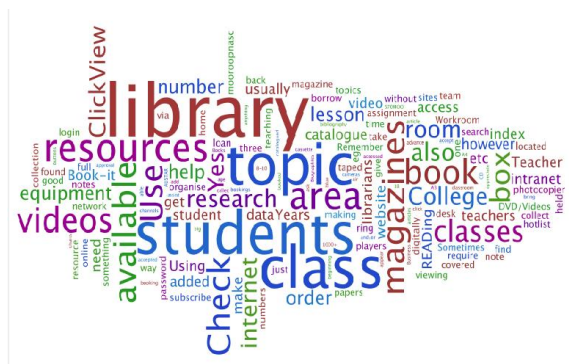




# Types of Information Resources

locate, select, use...



## Why should I use....?

Different kinds of student work (*assignments, projects, literature reviews, dissertations, etc.*) require information from a variety of sources. To **locate** the appropriate material and **select** the most suitable sources to **use**, you need to understand **what types of information resources** you may find in the Information & Learning Commons (ILC) and in any library as well. All of these information resources can be found in print or online, sometimes depending on how the publisher makes them available.

This guide will help you understand the benefits of using each of these **types of resources**.

**Books:** Use books when looking for an overall background on an issue or an intense analysis of a theory or person.

- In-depth info on a specific topic
- Scholarly books have bibliographies; follow up to check the info and find additional sources.
- Information can be dated. Check the publication date.

### Encyclopedias, Handbooks & Dictionaries:

- Concise overviews of a variety of topics, which can be helpful if you are just beginning your research and need background information on your topic.
- Include facts, figures, addresses, statistics, definitions and dates.

### Directories:

- Include lists of companies within an industry or according to certain criteria.
- Find specialists in an area that you're researching.

**Scholarly journals:** are good for up-to-date information. They are frequently used in literature searches & reviews because they offer a relatively concise, up-to-date format for research.

- Study narrow & specific subjects.
- Journal articles are reviewed & evaluated by other experts prior to acceptance.
- Scientific & technological discoveries are reported in detail in peer-reviewed journals.
- In-depth original research.
- Analysis & overview of research.
- Cited sources/bibliographies/reference lists.

**Popular magazines:** magazines intended for a general audience (e.g. Time). Specialized magazines (*for example business magazines for management students*) are not useful for research except as a starting point by providing news or general information about new discoveries, policies, etc. that you can further research in more specialized sources.

- Brief information on diverse, broad general-interest topics.
- Entertainment, leisure reading.
- Little technical language or jargon.
- Not much in-depth info.
- Few or no cited sources.

**Newspapers:** since newspapers are generally intended for a general (not specialized) audience, the information they provide will be of very limited use for research. Often newspapers are more helpful as providers of information about recent trends, discoveries or changes, e.g. announcing changes in government policy.

**Conference Proceedings:** can be useful in providing the latest research, or research that has not been published. They are also helpful in providing information on who are currently involved and in which research areas and in tracking down other work by the same researchers.

**Government/Corporate Reports:** many government departments and corporations commission or carry out research. Their published findings can provide a useful source of information, depending on your field of study.

**Dissertations & Theses:** these can be useful sources of information. However there are disadvantages: 1) they can be difficult to obtain since they are not published, but are generally only available from the library shelf or through interlibrary loan; 2) the student who carried out the research may not be an experienced researcher and therefore you might have to treat their findings with more caution than published research.

**Databases:** contain information from multiple sources. Databases include quality resources for research such as, scholarly journals, newspapers, conference papers, and magazines. Databases are web-based and accessible through the ILC's website.

**Google & Google Scholar** are useful, but ILC databases are more reliable and efficient.

#### Why?

***Databases are more likely to contain the full text of articles.***

- If you find an article through Google, you will most likely be asked to pay for it

***Databases have advanced search features.***

- You can choose to search only for scholarly sources.

- You can limit your search to a specific time period, author, publication, or subject terms.

***Databases are either discipline-specific or multidisciplinary.***

For example, if you're searching for articles about economics & finance, you can search in specialized databases for that subject area. Or, you can search in a database that covers many different academic subjects, from engineering to science to history to business.

**E-journals:** are scholarly journals or intellectual magazines that can be accessed electronically. They provide material for academic research and study and they are formatted approximately like in the traditional printed journals.

- Offer up-to-date information.
- Published by academic publishers, professional societies or university bodies.

An increasing number of journals are now available as online **open access journals** requiring no subscription and offering **free full-text** articles and reviews to the public.

**Internet:** the fastest-growing source of information. It is impossible to characterize the information available but here are some hints about using information from Internet sources:

- A growing number of peer-reviewed e-journals are appearing on the Internet , so the quality should be more reliable.
- Ease of access and availability of open access material including government websites and reports.

However:

- Anyone can post information on the Internet so the quality may not be reliable.
- The information you find may be intended for a general audience and not appropriate for research.

For further help you may reach the Library Services Desk by email at: [library@citycollege.sheffield.eu](mailto:library@citycollege.sheffield.eu) or [anagnostopoulou@citycollege.sheffield.eu](mailto:anagnostopoulou@citycollege.sheffield.eu) by phone: +30 2310 538560/961 or in person at the Information & Learning Commons (ILC), 6th floor, Leontos Sofou building.