Research Tips and Hints

Mount Saint Mary College

College Writing, Prof. Stobert, September 7, 2011
Learning Objectives

- Review research resources
- Review effective strategies for searching and accessing resources from the Web and databases
- Live demo on using library research databases
Research resources

- Books
- Databases of journal articles
information available on the Internet is not regulated for quality or accuracy

almost anyone can publish anything they want on the Web

often difficult to determine authorship of Web sources
Why do you need to evaluate information found on the Internet?

- even if the author is listed, he or she may not always be represented honestly
- the author may represent opinions as fact
- Therefore, the responsibility is on the user to evaluate resources effectively
Why not Google?

- Anyone can publish anything on the Internet
- Millions and millions of hits
  - Which are accurate and valid?
  - Requires your time to evaluate
- Does not include information found in library databases of scholarly journals
"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."
Know your source

- Some domains are more authoritative than others
  - .edu
  - .gov

- Ask yourself
  - Who wrote the information?
  - When was it written?
  - Why was it written?

- Will the information I find through Google meet my professor’s requirements for scholarly materials?
Which database to choose?
Databases are key

- Premium online subscription information resources
- Online collections of journal and newspaper articles, information from published works
- Searchable
- Often contain full-text articles
How to start?

- Put the problem in the form of a question
- Search
- Examine your results
- Revise your search question if needed
Question-based literature review strategy

What is the problem?
“Pick an issue from the film Race to Nowhere.”

What is the question?
“How does stress and anxiety impact students’ cognition?”

What are the question’s concepts?
1: stress  2: anxiety
3: students  4: cognition
5: learning  6: children
General Rule

Start big
then
narrow down

Is the reason for 0 results because there is nothing in this database or (more likely) were the wrong words used?
### Library Databases
- Academic Search Premier
- ProQuest Central
- Wilson OmniFile FullText Mega

### Web Sites
- Race to Nowhere
  <endtherace.org>
- Current Topics in Psychology
  <www.fenichel.com/Current.shtml/>
- Educational Research sites
  <school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/edref.html>
Review

- Steps to evaluating Web sites
- Avoid Google and other search engines
- Review effective strategies for searching and accessing library research resources
- On to the live demo!!!
Thank you

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This presentation available online at http://libraryguides.msmc.edu/garofalo_classes