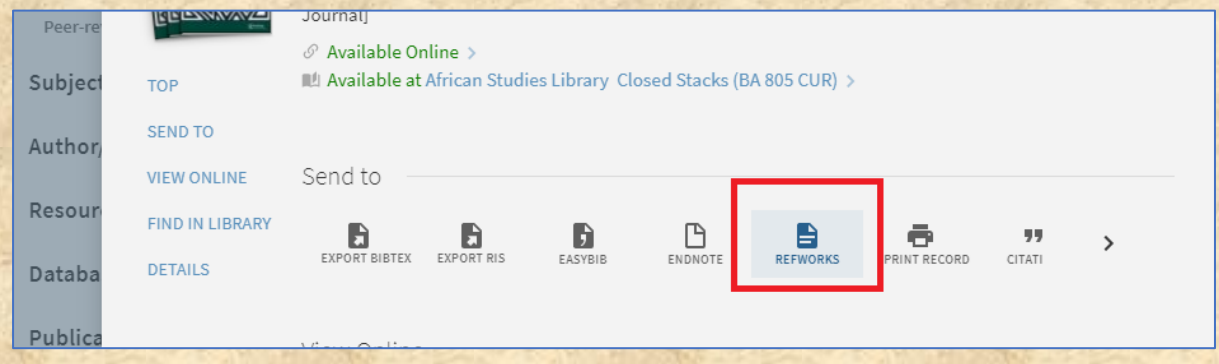
And so to download the article:

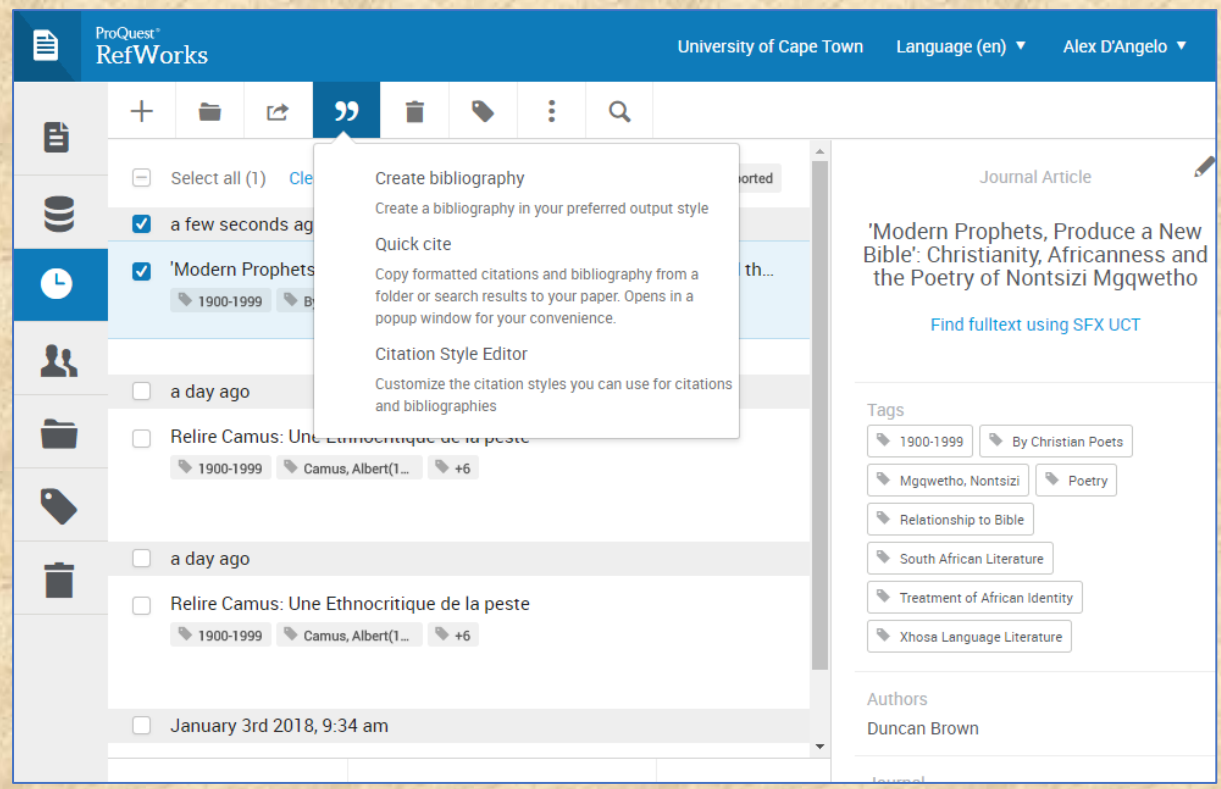


The record also shows me how to cite the book or article – which I will need to do if I am going to use it in an essay:

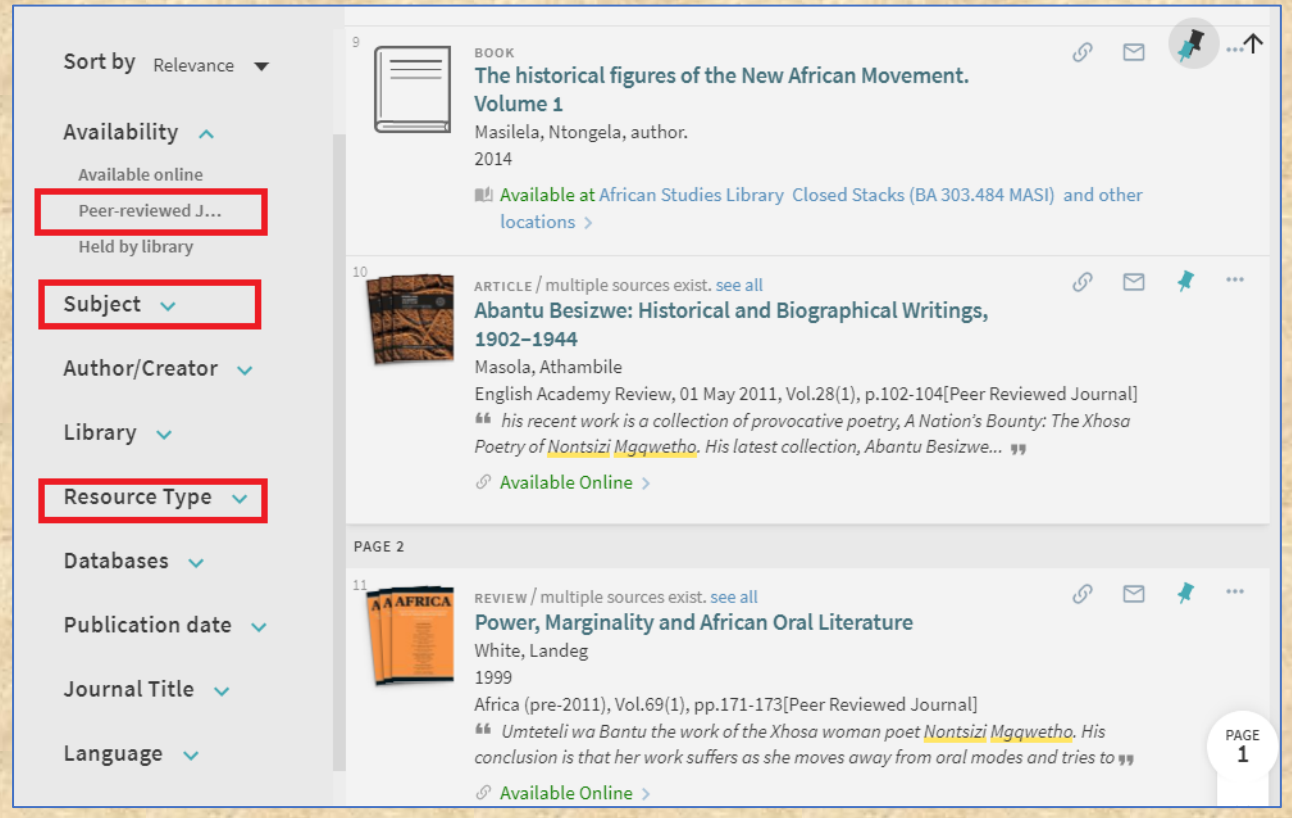


Or, even better, it allows me to send the record to a program like RefWorks or Endnote, which does my citing for me, automatically, at the touch of a button….



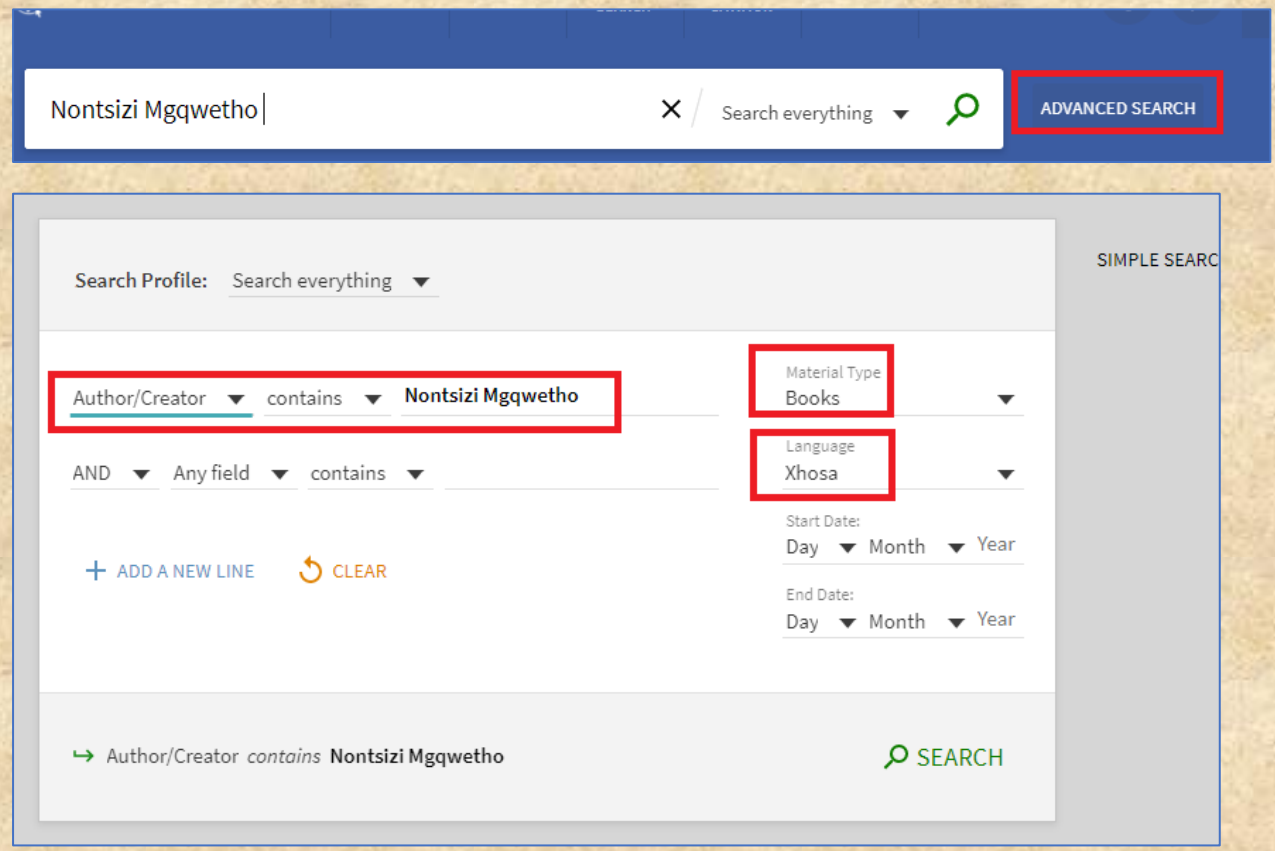


The left-hand side of the screen has all sorts of options for refining or restricting your results:

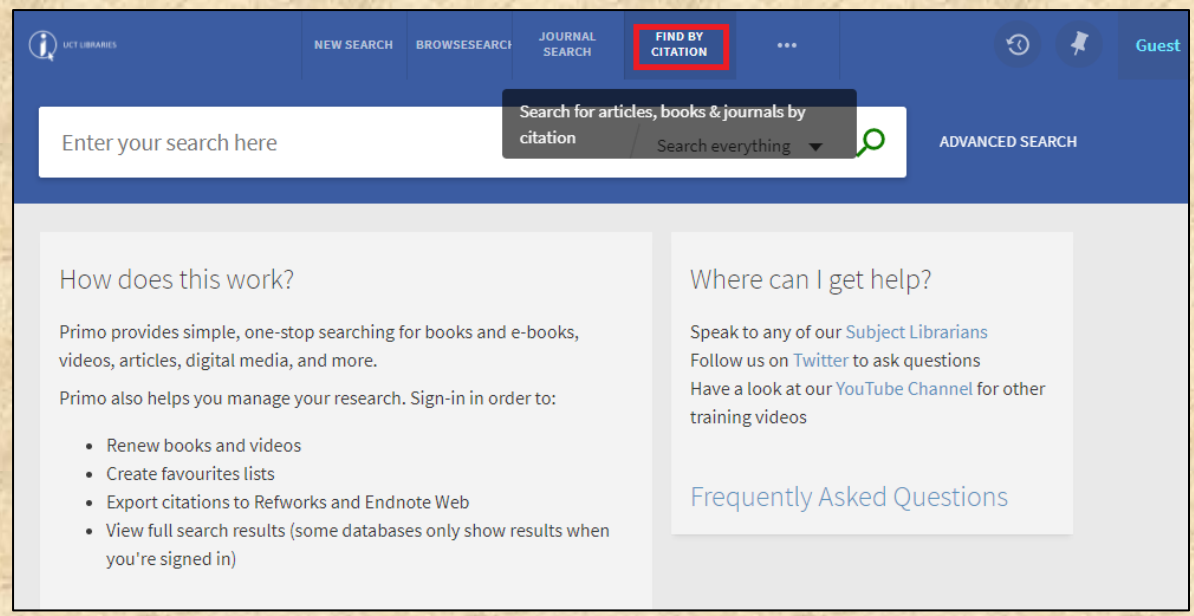


The most useful are probably Peer-reviewed Journals (the most respectable journals, I which every article is vetted by other academics), Subject or Resource type:

If you are getting too many results – and PRIMO can bring up *a lot* of results – you can use an Advanced Search to search more precisely:

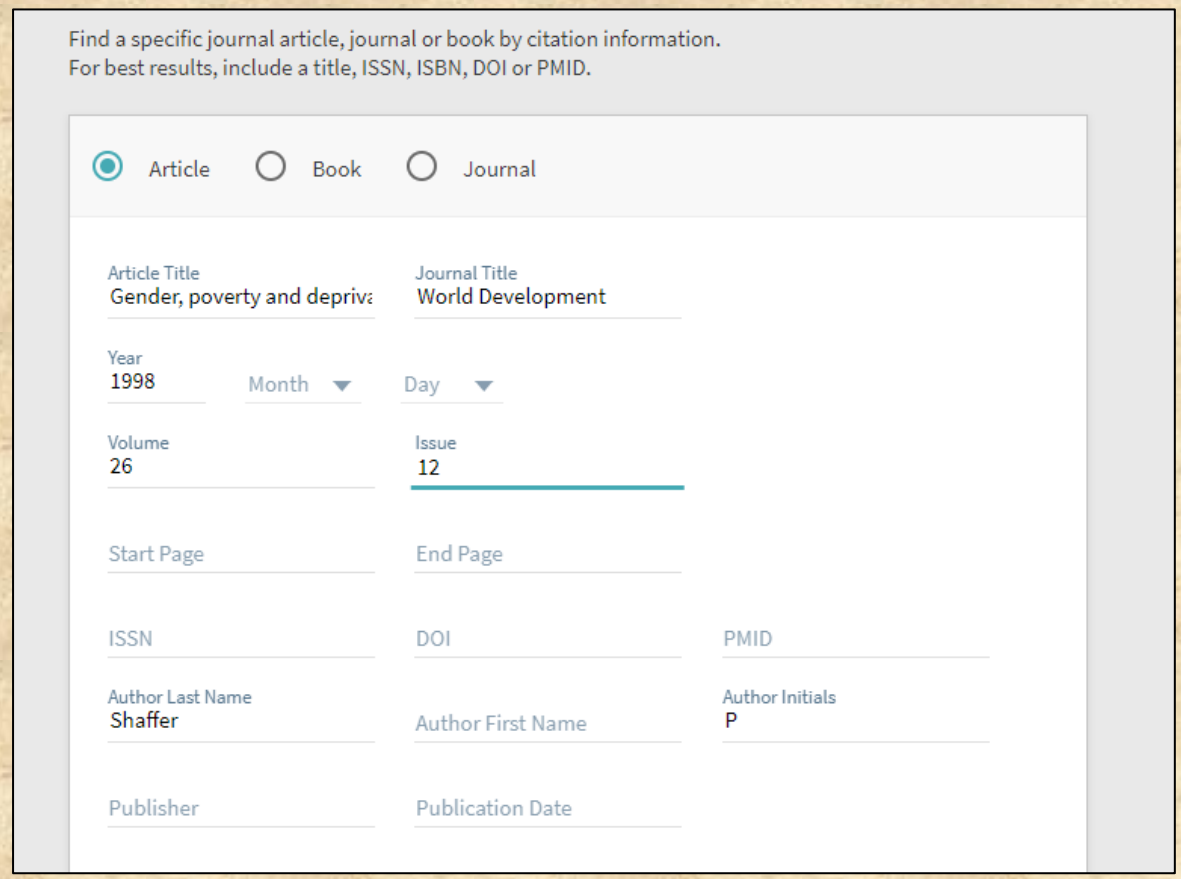


And if you are looking *for a very specific book, journal or article* – for example from a reading list - PRIMO has a *Find By Citation* form which can help you find exactly that reference. I'll use a good social science example here:



Just put in as much information as you have on the reference:

Shaffer, P., 1998. Gender, poverty and deprivation: evidence from the Republic of Guinea. *World Development*, 26(12), pp.2119-2135.



And this will bring it up in both print and electronic versions:

And clicking on the full text or database link will take you to it.

A digression into Boolean Searching

It is possible to create very precise searches just using keywords.

The trick is to combine them with *Boolean Operators*, *wildcards and brackets*. Most of our databases, including our library catalogue, take Boolean operators.

Consider this search string:

(child* OR wom?n OR gender) AND poverty AND Africa* NOT "African American"

The * is a wildcard – it calls up anything that follows the root "child" – so it will being up child and children or childhood……

The ? is a mid-word wildcard – calls up women and woman…

The OR expands you options – women or gender must come up in the results, it doesn't matter which….

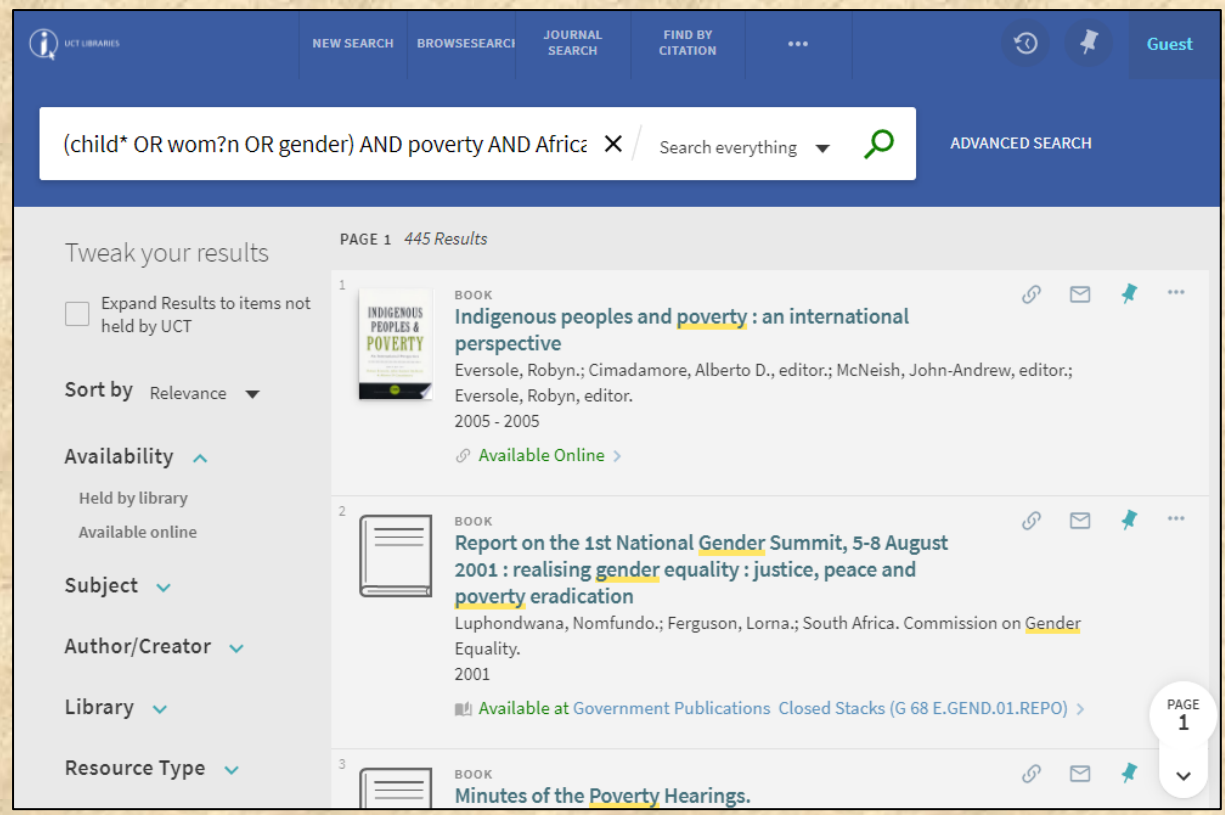
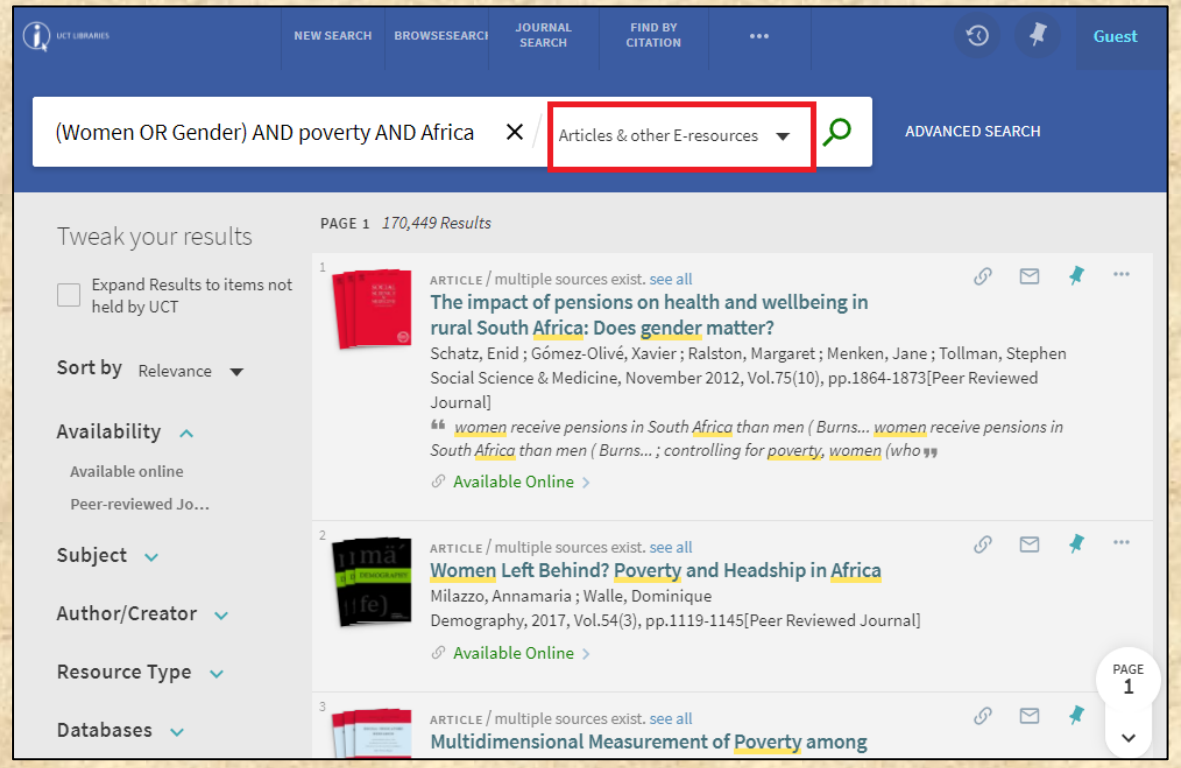
The (brackets) keep the OR words together and relate them to the AND which follows – otherwise the search would call up anything to do with women, regardless of whether it had to do with poverty and Africa….

Any words linked with AND must be included in the search results - OR broadens a search, AND tightens it.

NOT excludes a term. *Be careful of this.* First search without it, to get an idea of what you are missing.

"Inverted commas" enclose a *precise phrase*.

To use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) in PRIMO, you must enter them in CAPITAL LETTERS, otherwise PRIMO ignores them.



Don't forget that you can restrict the search to electronic journal articles or electronic books only, using the drop-down arrow – *useful if you are off-campus*.