Library Research

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Outline for Today:

- Library basics
- About internet searching
- Search planning
  - Main concepts; Brainstorm additional terms
- Search tips
- Demonstration
  - Library catalogue (books)
  - Web of Science (review articles)
- Time to work on assignment
Purpose of this Session

(& the Library Assignment!)

- Learn some skills for searching the Library collection
  - This is why I want you to do the assignment individually
- Give you some practice searching
- Get you started finding resources for your project
LIBRARY BASICS
Library Basics

- Student card = your library card
- 30 day loan period (undergrads)
  - You can renew 2 times, can renew online
  - Subject to “recall”, check your email!
- “Reserve” books held behind desk
  - Shorter term loan
Library Branches:

- 7 branches
- Science Library
  In Geology Building (by the T. rex!)

Mon – Thurs: 8am-8pm
Fri:  8am - 5pm
Sat: CLOSED
Sun: 12pm - 5pm

- http://library.usask.ca/
Background Reading

Where to start?

- Your course textbooks
- Subject-specific encyclopedias
- Popular science magazines (e.g. Scientific American)
- General internet searches (OK at this stage)
  - Wikipedia
ABOUT INTERNET SEARCHING
Internet searching

- Be very careful when using information from the internet for your research!
C.R.A.P. test

Currency
Reliability
Authority
Purpose/Point of View
C.R.A.P. test

Currency
- How recent is the information?
- When was the website last updated?
- Is it current enough for your topic?

Reliability

Authority

Purpose/Point of View
C.R.A.P. test

Currency

Reliability
- What kind of information is included?
- Is it primarily opinion? Is it biased?
- Are there references provided? Sources for the data?

Authority

Purpose/Point of View
C.R.A.P. test

Currency

Reliability

Authority
- Who is the creator/author of the website?
- What are their credentials? Are they experts on the topic?
- Who is the publisher/sponsor? Are they reputable?

Purpose/Point of View
C.R.A.P. test

Currency

Reliability

Authority

Purpose/Point of View
- What is the purpose of the website?
- Is the creator/author trying to sell you something?
- Is this fact or opinion?
Electronic Sources in Library

- Many library resources are now available in electronic format (e.g. ebooks, ejournals)
- These are *NOT* the same as general internet sites
SEARCH PLANNING
Suggested Types of Sources

- Books
- Edited books
  - Each chapter written by a different author
  - Usually there is an introductory/overview chapter
- Popular science magazines
  - Scientific American; New Scientist
- Journal articles
  - Likely be too technical though
  - Look for “review” articles that summarize research in your topic area
Concepts in your topic

- What are the main “concepts”?

“I’m interested in the evolution of flowers”
Concepts = Search Terms

Brainstorm some synonyms, alternate spellings, related terms...

- Remember the background reading on your topic!
- Learn some basic information about your topic and discover more terms to search by...
  - Encyclopedias
  - Course textbooks
  - Wikipedia

Good background sources; not so good to use in your final presentation
Brainstorm some synonyms, alternate spellings, related terms...

FLOWERS:
flowering plants, Angiosperms

EVOLUTION:
diversification, speciation
General advice:

- Be Persistent!
  - Check several sources

- Be Creative!
  - Use various terms and in different combinations
  - This is an iterative process – you learn as you go and adapt!
SEARCH TIPS
“Boolean Operators”

- The small joining words between your terms:

  - Flowers AND Evolution
  - Flowers OR Angiosperms
Search Tips: *Boolean Operators*

**AND** narrows the search

Use to combine different concepts

![Venn Diagram](image-url)

Flowers **AND** Evolution

Flowers  

Evolution
Search Tips: *Boolean Operators*

**OR** broadens the search

Use for synonyms

Flowers **OR** Angiosperms

Flowers

Angiosperms
Search Tips: *Truncation*

* = truncation

- Used to look for multiple endings of words
- For example:

  Flower* = *flowers, flowering*

Important to put the * at the **base** of the word!
Search Tips: *Phrase*

“” = quotation marks
- Used to look for an exact phrase
- For example:
  “Burgess Shale”
  “Plate tectonics”
DEMONSTRATION
Searching the library:

http://library.usask.ca/
What are databases?

- Also called indexes
- Index the contents of thousands of scholarly journals (library subscribes to ~60,000 ejournals)
- Library subscribes to many different databases (~500) – many very subject-specific, others multidisciplinary
Web of Science (WoS)

- Large multidisciplinary database, excellent coverage of the sciences
  - Comprehensive but not all-inclusive!
- WoS indexes 12,000+ journals; updates added weekly
Science Library

Need Help?

- DeDe Dawson dede.dawson@usask.ca
  Office 180.6 in Science Library
- Staff in the Science Library can help you too!
- A library guide to geology resources:
  http://libguides.usask.ca/geology
  (see Geol109 ASAP tab)