

PAF 101 – MISCELLANEOUS TIPS FROM LIBRARIAN
Module 2 – Fall 2009

See also: PowerPoint slides from librarian lecture, available at PAF 101 class website.

Warning: These librarian tips offer advice on Module 2 but are NOT a substitute for complete and careful review of the Module 2 instructions themselves.

Exercise 2.1: Exploring GoodSearch (powered by Yahoo!)

Tip: Web search engines usually provide a mix of reliable and not so reliable sources.

Librarian Food for Thought: For your societal problem/research topic, are you comfortable taking information you learn about via GoodSearch and then seeking out more information about the topic using non-Yahoo style research tools (e.g., Lexis Nexis Statistical & Proquest Research Library databases, SU Library's online catalog, etc.)?

Exercise 2.2: Locating Quantitative Data - Lexis Nexis Statistical

Tip #1: Use the "Find a Table" feature

Tip #2: Leave all narrowing "breakdown" categories on "any"

Tip #3: Experiment with changing the pull down menu from "all fields" to "table title" or "subject terms"

Tip #4: Use "period of coverage" date specifications if you get too many results

Exercise 2.3: Finding Periodical Articles - Proquest Research Library

Reminder: Do not use an article from an academic journal!

Librarian Challenge: How talented are you at identifying which journal articles are "academic" (scholarly/peer reviewed) and which are not?

Exercise 2.4: Finding Books - SU Library Catalog ("DISCOVER")

Tip: Access the DISCOVER search box at the Library website (note: The Library's older catalog interface is called SUMMIT and is sometimes referred to on the Library website as "Classic Catalog")

Librarian Challenge: Can you identify books published by the U.S. Government? (They may not be used for this exercise!)

Exercise 2.5: Using United States Government Publications

Reminder: Do not use a document published by the U.S. Census Bureau for this exercise!

Tip: If a relevant document on your topic is not available online, try searching its title in SU Library's DISCOVER Catalog (it may be available in print at E.S. Bird Library)

Exercise 2.6: Using Policy Publications - CQ Researcher

2.6A - Find a publication/CQ Researcher report on your topic

Tip: CQ Researcher is a great source for encyclopedic overviews of most topics with public policy implications

2.6B - Use the "Contacts" section of the report you select

Tip #1: The contacts section appears at the left margin of each CQ Researcher report

Tip #2: When on an organizational or policy institute website and seeking a "policy paper," "working paper," "policy brief" or "online report," look for links labeled "publications," OR "research," OR "working papers," OR "library," etc.

Exercise 2.7: Using United States Census Data

Tip#1: Use the "American FactFinder" tool to retrieve most of the data needed for this exercise.

Tip#2: To determine a comparable census area to your home county/city/town, use the "Population Finder" tool (located at the left margin, inside of American FactFinder)

Module 2 exercises require great attention to detail. Waiting until the last minute to begin is a big mistake!!!

Have other questions about Syracuse University Library or your research process? Contact Michael Pasqualoni.

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