Doing a Literature Search for your dissertation or project
Learning outcomes

• By the end of this session, you will be able to:
  • Consider your topic and identify keywords
  • Plan your search strategy using advanced search techniques
Devising a search strategy

Why use a search strategy?

• Saves you time
• Helps you to keep track of your searches
• Allows you to search the same way in many sources – consistency
• Allows you to piece together more relevant results
Defining your search

• First step – define what you are looking for – could be a statement or a question

• Identify the subject areas of your topic
Example

• ‘The effects of viral marketing on teenagers’ buying habits’
  • Subject areas: marketing, business, psychology, sociology (use of social networks)

• Questions 1 and 2 on worksheet
Finding Subject Resources

- **LibGuides**
  - For resources in different subject areas
Finding the best sources to search

- Books
- Peer reviewed journals on subject databases
- Conference proceedings
- Government publications
- Theses
- Official organisation websites e.g. Royal College of Nursing
- Other databases e.g. Images, market research
Identifying keywords

- ‘The effects of viral marketing on teenagers’ buying habits’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>viral marketing</th>
<th>teenagers</th>
<th>buying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stealth marketing</td>
<td>young people</td>
<td>spending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guerrilla marketing</td>
<td>youth</td>
<td>purchasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online marketing</td>
<td>adolescents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Question 3
Building up your search effectively

• Identifying keywords
• Boolean searching
  • Using AND, OR
• Truncation / Wildcards
• Phrase searching
• Field searching
• Limits e.g. by date
Broad search

(teenagers OR youth)
Narrow search

Viral marketing AND teenagers
Individual exercise

• Question 4
Advanced search techniques

• Truncation
  • market*

• Wildcards
  • behavio#r
  • wom?n

• Phrase Searching
  • “viral marketing”

• Searching by Field e.g. by author, keyword, abstract, article title etc

• Question 5
# Search Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Research Question</th>
<th>[Write your question here] e.g. The effects of viral marketing on teenagers’ buying habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Places to search for information</td>
<td>[Write your sources here] e.g. Discovery, Business Source Complete, ASSIA, ScienceDirect, Education Research Complete, PsycInfo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of sources searched</th>
<th>Date of search</th>
<th>Search strategy used including limits</th>
<th>Total number of results found</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Business Source Complete| 14/04/15      | Viral marketing OR stealth marketing OR online marketing  
Teenagers OR young people OR Adolescents  
Buying Or spending OR purchasing  
results of searches 1 AND 2 AND 3 | 30                           | Try adding in advertising            |
4 steps to finding literature

1. Identify keywords
2. Decide where to search
3. Search
4. Review results
Refining your search results

Too few results

• Spellings
• Boolean operators
• More search terms
• Subject headings
• Use one result as a launch pad
• Limits
• Correct databases

Too many results

• More specific search terms
• Add more concepts
• Boolean operators
• “phrase searching”
• Field searching
• Limits
Using one good result as a launch pad

- Author
  Written other similar papers?

- Relevant record

- Citings?
  Research which has quoted this paper

- References
  Previous research to read

- Keywords
  Lead to other records on the subject

Publication
Browse other issues of journals?
Summary: Search strategy steps

1. Think about your topic
2. Determine your subject areas
3. Identify your key concepts – meaningful terms, not “on” “as” etc
4. Think of alternative keywords
5. Consider how to link them together in your search using boolean operators
6. Apply other search techniques e.g. phrase searching
7. Any other limitations?
8. Refine your search
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