9-13-2005

Introduction to Library Research

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Introduction to Library Research
Campaign Staffer Scenario

You were just hired to work on a state legislature’s campaign staff and your first day on the job brings you a big assignment! There has been a school shooting in your candidate’s district. The shooter reportedly said, “It was like playing a video game.” All of a sudden, violence in the media is a campaign issue.

The head policy wonk for the campaign is busy preparing the candidate for a debate on the issue. She has asked you to write a position paper for the campaign’s web site on the government’s role in censoring violence in the media. The paper must cite not only reputable books on the topic but also refereed journal articles, and links to web sites. Since it is your first day on the job, she gives you a tutorial to help you through the research process. As always on a campaign, the paper needed to be done yesterday, so it is all up to you to do the research and put together a respectable paper! Good luck, you’re going to need it.

An expert who studies a subject or issue thoroughly and excessively!
Lesson 1: Refining Search Parameters and The Library Catalog

The number one reason people are unable to find the information they need is poor task definition. In other words, if you do not know what you are looking for you will never find it. The most important step in all searches is task definition.

Therefore, the first step in your searches should be to understand the question you want answered and clearly write it down.

Another way to define your task is to write down what the title would be for the perfect article on your topic. Once you have your question or title written down then you can perform a concept analysis. Let's try one...

"Should the government censor violence in the media?"

This question clearly defines our task or in otherwords tells us what we are looking for. Let's do a concept analysis of this question.
Lesson 1: Refining Search Parameters and The Library Catalog
“Should the government censor violence in the media?”

The first thing we need to do is identify the main concepts in our question:

Government  Censor  Violence  media

These are the key concepts of our search. Other words in the sentence like “the” and “in” are known as stop words. Stop words are words that databases and search engines usually ignore because there are too many of them. If they were included in searches you would get terrible search results.
Lesson 1: Refining Search Parameters and The Library Catalog

“Should the government censor violence in the media?”

Now that we have our main concepts we need to make a list of synonyms and related terms for each word so that we have plenty of keywords to use for searching and to further refine our search.

- Government
- Censor
- Violence
- media
- Agency
- Regulate
- Murder
- Television
- FCC
- Legislate
- Killing
- Movies
- Federal
- Restrict
- Crime
- Video Games
- Congress
- Control
- Courts
- Ratings
Lesson 1: Refining Search Parameters and The Library Catalog

"Should the government...

Obviously some of these terms would work better than others in a search so we need to pick the ones that are most likely to give us the best results. In the first row the term Government seems to be the best choice. It encompasses all of the other terms and if the government were to censor violence in some way it may not be obvious which branch or agencies would be involved.

Government
Lesson 1: Refining Search Parameters and The Library Catalog

"Should the government regulate..."

Next we have the word “Censor”. This is a very loaded term. It would probably bring us search results of only those in opposition to our question instead of arguments from both sides. The items we would retrieve are also more likely to be inflammatory in nature. Of the other terms in our table the term Regulate seems to be the most likely to bring us the widest range of hits (or results) representing many different points of view. Legislate may also be a good term. We can include both by nesting the two terms in parenthesis and inserting the word OR in capital letters.

We would also like to include other forms of these words like legistor or regultions. Instead of typing in all of the variations of these words we can use truncation. Truncation is where you use a wildcard like an asterisk **" to tell the search engine or database to search for all of the words that start with the letters you have typed in before the wildcard character. In other words you can search for Legislate, legislator, legislating, legislation, and legislated by simply typing in legislat* . We will use truncation for legislate and regulate in our searches.

government (regulat* OR legislat*)
Lesson 1: Refining Search Parameters and The Library Catalog

"Should the government regulate violence...

Our next choice looks like it should be violence. In most discussions on the topic, the discussion is not limited to a specific act but to the broad category of violence usually associated with crime.

government (regulat* OR legislat*) violence
Lesson 1: Refining Search Parameters and The Library Catalog

"Should the government censor violence in video games?"

Our last concept of "Media" may be too broad. There are many types of media and you could write several books on violence in any of them. It might be best to choose a specific type of media especially one in which you are particularly interested in, or is currently being discussed in our society. Right now one of the hottest topics related to violence in the media seems to be video games. Let's use that for our final term.

```
government (regulat* OR legislat*) violence video games
```

Now we have four very good search terms and we have narrowed our topic down to something more manageable. Instead of searching for all media we are focusing in on violence in video games only. Let's try using some of our terms for some searches.
Lesson 1: Refining Search Parameters and The Library Catalog

“Should the government censor violence in video games?”

First, we want to see if there are any books written on our topic. Books are a very good source of information because they often go through a rigorous process of editing and selection before a reputable publisher will publish them. On top of that, the books in the library go through another selection process that helps to ensure the quality of the information. The books that have made it through this process will have a more in depth discussion of a topic than just an article or a web page. They are more likely to look at a topic from all sides and to have in depth and well thought out discussions of the topic.

So, we are going to use the SFA Library website to find some books on our topic.
You may access the SFA Library homepage by clicking the Library link on the SFA main page or you may go directly to the page by typing in the URL: http://libweb.sfasu.edu

Please click the Catalog button.

To search for a book about our subject we first need to access the Library Catalog. Click here to bring up that page.
Because of this, it might be best for us to use only the two most important terms in our search: Violence and video games. This should give us plenty of books to choose from on our topic. We will type in these words in a way that the database will understand what we are looking for.

Mainly we will connect the terms together using the term AND. So our search should look like violence AND video AND games.

The library catalog is a database that has the title of the book, the author, and several subject headings assigned to each book. The catalog does not search every word in a book or for journal articles.
This is our door to the library catalog. In this text box we are going to need to enter our query "violence AND video AND games." Why don't you go ahead and try entering it yourself...
Type in violence AND video AND games.
After entering in your query click here and launch the search.
The Search Results page has appeared. Let's briefly scroll through our results.
The first item on our list is a congressional hearing on our topic. It is a government document and is kept on the second floor of the library. You can tell that it is separate from the books by the Location description: SFA Documents. Now let’s scroll down to another search result...
Search Results
6 titles matched: violence AND video AND games

   Location: SFA Documents
   Collection: SFA Doc. Micro
   Call No.: Y 4 EN 2/3/1994-124
   Status: Checked In

2. Tuning in to young viewers: social science perspectives on television / Tannis M. MacBeth, editor.
Note that our fourth search result is located in SFA Stacks. This means it is a book located on either the third or fourth floor.
Another important aspect of catalog searching to understand is each search result's record. By click on a search result you may gain access to its record. Let's do that now; click our fifth search result...
Click the fifth search result to bring up it's record.
5. *Marketing violence to children: hearing before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, United States Senate, One Hundred Sixth Congress, second session, September 13, 2000.*

by United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation


Location: SFA Documents
Collection: SFA Doc Micro
Call No.: Y 4 C 73/7.S.HRS.106-1144
Status: Checked In
The Search Result Record page has appeared. Let’s briefly scroll through it...
Marketing violence to children: hearing before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, United States Senate, One Hundred Sixth Congress, second session, September 13, 2000.


Subjects :: Children and violence -- United States.
The record has some very important information. Probably the most important information is the title information at the top and the Copy/Holding information at the bottom. This gives you the collection and location it is in. This particular item is in the SFA Documents Microfilm collection. There is also a call number. The call number tells you exactly where on the shelf or in which drawer the item is kept. You will need to write this information down in order to retrieve this particular item. The column marked status lets you know whether an item is checked out or not.
You may have noticed that there is a URL in the record. Many government documents are online. This particular document is online so you do not even have to get the microfilm you can just read it on the web or print it out.
The next best thing about the record is the subject headings. These subject headings are based on a controlled vocabulary. That means that whenever there is a book about video games in the United States it will always have the subject heading “video games -- United States.”
If you click on one of the subject headings, you will get all of the other books in the library on that subject. This is a great way to expand your search and find more items. Let's look at what happens when we click on the subject heading. Try clicking on a subject heading, "Children and violence -- United States."

Click the Children and violence -- United States subject heading.
The Subject Headings Search Results page has appeared. Let's scroll through it briefly...
You have successfully completed Section One.
Library Searching Quiz
The most important step for any search is...
A) picking the right database.
B) picking the right keywords.
C) using books.
D) effective task definition.
Correct - Click here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.
Question %d of %d
Submit
Back
Clear
Library Searching Quiz
Concept analysis is when...
A) you convert your topic into a mathematical value.
B) you write down a question.
C) you pick out the most important terms or ideas from your task definition.
D) you analyze a set of search results and pick out the best one.
Correct - Click here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.
Question %d of %d
Submit
Back
Clear
Library Searching Quiz

Truncation is where you ...
A) add branches to your main concept in creating a concept tree.
B) cut you search string short so it will fit in the search box
C) add a wild card to the root of a word to retrieve all of the word variations in your search.
D) answers A and B.

Correct - Click to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please select an answer before continuing.

Question %d of %d
Submit
Back
Clear
Library Searching Quiz

Books are good sources of information because...
A) they have gone through a stringent editing process.
B) they are old.
C) they often discuss a topic in depth.
D) both a and c.
Correct - Click here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.

Submit

Back

Clear
This concludes Section One of the Introduction to Searching module.

You can now successfully gather books for the campaign paper!

Please proceed to Section Two.
Lesson 2: Searching for Journals

While books are one of the best sources of information on a topic they can sometimes be a bit dated. The process of writing a book can take years and may not have the most current information. A good place to get more current information is in journal articles.

There are basically three kinds of journal articles. The ones that you are most likely to need first are scholarly journals. Experts in their field have written scholarly journal articles and most importantly, these articles have been reviewed by other experts in the field for accuracy and quality of the content. These journals are referred to as refereed journals because of this stringent review process. Most refereed journals can only be found in libraries.

There are also popular journals. You would see these magazines at a supermarket or a bookstore. They can have valuable information and are usually easier to understand but they are not subject to the same quality standards of a scholarly journal. Let’s look for an article on our topic of violence in the media.
Once again, we need to launch the Library website in order to search through the various journals.
To begin our search we will click the Calli button. This will bring us to a page with several disciplines taught at SFA. We will need to choose one that will help focus our search.

Please click the Calli button.
This page contains many of the disciplines taught at SFA. Our subject “Should government censor violence in the media?” is most closely related to psychology. We choose psychology because studies about children and media violence are likely to be done by psychologists. Therefore we should look there for our journals.
Click the Psychology link.
Please click the Psychology link.
"Call" the Library Wizard provides access to indexes, e-journals, books, online catalogs, web sites, newsgroups, course reserves and all other library resources. Calli organizes these resources by SFA departments and curriculum.

Accounting
Agribusiness
Anatomy/Physiology
Anthropology/Archaeology
Astronomy
Biology
Chemistry
Child Family Development
Communication
Computer Science
Criminal Justice
Economics/Finance
Elementary Education
English/Philosophy
Environmental Science
Fashion Merchandising
Forestry
General
General Business
Genetics
Geography
Geology
Government Documents
History
Hospitality Administration
Human Health
Human Sciences
Human Services
Internet Design
Interdisciplinary Studies
Journalism
Kinesiology
Liberals Studies
Linguistics
Math/NIIT/Int. Business
Mathematics/Statistics
Medical/Health
Microbiology
Military Science
Modern Languages
Music
Nursing
Nutrition/Dietetics
Physics
Political Science
Psychology
Public Administration
Radiation Therapy
Secondary Education
Social Work
Sociology
Speech Communication
Theatre
Veterinary Zoology
Viticulture
The Psychology Page appears
In order to find journal articles you have to look in a database or journal index. There are hundreds of databases to choose from and Steen library subscribes to well over a hundred of them. These databases are fee based, are not available to the public, and cannot be found with internet search engines. However, they are available, free of charge to individuals in the SFA community.
If you notice at the top of the Calli page, you will find the picture of a librarian. The librarian is the most important resource in the library. Their main function is to help you find the information you need. Ask them many questions. They have spent years helping students and researchers find information.
First, we are going to select one of my favorite general indexes Expanded Academic Index. This database is available in the general section of all of the Calli pages. This time we are going to construct a search using all of our key terms. First click on the Expanded academic Index link...

Please click the Expanded Academic Index link.
The Expanded Academic Index page appears.
Expanded academic has selected a subject search for you by default, which is a search of their controlled vocabulary similar to the one in the book catalog we searched earlier. However, we want to do a key word search so we are going to select that now. Please click the keyword search button.
The Keyword search page appears.
Once we have selected keyword search we will get another screen and we will want to select “Search for Words In entire article content.” This will search for anything in the title, the abstract, and if it is available the full text of the article.

Please click the “in entire article” button.
Now, we are ready to search. First, we need to figure out exactly what search terms we will use in the database to maximize results. Let's show you....
Lesson 2: Searching for Journals

This time when we search we will type in our full search string using all of our terms:

- government
- (regulat* OR legislat*)
- violence
- video games

This should bring us some very specific results related to our topic. First, we will use government then we want to attach that to regulat* or legislat* we do that by typing government AND (regulat* OR legislat*) this will give us documents with the word government and either the word legislate or regulate or any of their variants.

Next, we need to connect our two additional terms namely violence and video games first we connect violence with the word "AND" giving us Government AND (regulat* OR legislat*) AND violence. Now the last two words are a specific phrase and we want to be sure that we get pages that has the phrase video games and not just the word video in one place and games somewhere else on the page. We do this by using quotation marks so our final search string should look like this:

government AND ( regulat* OR legislat*) AND violence AND “video games”.

This would give us the most relevant results for the topic of government regulations on violence and the connection to video games.
Please click the Search button!
The Search Results page appears.

As you can see we have 231 articles appear under our search. Our search was a huge success, and is proof that a well-defined task definition will yield many results.

Let's scroll through the first page of results briefly...
Captivate

Monday, February 12, 2018

[Image of a computer screen showing a search bar with a keyword search query. The query is: "Keyword search (an entire article content): government AND (regulat* OR legislat*) AND violence AND "video games""

Search results are displayed, with one result highlighted:

Sex, Lies, and Videogames: What's most shocking about the controversial—and top-selling—Grand Theft Auto isn't embedded sex scenes. It's the financial chicanery of the game's maker. Why don't investors care? (Brief Article)(Company Profile) Bethany Mollenkof

*Fortune* August 22, 2005 v152 N p66 (2486 words)
This concludes Section Two!
Library Searching Quiz
On the Library homepage what button do you hit to get to the journal databases?
A) Home  
B) CALLI  
C) LibWeb  
D) Journals
Correct - Click Here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.
Question %d of %d
Submit  
Back  
Clear
Library Searching Quiz
Many of the databases you, as a part of the SFA community, have access to are fee-based and exempt from public internet searches?
A) True
B) False
Correct - Click here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.
Question %d of %d
Submit
Back
Clear
Library Searching Quiz

To nest terms together you should put them within...

A) parenthesis
B) brackets
C) quotations
D) None of these

Correct - Click here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.

Question %d of %d
Submit
Back
Clear
This concludes Section Two of the Introduction to Searching module.

Now, finding journals to support our position is no problem!

Please proceed to Section Three.
Lesson 3: Searching on Google

Now let’s turn to the internet and see if we can find anything useful on our topic.

Let’s start with Google. Google has quickly outpaced its competitors in the search engine business. While there are some search engines that do certain things better than Google, Google seems to be the best all around product at the moment. Since we often get a lot of garbage hits on the Internet we want to narrow our search as much as possible to get the most relevant results. Since we are looking at government involvement in the regulation of video games we are going to use one of Google’s specialized search engines called Google U.S. Government. This can be hard to find. First, go to the Google home page...
Next, Select the more » link...

Please click the more » link...
The Google Search: More, more, more page appears
Click the Special Searches link to get to the Google U.S. Government search.
Please click the Special Searches link...
Use Google to search within specific topics

Google's special searches enable you to narrow your search to a specific topic.

Our **Public Service Search** offers educational institutions and non-profit organizations worldwide free SiteSearch.

Our **University Search** enables you to search for a specific school website. We now offer hundreds of schools. Try searching for things like admissions information, course schedules, or alumni news.

Google also offers these special searches:

U.S. Government

Linux

BSD
The Special Google Searches page appears
Select the U.S. Government link
Please click the U.S. Government link...
Our University Search enables you to search for a specific school website. We now offer hundreds of schools. Try searching for things like admissions information, course schedules, or alumni news.

Google also offers these special searches:

- U.S. Government
- Linux
- Apple Macintosh
- Microsoft

©2004 Google - Home - All About Google - We're Hiring - Site Map
Now let’s search for violence “video games” we do not have to use the term AND because Google will assume the term AND in all of the results it brings to the top but we do need to use quotation marks so that we get the specific phrase “video games”. We also do not need to use the word government because we are searching a part of Google that is already dedicated to government information.
Enter in violence "video games" into our search field.
Please enter violence "video games" and click the search button!
As you can see from our top ten results we have received our search has been very successful, and we have found plenty of information directly related to our topic. We have also avoided a lot of .com sites trying to sell us video games which we would have gotten in a regular Google search.
As you can see we used the building blocks of the first step—the task definition then the concept analysis to perform different searches in different resources. The most important part of any search and where most searches fail is in the task definition and concept analysis stage. Time spent narrowing your topic and identifying good key words will save you a great deal of effort and trouble down the road.
Library Searching Quiz
The most important part in any search is the...
A) search engine
B) choice of database
C) effective task definition and concept analysis
D) using Google!
Correct - Click here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.
Question %d of %d
Submit
Back
Clear
Library Searching Quiz
The best way to search Google is to...
A) type in a question on the home page.
B) choose an appropriate Google search engine and then use carefully chosen keywords.
C) anything that gets you at least a million.
D) whatever comes up because it is all good.
Correct - Click here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.
Question %d of %d
Submit
Back
Clear
Library Searching Quiz

Search engines are...
A) the first place you should look for information
B) the last place you should look for information
C) have no good information in them
D) are part of a larger effective search strategy.

Correct - Click here to continue
Incorrect - Click to continue
Please try again.
Please select an answer before continuing.

Question %d of %d
Submit
Back
Clear
This concludes Section Three of the Introduction to Searching module.

You have reached the end! Congratulations!

You now have the tools necessary to complete our campaign paper and any other research project you may encounter!