

Advantages of Different Types of

Resources

Books • Newspapers • Periodicals • Internet Sources • Government Documents • Dissertations

BOOKS

Books generally provide in-depth and lengthy coverage on a given subject. Because of the amount of time involved to write and publish, the information is not always up-to-the-minute. This is only a concern if you are researching a topic that requires the most current information available. If you are unsure of the merit of a book, consult a book review published in a professional journal of the given subject area.

Use for...

starting your research, background facts, and introductory information on a topic.

Find by using...

Feinberg Library's **Online Catalog** • **SUNYcat** • **WorldCat** and **Books in Print** for libraries and publishers around the world • **Booksellers** (e.g., Amazon.com) • **ICEPAC** for libraries near Plattsburgh.

NEWSPAPERS

Daily newspapers are a great source for information on current events, such as Middle East peace talks. Older editions provide day-to-day coverage of past events such as the oil embargo and the Manson murders. Because newspapers are outlets of mass communication, they're good barometers for reading the interests of the popular culture.

Use for...

current events and breaking news, hot topics, and for updating older information.

Find by using...

sources such as **Proquest Newspapers** (27 major U.S. newspapers) • **Custom Newspapers** (150 newspapers, including 10 from New York state) • **Lexis- Nexis** online and news sources such as the WorldNews Network (www.wn.com).

PERIODICALS

Like newspapers, periodicals are good sources for current information. Periodicals differ from newspapers in that many periodicals are professional journals devoted to a specific field of study, such as *Journal of Protozoology*. Articles appearing in these journals are much more authoritative than comparative newspaper articles as most have very stringent review processes for submission. Compared to books, periodical articles tend to focus on a specific aspect of a topic, and are less useful for general overviews or histories of a topic.

Use for...

research on a specific topic, academic papers and case studies, updating information from reference or textbooks.

Find by using...

the Feinberg Library's **research databases** covering your topic • **full-text databases** such as the Health Reference Center, Proquest Research Library, and Academic Search Premier • other databases, such as **JSTOR**, **Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center**, and **ScienceDirect**.

INTERNET SOURCES

The Internet is a great resource for getting current information on a variety of topics, BUT always consider the source. The commercial domain (.com) is less reliable than the educational (.edu) or government (.gov) domains. Also, check when the site was last updated (you can do this and check the source of the document by opening “document info” in one of the pull-down menus of your web browser). If the site on a current issue was last updated several months ago, chances are the information contained within is not reliable. The Internet is useful for finding information on associations and companies, but remember to pay attention to who has authored the web page.

Use for...

just about anything; including history, primary documents, news, business, health, government, and international information, and personal stories. *Always be skeptical and alert for errors and bias.*

Find by using...

Internet search engines and directories. Start with options recommended on the Feinberg Library homepage (www.plattsburgh.edu/library).

U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

U.S. Government documents are excellent sources of information on a variety of topics, such as business, science, law, criminal justice, etc. These primary documents, published under the auspices of the federal government, provide vital information such as census data, Supreme Court transactions, and federal rules and regulations. Policy statements and resources are often listed on agency web sites for citizen use as well.

Use for...

any topic; especially education, political, legal, business and social issues topics.

Find by using...

the **GPO Access** and **GPO Monthly Catalog** databases • **WorldCat** and the **Feinberg Library Online Catalog** • the **Web at the Federal Web Locator** and **FirstGov.gov**

DISSERTATIONS

Dissertations generally cover a narrow topic but do so in great detail. The authority of the work is generally without question as all are produced under the guidance of an academic committee within a university. To gauge the value of the information to a given field of study, check to see if it was published. A published dissertation has made it through the extra review process of a particular press, and therefore, it is likely to be more authoritative than a similar paper that has not been published.

Use for...

comprehensive research papers, graduate level courses, and very specific or hard-to- find topics.

Find by using...

the **Dissertation Abstracts** database • **WorldCat** • (NOTE: Some journal databases include dissertations in their results, such as ERIC, CINAHL, and PsycINFO).

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