LIBRARY RESEARCH PROCESS: SOME BASICS
COMS 205

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Focus on

Library website

Steps in a library research process

Finding and using different types of sources

Citing your sources
library.concordia.ca

From the home page:

• Course reserves / textbooks

• Library catalogue

• Databases

• Subject guides
Getting started

• Choose a research topic
• Refine the topic
• Form a **good question** to target your research
What do you have?

Readings usually have works cited or bibliographies

Starting point
• important works (bibliography)
• help you think about your topic
Finding sources from bibliographies


Finding journals from the Library website

A) Use the *electronic journals* section to search/browse by
   - Title
   - ISSN (e.g. 1918-5901 or 1918-591X)
   - Subject

B) Use the Library catalogue
   This will show *print*, *microform*, and *digital* holdings.
Finding background & context

Subject *encyclopedias*, for an authoritative introduction to a topic

See the Communication Studies Subject Guide
https://www.concordia.ca/library/guides/communication-studies.html

**Books**, for a deeper focus

Search the catalogue
https://clues.concordia.ca
Other Sources
Why scholarly journals?

• Report original research by scholars
• In-depth articles on specific research questions or issues
• Peer-reviewed
• Audience is other scholars in the field
• Bibliography of works cited
### Contrasting types of publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarly Journal</th>
<th>Magazine / Newspaper / Trade Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles are scrutinized for quality by other scholars in the field before publication</strong> (peer review)</td>
<td>Editor reviews articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authored by scholars in the field</td>
<td>Authors are journalists, practicing professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information is sourced with bibliography (previous research)</td>
<td>No bibliography. Information may be sourced by some fact-checking; interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose is to advance knowledge; report original research</td>
<td>Purpose is often current news and entertainment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recognizing scholarly articles

• Always includes a list of works cited as well as having citations throughout the text
• Usually states the institutional affiliation of author(s)
• Often begins with an abstract (condensed summary) of the article
• Reports original research

Services like Ulrich's or Sherpa/RoMEO can help you identify journals that publish scholarly articles.
Finding scholarly journal articles

From bibliographies
Using article databases

Search the two core communication studies databases:
  • Communication and Mass Media Complete
  • Communication Abstracts

Search other databases such as:
  • Academic Search Complete (multi-disciplinary)
  • Historical Abstracts
  • America: History and Life
  • Gender Studies Database
  • Film and Television Literature Database
Search a database

Searching: Communication & Mass Media Complete

- underwater
- AND cable
- AND news

Search
Search improvements: synonyms

How did **underwater cables** change the dissemination of **news**?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>underwater</th>
<th>cables</th>
<th>news</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synonyms</strong></td>
<td>undersea</td>
<td>cable</td>
<td>journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>transatlantic</td>
<td>wire</td>
<td>media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>submarine</td>
<td></td>
<td>press</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[wordnik.com](http://wordnik.com)  
[thesaurus.com](http://thesaurus.com)  
[wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)  
[wiktionary.org](http://wiktionary.org)
Search improvements

Truncation *

cabl* = cable or cables or cabling

Specific phrase “ ”

“chief executive officer” = chief executive officer

• no chief financial officer
• no chief officer
• no “The officer said the chief reason Ms. Smith called 911 was...”
Search a database

underwater or transatlantic or submarine AND cabl* or wire AND news* or journal* or media or press
Sources
Many types of sources

- News sources
- Magazines and trade publications
- Scholarly articles; peer reviewed
- Books (academic and non-academic)
- Encyclopedias, dictionaries, reference books
- Government reports, publications
- NGO publications, associations, professional
- Non-print formats (Video, audio, new media)
Thinking about sources

**Purpose**

**Authority**

**Audience**

**Format**

**Currency**

**Scholarly**

**References**
- Where do they get their information?
- Is it credited?
- What references are listed?
- Can they be verified?

**Reviews of the source**
- How is the source regarded by others?
- Are there reviews of the source?

CITING & ADDITIONAL HELP
Citing work in an academic context

What do you need to cite?
• Text copied from another document, website, or book
• Paraphrased words or idea
• Images, graphs, etc.

What do you not need to cite?
• Common knowledge facts, events, dates, concepts.

Consult the style guide to find out how

Concordia how-to guides on academic citing
library.concordia.ca/help/citing

Other institutions’ sites, especially Purdue OWL
- Keeps track of your sources
- Creates your bibliographies for you in your chosen style
- Easily insert citations while you’re writing

https://www.zotero.org
Getting help

In person at the reference desk

Consult a librarian

Subject guides

Online chat