

Introductory Information Literacy Skills

Assignment 3: Searching WWW for sources of facts and opinions (15%)

Submit as requested on the course Moodle page

Structure: together with each completed task, this assignment includes the following components (cumulative; started in Assignment One):

- Journal or reflective log:
 - Continue to describe your each step of the research process and any difficulties you encountered.
 - Reflect on the revisions you make.
 - Include references to the appendices when referring to material.
- Working bibliography:
 - A cumulative list of information sources that you have retrieved.
 - Notes about each item and why it was selected.
 - Each item should also include the location, resource and strategy (where and how you found this source).
- Appendices:
 - Photocopies of the items retrieved.
 - Print outs and screen shots requested.
 - Appendices must be labeled.

This assignment continues to be a team endeavor and is a continuation of Step Three of the *Research Process: Conducting the Literature Search*. You are required to consult a variety of sources accessible via WWW in an attempt to locate relevant information. It is highly recommended that **searches are prepared on paper ahead of time**. This will give you time to reflect on the choice and logical arrangement of keywords in a search statement, and any modifications to your strategy based on undesired results. However, there is no controlled vocabulary on the web and you are searching full-text information and an enormous quantity of it. Therefore search strategies must be precise.

There are six mandatory questions to answer to succeed in this assignment:

Q1 asks you to reflect on the work you completed in assignment 2 (searches, results, evolution in preliminary thesis and outline) and the information you need for your search. Q2 requires you to choose a search tool (e.g. a search engine or a directory). Q3 asks to complete your search using the features of the selected search engine and evaluate the quality of web-sites/pages. Q4 calls upon using Google Scholar to locate scholarly literature available across the web. Q5 calls upon evaluating the relevance of

your search results and to prepare a working bibliography. Q6 requires you to revise your preliminary thesis statement and outline.

~~Q.1 Reflect on your approach~~

- ~~A. Reflect on the work that you completed for assignment 2. You may like to use the following questions to guide your reflections:~~
- ~~• What did you learn about database searching that will be applied next time you conduct a database search?~~
 - ~~• What are some things you could do to make the process easier, next time you do a database search?~~
- ~~B. Decide what type of information you would like to get in the end of your searches. Answering these questions may help you:
What type of information am I looking for? Research results? Opinions? Statistics? News? For what time period? Where? On the organizational websites? Blogs? Forums? Your answers will help you:~~
- ~~• decide what type of information you would like to get in the end of your searches, and~~
 - ~~• modify your search statement accordingly.~~
- C. Review your preliminary thesis statement and determine if it needs to be modified. Revisit and develop your preliminary outline. Reflect on the search string you used in Assignment 2. Is it still relevant?
- D. Review and refine your search statement in correspondence to your preliminary thesis.

Q.2 Selecting a search tool

Write a 250-word summary arguing for why you think, feel, and know the use of a WWW search tool can be beneficial for your search process. You should elaborate on: a) the importance of the human element versus automation in the indexing process (search engines versus directories); and b) the comparison of the search tool functionalities.

Q.3 Searching WWW via a search tool

- A. In regard to your topic, use the selected search tool to search the web for a) PDF and Word and PPT files; b) definitions of your key concepts; c) image and video files (if relevant); d) news headlines (if relevant). Print the first page (physical) for each of the four types of searches.

- B. Evaluate the quality of the three web-sources that provided you with the above materials. Ensure that your selection meets the CARS criteria for information quality:
- Credibility:** What is the author's education, training and/or experience? What is their current position? Do they include contact information? Is the information posted to an organizational or educational web site? If so ,who are they? Was the document previously published in printed form? If so, where?
- Accuracy:** Given the date of the document it the information still of value? For whom is this information intended and for what purpose? What is the document about? How is the document relevant to your thesis? Is the document comprehensive (e.g., complete, accurate, factual)? Provide examples.
- Reasonableness:** Does the author(s) provide a reasoned, objective argument? Does s/he provide a balanced view that looks at opposing viewpoints? Do you notice any bias? Provide examples.
- Support:** Where does the information in the document come from (e.g., are there intext citations)? Is a bibliography included? If so, what types of sources are listed (e.g., journal articles)? Are all statistics documented? Provide examples. Have you previously located other sources that support the arguments in this source? If so, which ones?
- C. In your Working Bibliography (RefWorks): Add the complete bibliographic information for these three web-based sources and state the tool and search strategy used, along with the date. In the Notes field, address each CARS criteria, along with any personal notes. Remember if the document was originally published in printed form, use the evaluation criteria you would use for printed sources.

Q.4 Using the Google Scholar engine

- A. Use your search statement (related terms, phrase searching, Boolean operators and nesting) or build the string using the advanced search functionality of Google Scholar engine.
- B. Search for scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, technical reports relevant to your research topic.
- C. Print the first two pages of your Google Scholar search.
- D. Mark and save the 3 results you deem relevant to your topic (your choice). You can export them in RefWorks if logged under Concordia University Libraries.

Q.5 Adding records to your Working Bibliography

- A. Review the records imported in RefWorks and evaluate their relevance to support ideas in your thesis statement. In RefWorks edit notes fields add the justification for inclusion.
- B. Add the search strategy you used to find the source into any spare field in RefWorks records. Produce your working bibliography using RefWorks output.
- C. As an option, you can keep your WB as an MS Word document.
- D. In addition generate a reference list (all relevant records) in the APA style (6th edition).

Q.6 Revising preliminary thesis statement and outline

Now that you have completed your searches and got an idea of what other researchers have written on your topic, you should have come across thoughts and ideas that can be used to make your own research more interesting. If needed revise your thesis and outline. In your Reflective Journal, explain your rationale for revising or not revising both. If you have revised either, include the new thesis/outline in your journal.

Hand in (add Table of Contents, page numbers, references, Appendices):

Reflective journal (all questions should be addressed)

Q1: revised thesis statement and outline

Q2: a 250-word summary;

Q3: first page of each of the searches for: a) PDF and Word and PPT files; b) definitions of your key concepts based on the preliminary thesis statement; c) image and video files (if relevant); d) news headlines (if relevant); and evaluations of the selected three web-sources.

Q4: first 2 pages from the Google Scholar search; evaluations of the three research sources.

Q5: a copy of your working bibliography (full-record including search strategy and justification for inclusion); a bibliographic list in the APA style.

Q6: refined thesis statement and fuller developed outline

NB! at the top of the cover page enter the full name, ID and the signature of each team member as well as the description of their contribution to this project. All team members must review the assignment before it is submitted.

Remember the penalties for late assignments! 1 mark per day (1%) will be deducted for late assignments.