

Points to Remember – Research Terminology and Tips

When working on a research project, quality of information is important! Whether your information is from a website, scholarly journal, magazine, newspaper or book, it is important to understand what you are reading.

ONLINE RESEARCH

Most research is completed online. This can be via databases, blogs, and websites. The biggest difference between the three is that databases hold vast amounts of magazine, journal, newspaper and even electronic book information that are housed separately from the general internet blogs and personal/professional web space; much like going to a library and picking up the actual material in person.

Format

Full-Text: An article that has been reproduced for a database e-journal or web page by typing the information in an HTML text format. Any tables or images will be attached via links to the article.

PDF: A PDF formatted article is a digital image of the actual article. All images, tables and text are exactly as they appear in the actual journal/magazine.

Searching

Full-Text Searching: A search in which the database searches the complete text of the articles in the database and not just the title, abstract and subject listing.

What type of article is it?

Scholarly, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed: These articles are from journals that are scholarly in nature. They go through a review process where the article is submitted to the editor, who in turn passes it on to a group of subject experts to read. This group of peers is comprised of people who are highly knowledgeable in the field and are able to objectively read, understand and evaluate the information for facts as well as problems. If the article is proven acceptable, it will be published in the journal at some point in the next six months to a year. If not, it is refused with reasons and the author is notified so that he or she may be able to resubmit with corrections.

NOTE: Magazine articles are generally edited by the magazine editor(s) and the author is paid for his/her submission. Scholarly journals, as a rule, do not pay for author submissions.

What type of publication is it?

Magazine: General interest topics. Material is written on a sixth grade vocabulary level in order to reach the most readers. The advertisements will be on general topics such as clothes, perfume, cars, vacations and more.

Journal: Scholarly in nature, the material is subject specific and research oriented. The vocabulary will be complex and may include "jargon" or terms that are commonly utilized in that field of study. Advertisements are limited to subject specific items such as conferences, books and subscriptions.

Trade Publications: Publications that are generally not research oriented in theme. Titles such as *PC World*, *Opera*, *Police Chief* and *Sky and Telescope* are examples of trade publications.

BOOKS AND RESEARCH

Books are an important part of any research project. They contain supporting research and terminology, commentary and experience, and many other nuggets of information that are very important to having a well rounded research project with a firm base.

Local resources

Your campus library is a valuable resource that can not only provide books but experienced librarians that can help you mold your research to be effective and time efficient. By utilizing the local Online Catalog, you can search for books on your topic as well as books that can provide supporting information on secondary support subjects to your main topic.

Searching

Using the online catalog, you can search with keywords, subjects, titles and authors. All you need is a good idea of what you want to search and time to create a proper search. As with both database and book searching, spelling is key!

Keyword Search – This type of search is most effective for broad searches. It will look through the whole book record of all the books in the library database and the results will be far ranging.

Subject Search – This search will produce fewer results than a keyword search as it only searches the subject field of the book record. It helps to have a better understanding of your topic so that you can use terms that are effective for your subject.

Title Search – This searches the title field of the book record. Title and spelling accuracy are important as misspellings can lead to zero results in online catalogs that do not have smart spelling search ability.

Author Search – If you have names of specific people you would like to include in your research, doing an author search will produce books by the author and not about the author. By entering in the author's last name first, then a comma and the first name, you will receive any book titles your local library has by that author.

NOTE: If you want books about the author, then you would need to use the subject search.

One book can produce several!

Some smaller libraries may not have enough "book" resources but one is a good start. Check the bibliography of the book. Another resource within a book is to look in the Table of Contents or the Index of books that are similar to your topic. Sometimes they may have a chapter or more on what you are researching within the broader scope of the book.

Are there titles that will help support your topic but aren't at your library? Use the library's **Interlibrary Loan** to order the book(s) from other libraries. Generally this is a free service but it does require some time management. Place your request early in your research process to allow time for the books to arrive.

Did you search for books online via WorldCat or book vendors such as Amazon or Barnes and Noble? Interlibrary Loan can search other institutions to find these books for you as well. Bring the book's title and author as well as the ten digit ISBN (International Standard Book Number) to the campus library and they may possibly locate and borrow that book for you.

Still having trouble finding information?

Utilize local resources such as your librarian and your professor. Your topic may need to be refined or broadened in order to find better results.