

# COM 411: RESEARCHING TOPICS

## SEARCHING FUNDAMENTALS

With Keyword Searching, you determine your search terms; you have greater flexibility but you get broader results. You must try multiple searches using different spellings and synonyms in order to match all the variations authors could use. Alternatively, Subject Searching is very organized and uses only pre-determined terms; you find your Subject Heading and you search for it. You must use the term chosen by the person who has cataloged the book or article.

1. Perform a keyword search using important terms that define your topic.
2. Find a good result and look at its Subject Heading.
3. Perform a subject search using the Subject Heading you find.

## DATABASES

*Academic Search Premier* – full-text articles from over 3,600 peer-reviewed journals

*Education Research Complete* - A collection of full-text education journals that covers areas of curriculum instruction as well as administration, policy, funding, and related social issues

*Library Catalog & WorldCat* – information on books the library owns or can borrow

*ProQuest* – full-text articles from magazines, newspapers and journals

*ScienceDirect* - Full-text journal articles in science, technology, and medicine

*Sociological Abstracts* - Abstracts of journal articles, monographs, conference papers and dissertations in sociology, the social sciences and related disciplines, from 1960 to the present

## RELATED JOURNALS

*ISIS* – Covers the “history of science, medicine, and technology and their cultural influences”.

Available in print or electronic format

*Technology and Culture* – This “is the preeminent journal for the history of technology.”

Available in print or electronic format

## RECOMMENDED WEBSITE

*Pew Internet & American Life Project* – “The Pew Internet & American Life Project produces reports that explore the impact of the Internet on families, communities, work and home, daily life, education, health care, and civic and political life. The Project aims to be an authoritative source on the evolution of the Internet through collection of data and analysis of real-world developments as they affect the virtual world.” [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)

## SUBJECT DIRECTORIES

*Librarian’s Index to the Internet* – trusted sites for research

<http://www.lii.org>

*Internet Public Library* – lists of information on many topics from the School of Information at the University of Michigan

<http://www.ipl.org>

*Google Directory* – Choose your topic by selecting subject area you need to research

<http://directory.google.com>

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## FINDING MATERIAL

You should divide your research into two stages:

Stage 1: Use the library databases to identify a source, e.g., a journal article

Stage 2: Use various resources to obtain the source, including:

SFX / List of E-journals – a list of magazines & journals available via our databases

List of Print Journals – a list of our print serials; the list is available in print & online

Librarians – always feel free to ask a librarian to help you locate material

Interlibrary Loan – fill out an online ILL form to obtain material we do not own

## EVALUATING WEB SITES

Always evaluate your web results for their:

accuracy – does the site misstate, misrepresent or exaggerate facts? are there errors?

authority – who created the site and what are their affiliations and credentials?

bias – does the site offer a point of view or opinion?

coverage – how much information is there?

currency – when was the site last updated?

.aero | .biz | .com | .coop | .edu | .gov | .info | .int | .mil | .museum | .name | .net | .org | .pro

## ADDITIONAL EVALUATION INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE

- Google's Directory page: search for *web site evaluation* and choose the *Category*

- Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask (UC Berkeley)

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

- Evaluation of Information and Sources (Purdue)

<http://www.lib.purdue.edu/ugrl/inst/evaluationchart.pdf>

- Five criteria for evaluating Web pages (Cornell)

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/webcrit.html>

## ACCESSING DATABASES FROM HOME

All of the Library's databases are available from home; you need your college e-mail username and password to access them.

1. Go to the Library Home Page: <http://www.sunyit.edu/library>

2. Click on "Databases".

3. Click on the name of a database.

4. Enter your college e-mail username and password.

## DOCUMENTATION STYLE

1. Go to the Library Home Page: <http://www.sunyit.edu/library>

2. Click on "Research Guides".

3. Click on "APA Documentation Style", "APA Sample Bibliography", "MLA Documentation Style", "MLA Sample Bibliography" or "Make a Citation".