BASIC LIBRARY RESEARCH PROCESSES
COMS 240

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Focus on

Library website

Steps in a library research process

Finding and using different types of sources

Citing your sources
Where to find resources

From the home page:

◦ Library catalogue (named Sofia)

◦ Databases

◦ Subject guides

https://library.concordia.ca
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)

B) Search Sofia (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 Sofia (Library catalogue)
https://concordiauniversity.on.worldcat.org
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>Articles are scrutinized for quality by other scholars in the field before publication (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
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>Synonyms:</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>
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)

Use the OR boolean operator to separate your synonyms.

Use the AND boolean operator to separate your concepts.

Same as writing:
Too many results?
  a) try adding a concept
  b) try removing some synonyms
  c) use database filters such as date ranges, languages, peer review, etc.

Too few results?
  a) try adding synonyms
  b) try removing a concept
  c) truncate words that could have alternate endings

Results off topic?
  a) try removing less-related synonyms
  b) try adding concepts to increase precision
  c) check that you’ve written phrases inside “quotation marks”
  d) use database filters such as date ranges, languages, peer review, etc.
  e) use the NOT boolean operator to exclude certain words from your search
Use limits to filter results.

How do you get the document?
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?

See our guide
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.

"Chicago"

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

Ask us now