

Finding Research Sources

Give this action plan a try when you start your search for source material to write a paper. If you feel lost or unsure at any time, just contact the Research Help Desk staff for some friendly and willing guidance [e-mail: reflib@salisbury.edu | phone: 410-548-5988].

1 Search the online library catalog for books and other materials on your topic

BLACKWELL LIBRARY: The library catalog is an online search mechanism, so navigate to the library home page, click on the library catalog link and start searching - www.salisbury.edu/library.

You will find books that you can check out (Stacks) and books/materials you can use only in the library (Reference, Special Collections, etc.). You might also find listings for other non-book items, such as videos, audio books, newspapers, magazines and journals.

USMAI LIBRARIES: You may also freely borrow Stacks items from any of the other 16 University System of Maryland (USMAI) libraries. Simply search the other libraries in the USMAI Combined Catalog and electronically request that an item be mailed to Blackwell Library for you to check out.

2 Search in electronic library databases for articles on your topic

(Note: print indexes can be used to find older articles on your topic - ask a librarian)

Libraries usually offer a variety of different databases (and several different print indexes). Blackwell Library has over 100 databases! Learn how and where they are and take a moment to review how to use them. Choose the appropriate databases (or indexes) for your discipline or topic.

DID YOU KNOW: the same full-text article can appear in an online source (library database) AND in a print source (magazine, journal or newspaper).

Two cool things about library databases are...

- A) you can use databases from any Internet-connected computer - *twenty four hours a day, seven days a week!* This means you can do research at a time and place that is best for you! (NOTE: you must log on using your 14-digit ID/Barcode (back of SU Gull Card) AND...
- B) you can pull up full-text articles, from thousands of reputable magazines and journals, and save, e-mail or print them from your own computer!

3 Use a Web search engine to find Internet sources

They say the best and worst thing about the Web is that anyone can create a Web page.

BEST: the web is an open forum for free expression.

WORST: you are writing an academic paper and must sift through millions of non-scholarly pages to find the good stuff - this takes a lot of time you may not have.

Still, academic-level materials can be found on the Web. Web search engines are getting better at allowing you to limit your search criteria. It is important that you better understand how search engines work. Whatever your favorite search engine, click on and read the Help, Advanced Search or Research Tips page before starting.

[www.google.com, www.alltheweb.com, www.dogpile.com, www.kartoo.com, www.yahoo.com]