

COMP

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Doing Your Research

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Learn keyword searching
- 2 Conduct primary research
- 3 Do library research
- 4 Use books
- 5 Find periodical articles
- 6 Understand the Internet
- 7 Find reliable free-Web information
- 8 Evaluate online sources

Keyword Searching

- Helps to find information in:
 - *Electronic library catalogs*
 - *Online databases that index periodical articles*
 - *Print indexes to periodical publications*
 - *Internet resources*
 - *Print books*
 - *E-books*
- Choosing keywords
 - *Begin brainstorming a list of possible keywords*
 - *Consult the Library of Congress subject headings*

Keyword Search Strategies

- Get to know the database
- Use a shotgun approach
 - *Start with the most likely keyword*
 - *If there are no results, choose a related term*
- Use Boolean operators to refine your search
 - *Words or symbols used when searching research databases*
 - *Describe the relationship between various words or phrases in a search*

Primary Research Methods

Surveys

Interviews

Observations

Experiments

Analysis

Primary Research Methods

- **Survey/Questionnaire:** Set of questions created to gather information from respondents about a specific topic
- **Observation:** Noting information received in person through the senses
 - *Inspection: Purposeful analysis of a site or situation in order to understand it*
 - *Field research: On-site scientific study conducted for the purpose of attaining raw data*

Conducting Surveys

Find a focus

Create effective question

Draft your survey

Revise your survey

Edit your survey

Conduct your survey



Types of Questions

- Closed
 - *Can be answered with a simple fact or with a yes or a no*
- Open-ended
 - *Require elaborate answers*

Making the Library Work

- Librarians - Information experts
- **Collections:** Materials housed within a library
- Research
 - *Subscription databases: Online services that, for a fee, provide access to multitude of articles*
- Special services - Interlibrary loan, hold and reserve services and other options



Catalog Searches

- Locating by Call Numbers
 - ***Library of Congress call numbers:*** *Set of numbers and letters specifying the subject area, topic, and authorship or title of a book*
- Classification Systems
 - *LC classification system - Combines letters and numbers*
 - *Dewey decimal system - Uses only numbers*



Research Strategy for Books

- Check out front and back information
- Scan the table of contents
- Using key words, search the index
- Skim the foreword, preface, or introduction
- Check appendices, glossaries, or bibliographies
- Carefully read appropriate chapters and sections



Forms of Periodical Publications

- Daily newspapers and newscasts - Provide up-to-date information on current events, opinions, and trends
- Weekly and monthly magazines and newscasts - Offer in-depth information on a wide range of topics
- **Journals:** Quarterly publications providing specialized scholarly information for a narrowly focused audience



Finding Periodical Articles

- Online databases
 - *Basic search*
- Making the advanced search
 - *Citation lists*
 - Refine the search
 - Mark specific citations
 - Re-sort the results
 - Follow links
 - *Identifying information*
 - *Full-text articles*

Understanding the Internet

Identifying addresses

- *URL*
- *Domain name*
- *Address extensions*

Saving information

- *Bookmark*
- *Printout*
- *Save or download*
- *E-mail*



Finding Free-Web Information

- Reliable web sites
- Subject trees - Listing of Web sites, arranged by experts
- Search and metasearch
 - ***Metasearch tools:*** Sites that search other search engines
- Understanding the uses and limits of Wikipedia



Understanding Wikipedia

Strengths

- Consensus model of knowledge
- Currency of information
- Breadth of information
- Links

Weaknesses

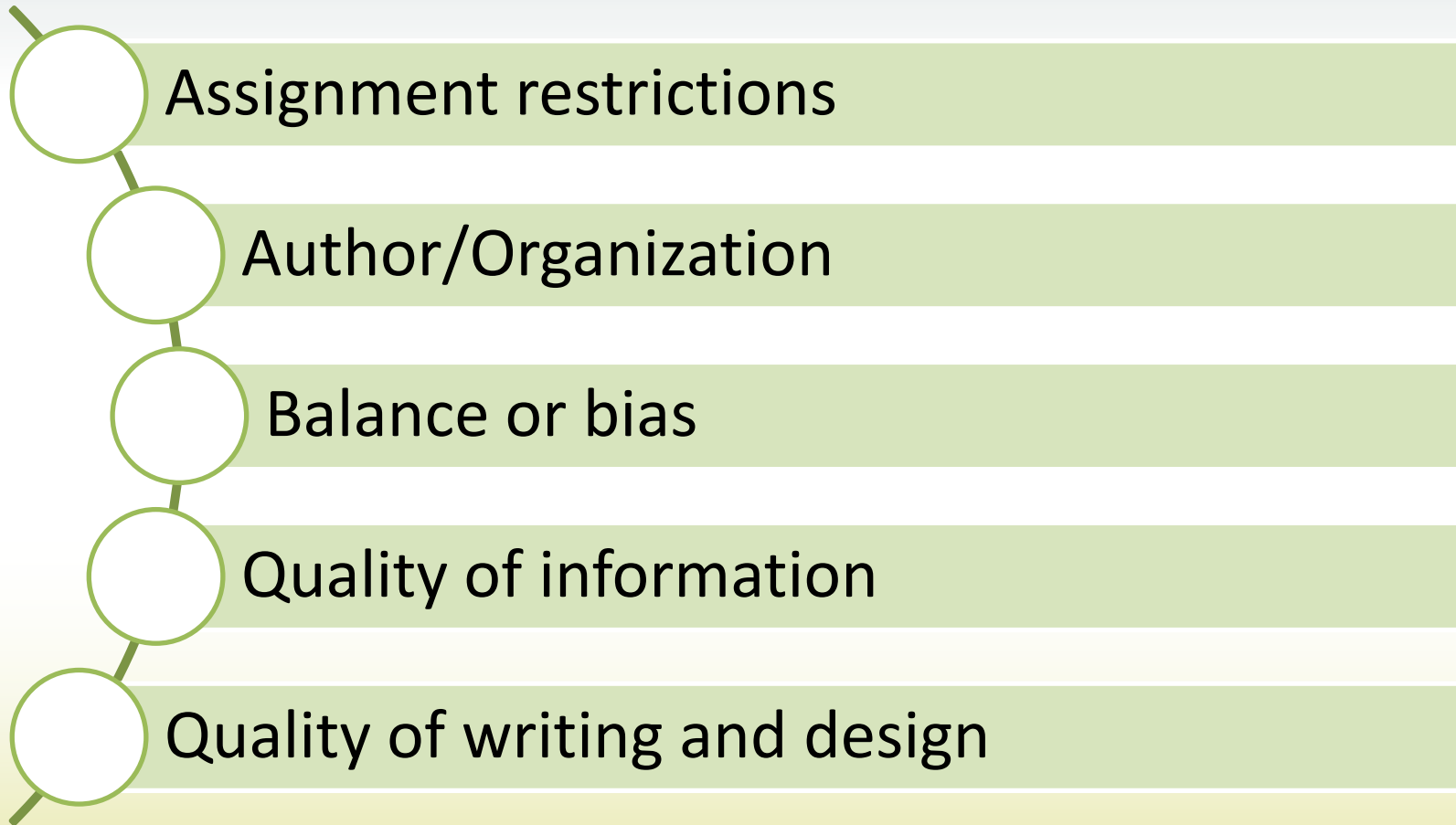
- Popular model of knowledge
- Anonymity of authorship
- Variable quality of content
- Variable coverage
- Vulnerability to vandalism
- Tertiary nature of information



Using Wikipedia

- Respect the assignment
- Verify Wikipedia information
- Use Wikipedia as a semi-authoritative reference source
- Use Wikipedia as one starting point
- Study individual articles to get a sense of their reliability

Evaluating Online Sources



SUMMARY

- Research is about searching and re-searching
- Primary research gives direct, hands-on access to the topic
- Libraries and electronic searches are gateways to information
- Understanding the Internet is vital in order to do quality research

