

Open your Mind



With Information Literacy

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INFORMATION LITERACY

4 STEPS FOR INFORMATION COLLECTION

Step 1: Recognise your need for information

An information literate person is able to recognise his/her need for information.

For example:

- When you get an assignment from a lecturer.
- Or, when you need personal information to enable you to make a decision, e.g. what is the best stereo system to buy.

NB: Remember, having information enables you to make good decisions!

Step 2: Think about and analyse your assignment topic or question

Identify the main ideas and keywords in the question.

*Example: "Discuss the **selection criteria** and **selection aids** used in **selecting books** for a **library**."*

Step 3: Find background information and define the keywords

Define the keywords by consulting dictionaries (general or specialised) and encyclopedias to give you an overview of the keywords.

*Example: "Discuss the **selection criteria** and **selection aids** used in **selecting books** for a **library**."*

Keywords: selection criteria
selection aids
book selection
library

Step 4: Find information

Information finding tools

Start with what you have available in your library.

• **OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)**
It is the electronic database of titles of all the books, journals and audio-visual resources available in the Library.

• **Databases**
According to the Harrod's librarians glossary and reference book (Ray, 2000, p. 209), a database is:
"any grouping of data for a particular purpose or for the use of a particular set of end users," e.g. full text engineering articles intended for engineers.

"usually organized via Fields"

"providing tools to enable manipulation of the data such as sorting, grouping and extraction."

"might contain bibliographic data, or numerical, statistical material"

"are individually accessible by electronic or other means", e.g. CD-ROM or online.

In the Polytechnic Library we have, for example, EbscoHost that is accessible from the Library's website.

World Wide Web

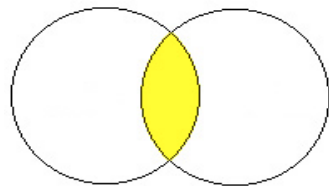
The World Wide Web is a group of computers across the world that is interlinked with each other via satellite or optical fibre. Information is sent from one computer to another in the form of "packets" that are re-assembled as soon as it reaches its destination.

Boolean Search Operators

Boolean searching is an accepted method to us when searching in databases and with search engines (see Internet, p. 7). It enables you to get more accurate search results.

When you do a Boolean search you use the keywords that best describe your topic. The 3 basic Boolean operators are **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**.

If you would like to retrieve documents that contains two keywords, you use **AND**. **AND** narrows a search by combining terms and retrieves every document that contains both of the keywords specified. For example if you are looking for publications on marketing **AND** management:

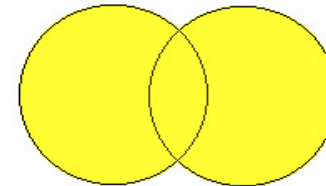


marketing **AND** management

The Venn diagram above illustrates the **AND** search. The left circle includes all records including *marketing*. The right circle includes all records including *management*. When the computer searches its database and retrieves every record containing both of the words. Several keywords may be used to narrow searches with the **AND** operator.

The **OR** operator broadens or widens a search to include documents containing either keyword. The **OR** search is particularly useful when there are several common synonyms for a concept or variant spellings of a word.

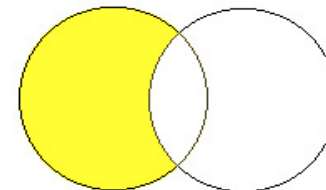
To find information on building use:



building **OR** construction

As the diagram shows, the computer searches for all documents containing *building* (left circle) and all documents containing *constructing* (right circle). All documents represented by both circles will be retrieved. **OR** searches often produce large numbers of documents.

Combining search terms with the **NOT** operator narrows a search by excluding unwanted terms. To find information on management but not the personnel management use:



management **NOT** personnel management

The diagram illustrates the search by retrieving documents including the keyword management (left circle) and excluding documents with the term personnel management

(right circle). Retrieved documents are shown in the yellow shaded area.

Boolean search terms may be combined in various ways to carefully refine searches. For example:
marketing **AND** management **NOT** personnel management
dams **OR** lakes **AND** pollution
(English, 2003)

Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)

DDC is a numeric system used by libraries to organize their collection according to subject fields.

Each library item is assigned a call/shelf number. The shelf number usually consists of the class number followed by the first 3 letters of the author's surname or the title, e.g 005.72 ENG. This indicates the "address" of the item in the library.

Information Sources

Books

The most important parts of a book are:

The **title page** is the first page that you get when you open a book, on the right side of the book that gives the title, the sub-title, the author(s), and the publisher. Often the place of publication and the date of publication are also given on the title page.

The **imprint page** is the back of the title page. This page usually gives publishing and copyright details.

The **contents page** gives an outline of how the subject of the book is being presented. It gives the names of the different chapters/sections that the book consists of and the page numbers of the chapters.

The **index** of the book (which is at the back of the book) may be one of the most important parts of the book. The index is an alphabetical list of topics or keyword discussed in the book. It also refers you to the page a topic can be found on.

Dictionaries

A dictionary is an alphabetical list of words/terms with their spelling, pronunciation, definition and usage. Dictionaries are reference works and are usually held in the Reference section of the Library.

There are different kinds of dictionaries:

Language dictionaries, e.g. Oxford Learners' Dictionary.

Subject dictionaries, e.g. Dictionary of Geology.

Biographical dictionaries, e.g. A biographical dictionary of civil engineers in Great Britain and Ireland.

Quotation dictionary, e.g. The Little Oxford dictionary of quotations.

Dictionaries are also available online. The Polytechnic Library has, for example, the Oxford Reference Online, which is accessible from the Library's web site.

Encyclopedias

Encyclopedias give general, factual information on almost any topic. The topics are arranged alphabetically. An encyclopedia usually consists of a number of volumes of which one or two make the index. Besides facts, they often include pictures, bibliographies, maps, etc. Encyclopedias can come in printed format, on CD-ROM or on the Internet. Encyclopedias can usually be found in the Reference section of the Library and can be general or subject specific.

Periodicals/Journals/Magazines

A **periodical** is a publication that appears regularly at certain intervals.

A **journal** is a periodical that contains more academic and research articles, e.g. African journal on conflict prevention.

A **magazine** contains general interest articles intended for the layperson and usually appears on a weekly or monthly basis, e.g. Ebony.

The latest editions of the Polytechnic Library's periodicals are available for reading in the library, while back issues can be retrieved by requesting it at the Issue Desk.

Newspapers

Newspapers can be accessed via the physical copy in your library as well as online. The Polytechnic Library has four Namibian and four South African newspapers available for you to read in the Library.

For the online, full-text versions you need to be connected to the Internet. Examples of online newspapers are Business Day and News24.

Audio-visual Material

These materials are non-print materials such as videos, audiocassettes, films and CD-ROMS.

Internet

The Internet serves as a gateway to a large variety of information sources, e.g. full text articles or books, research or training material, etc.

Getting around on the Internet you need special software called a **Web browsers**, of which Internet Explorer and Netscape Communicator are the most popular.

The Internet is so large that you need help to get the information you need faster. There are a variety of services that helps you to find information and they are called **search**

engines. Examples of search engines are Yahoo, Google and AltaVista.

Another kind of service is **metasearch engines** that use up to 150 search engines simultaneously, e.g. Metacrawler or Savvysearch. The results are itemized by search engine and relevance.

EVALUATION OF INFORMATION

To ensure that the information you have found are suitable and of value, you should take the following into account:

- 1. Authority**
Who is the author?
What are the author's qualifications/expertise?
What else has the author written?
Is the author associated with a reputable institution/organization?
Was the work published in a peer-reviewed journal or by a reputable publisher?
Answers to these can usually be found in the published document, in biographical sources, directories like "Who's who" or on the Internet.
- 2. Objectivity**
Does the author state what the goals of the publication are?
Does the author exhibit any bias? I.e. does the author give facts or his/her own opinion?
Does the publication appear well researched?
You can verify this by examining the sources used in the publication and by comparing it with a reliable source.
- 3. Quality**
Does it have a clear and logical structure?
Does it contain a lot of grammar or spelling mistakes?

Is the information complete and accurate?

4. **Coverage**

Does it support the other sources you have read?
Does it add new information to what you already have?

5. **Currency**

When was it published?
Does the topic need regular revision?
Is the later revised edition?
In most fields it is better to consult the latest edition of a publication.

6. **Relevance**

Does the publication appropriate for the assignment you have to do?
To establish whether it covers the topics you are interested in:

- look at the contents pages and/or index of the publication
- read the preface, introduction or abstract of the publication.

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM AND HOW TO AVOID IT?

Plagiarism is when you intentionally or unintentionally copy parts of some else's work and presenting it as your own without giving credit to the author. It is unethical and a criminal offence.

To avoid making yourself guilty of plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings--any pieces of information--that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or

- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words. (Writing Tutorial Services, 2003)

CITING OF RESOURCES

All sources that you use in your report or research should be cited to make sure you do not make yourself guilty of plagiarism.

Citing refers "to a text or part of a text identifying the document in which it may be found" (Prytherch, 2000). By doing this you give recognition to the author. Sources are cited within the text as well as in the bibliography. The bibliography is an alphabetical list of all the sources you have used in your report or research, which usually appears at the back of your document.

Why is citing important?

- It gives credit to the sources of words, ideas and illustrations.
- It helps to keep track of information searched.
- It enables the reader to check sources for accuracy.
- It enables others to use your sources to pursue the topic further.

Citing methods

There are various citing methods, e.g. Chicago method, APA style, MLA style, Harvard method, etc. The style that is chosen will differ from one institution to another and from one subject area to another. Most of the methods are quite similar. Following is an overview of the Harvard method. For a more in-depth explanation you will have to search on the Internet or consult the printed sources in the Library.

Harvard method

□ Citing in the text

When you refer to a source in the text or use ideas from a source, insert the author's surname and year of publication.

Always use the information given on the title and imprint pages. If you make a direct quotation or referring to data and figures, page numbers should be added. If the author's name is mentioned in the text, the year of publications should be in brackets next to the author's name.

One author:

e.g. Soil layers below the well tip contribute relatively little water (Kozeny, 1988, p. 223)

e.g. A recent study (Carlson 1990) ...

e.g. James (1981) obtained results which...

If an author has published more than one cited document in a year, they are distinguished by placing lower case letters after the year within the brackets.

e.g. Brown (1980, 1983a, 1983b) theorized ...

Two or three authors:

e.g. It has been noted that this is not a unique phenomenon in Namibia (Baines & Jackson, 1973).

e.g. Other countries faced similar problems (Cain, Pain & Rain, 1985).

If more than one citation is referred to in a sentence, list authors by date and then alphabetically.

e.g. A larger majority of women are choosing not to have children (Marks and James, 1999; Buck, 1997; Rhodes, 1993)

Four or more authors:

When the source has four or more authors, the first author, as shown on the title page, should be used, followed by 'et al'. Et al. is short for the Latin et alii, which means 'and others'.

e.g. (Matlock, et al., 2001)

Editor(s)/Compiler(s):

If the source only had an editor/compiler, it should be indicated as such. The accepted abbreviations that should be used are 'ed.' = editor, 'eds.' = editors and 'comp.' = compiler.

e.g. (ed. Kaufmann, 1995)

e.g. (comp. Friend, 1963)

Volumes and sections:

When periodicals or parts of a series is used and volumes and sections have to be indicated, it should be done as follows:

e.g. (Jensen, 1989, vol. 2, p. 23; vol. 3, pp. 20-41)

e.g. (Black, 1982, sec. 2)

□ **Citing in the bibliography**

The author and year you have indicated in the text serves as a link to the more complete reference in the bibliography.

Book references

Should include:

- **name/s** of author/s, editor/s, compiler/s (surname, and initials or given name), or the institution responsible
- **year** of publication

- **title** of publication and **subtitle** if any (all titles must be underlined, italicized or in highlighted)
- **series title** and individual **volume** if any
- **edition**, if other than first
- **place of publication** (if known)
- **publisher**
- **page number(s)** if applicable

One or two authors:

e.g. Twigg, Carol A. & Oblinger, Diana G. 1997. *The virtual university*. Washington, D.C.: Educom.

Four or more authors:

e.g. Cheek, J., Doskatsch, I., Hill, P. & Walsh, L. 1995. *Finding out: information literacy for the 21st century*. Melbourne: MacMillan Education Australia.

NB: You should not use 'et al.' in the bibliography.

Editor(s):

e.g. Basford, Lynn & Slevin, Oliver (eds.). 1995. *Theory and practice of nursing: an integrated approach to patient care*. Edinburgh: Champion.

Corporate author (institutions, companies):

e.g. Department of Commerce. Office of Consumer Affairs. 1992. *Managing consumer complaints : responsive business approaches to consumer needs*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Series

e.g. Innes, John & Mitchell, Falconer. 1993. *Overhead cost*. Advanced management and accounting series. London: Academic Press.

Edition:

e.g. McTaggart, D., Findlay, C. & Parkin, M. 1995. *Economics*. 2nd ed. Sydney: Addison-Wesley.

A chapter in a book:

e.g. Capra, F. (1983). The systems view of life. Chapter 9 in *The turning point: science, society and the rising culture*. London: Fontana.

A part of an edited book:

e.g. Harley, J.T., Harker, O.J. & Walsch, D.A. (1980). Contemporary issues and new direction in adult development of learning and memory. In *Aging in the 1980's: psychological issues*. Edited by Poon, L.W. Washington: American Psychological Association.

No author/editor:

Where no author/editor is named the title is used in place of the author/editor.

e.g. *The CCH Macquarie dictionary of business*. 1993. North Ryde, NSW: CCH Australia.

Periodical references

Should include:

- **name/s** of author/s of the article (surname, and initials or given name)
- **year** of publication
- **title of article**
- **title of periodical** (underlined, highlighted or italicised)
- **volume** number
- **issue** (or part) number
- **page number(s)**

Periodicals include items published on a regular basis, like journals, magazines, scholarly newsletters, etc.

e.g. Bennett, H. Gunter, H. & Reid, S. 1996. Through a glass darkly: images of appraisal. *Journal of Teacher Development*, 5 (3), October, pp.39-46.

e.g. Baty, P. 1998. Learners are born, says report. *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 16th January, p.5.

Electronic journal references

Should include:

- **name/s** of author/s
- **year** of publication
- **title** of article
- **title** of journal
- **type of medium**
- **date of publication**
- **date item retrieved**
- **name** or **site address** on the Internet (if applicable)

e.g. Smith, J. 1996. Time to go home. *Journal of Hyperactivity* [Online] 12th October, 6 (4), pp.122-3. Available from: <<http://www.lmu.ac.uk>> [Accessed June 6th, 1997]

Online resource references

Should include:

- **name/s** of author/s, editor/s, compiler/s
- **year**
- **title** (underlined, highlighted or in italics)
- **[Online]**
- **edition**
- **place** of publication:
- **publisher** (if ascertainable).
- **Available** from: <URL> [Accessed date].

e.g. Holland, M. 1996. *Harvard System* [Online]. Poole: Bournemouth University. Available from: <<http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/service->

depts/lis/LIS_Pub/harvardsys.html> [Accessed August 22nd, 1997]

Interesting printed sources on citing you can consult in the Library

Struwig, F.W. & Stead, G.B. 2001. *Planning, designing and reporting research*. Cape Town: Pearson Education SA.
Library DDC no.: 808.066 STR

Thompson, E., I. Buchholz & Karsten, S. (Comp.). 2000. *Bibliographic references: the name-year method*. UNAM library publications, no. 2. Windhoek: University of Namibia Library.
Library DDC no.: 011.001 BIB

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Astbury, Brad. 2003. Guide to referencing – the Harvard style [Online]. Queensland : University of Southern Queensland Library. Available from:
<<http://www.usq.edu.au/library/resources/genref/harvardprint.htm>>
[Accessed January 27th, 2004]

Bell, Colleen. 2003. Critical Evaluation of Information Sources *Or, But Is It Credible?* [Online]. Oregon: University of Oregon Libraries. Available from:
<<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/findarticles/credibility.html>>
[Accessed September 26th 2003]

Brunner, Susan. 2003. 5-Step strategy [Online]. Adelaide: Government of South Australia. Available from:
<<http://www.tafe.sa.edu.au/lili/>> [Accessed September 24th, 2003].

Dee, Marianne. 1998. Quote, unquote : the Harvard style of publishing reference material [Online]. Leeds: Leeds Metropolitan University. Available from:
<http://www.lmu.ac.uk/lss/lss/docs/harvfron.htm> [Accessed January 26th, 2004]

Engle, Michael. 2003. The seven steps of the research process [Online]. York: York College of Pennsylvania. Available from:
<<http://www.ycp.edu/library/ifl/etext/etsearch.htm>> [Accessed September 24th, 2003].

English, Denise. 2003. Research guides : Boolean search tips [Online]. Leesburg: Lake Sumpter Community College. Available from: <<http://lscs.cc.fl.us/library/guides/boolsea.htm>> [Accessed October 1st, 2003]

Gates, Jean Key. 1994. *Guide to the use of libraries and information sources*. 7th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lakritz, Esther. 1989. *Developing library skills*. Carthage: Good Apple.

McCain, Mary Maude and Merrill, Martha. 2001. *Dictionary for school library media specialists : a practical and comprehensive guide*. Englewood: Libraries Unlimited.

Prytherch, Ray (Comp.). 2000. *Harrod's librarians' glossary and reference book*. 9th ed. Aldershot: Gower.

Thompson, Elizabeth (Comp.). 2000. *Bibliographic references : the name-year method*. Windhoek: University of Namibia.

UCT Libraries. [200-]. *Information literacy* [Online]. Cape Town: UCT Libraries. Available from: <<http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/infolit/index.html>> [Accessed September 24th, 2003].

University of Queensland. 2002. *Cybrary Harvard style usit* [Online]. Brisbane: University of Queensland. Available from:
<<http://www.library.uq.edu.au/training/citation/harvard.html>>
[Accessed January 27th, 2004]

University of Sheffield Library. 2001. *Harvard referencing guide* [Online]. Sheffield : University of Sheffield. Available from:
<<http://www.shef.ac.uk/library/libdocs/hsl-dvc1.html>> [Accessed January 27th, 2004]

Warner Bros. Online. 2000. *Looney Tunes teach the Internet*. S.I.: Warner Bros. Available from:
<<http://www.warnerbros.com/ltti/homepage.html>> [Accessed September 26th, 2003].

Writing Tutorial Services. 2003. *Plagiarism : what it is and how to recognize and avoid it*. Bloomington: Indiana University. Available from: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html> [Accessed September 26th, 2003]