

Phillips Memorial Library

Library Research Tips and Tricks

Refining Your Topic...

1. Pick a topic that interests you
2. Discuss your topic with your professor
3. Discuss your topic with a member of the reference staff
4. Review indexes and article titles in subject-specific encyclopedias or dictionaries
5. Don't forget your course textbook!

Finding Books and Journal Articles...

1. HELIN Catalog
2. Subject Databases (Academic Search Premier, ABI/Inform, etc.) with Article Linker™
3. Find Your Way Subject Guides (link under "For Students" on Library Home Page)

Building Your Database Search Strategy...

1. Familiarize yourself with the thesaurus or subject terms list available in most databases. Note: Many databases use subject terms unique to that particular database.
2. The pre-selected terms or subject headings used to organize records in databases make your searches more powerful and efficient.
3. Here is a brief example of the difference between keywords and subject headings (using Academic Search Premier):

Examples using keywords (words you think up on your own, good to start with)	Examples using official subject headings (words you find in a thesaurus or item record)
Heart attack	Myocardial infarction
Religious rites	Rites and ceremonies
Undergraduates	College students

Finding Quality Information on the Web...

Things To Consider:

1. Who has the primary responsibility for this information? Who wrote or contributed this content?
2. Does the information indicate the presence of a balanced viewpoint? (Both points of view offered)
What is the goal of the page/site: Inform, entertain, rant, and sell?
3. Is the information reliable? Can you verify sources or citation? Is the information current?
4. How often are the web pages updated? (Some topics may require more recent information).
Note: Undated factual or statistical data isn't any better than anonymous information.
5. **BOTTOM LINE:** Are the Web Sites found as good as print or electronic sources available in the Library?

ASK A LIBRARIAN, WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

X2581

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<http://www.providence.edu/Academics/Phillips+Memorial+Library/>