"... the constant threat of unpredictable dangers like plane crashes or random shootings pervade our lives....

...IS the world really such a dangerous place?...

Doubt it!

Source: Culture of Fear. Talk of the Nation, National Public Radio
http://search.npr.org/cf/cmn/cmnpd01fm.cfm?PrgDate=11/09/1999&PrgID=5
Learning Objective

To explore some strategies to check/verify facts, find and evaluate information from the web, online and traditional library resources.
How do we Know?...ways to answer questions

- **Using Common Sense/Guessing**
  - Usually not enough to completely answer the question
  - Doubts creep in if differing points of view are presented
  - A guess is only a guess...not supported

> “Everybody gets so much information all day long that they lose their common sense.”
> -- Gertrude Stein

> “Common sense is the most fairly distributed thing in the world, for each one thinks he is so well-endowed with it that even those who are hardest to satisfy in all other matters are not in the habit of desiring more of it than they already Have.”
> -- René Descartes

(Katzer 1982)
Asking or Seeking Advice

- Of friends, colleagues, teachers, acknowledged leaders, professionals, etc.
- May not answer your question completely
- How did they gain their experience...was it haphazard?
- Are these their impressions or insights...?
- Do they remember them accurately?
- Are they over-generalizing? Who should you believe?

I always pass on good advice. It is the only thing to do with it.

It is never of any use to oneself. -- Oscar Wilde

(Katzer 1982)
… ways to answer questions

- Conducting your own research
  - Can be a good way to answer a question
  - Surveying/Asking your question to a set of (right?) people to get their responses
  - Compile, study and evaluate these responses and you may find the answer.
  - Can be a very Time-consuming process

*If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?*

-- Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955)

(Katzer 1982)
Searching the Literature/Published works

- If your question has been studied before you might get important information from a literature search.
- This is your preliminary step to any research. You should know what has been written about the question you are asking or your topic of research.
- Search, locate and collect information about your topic.
- Assess what you find….go beyond the information you read and try to draw your own conclusions.

It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curious of inquiry. It is a very grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion and a sense of duty.

-- Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955)

(Katzer 1982)
Information can be found from facts, ideas, articles, opinions, interpretations, discourses, speeches, statistics, survey results, etc.

What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence, a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it.

-- Herbert Simon, Economist
Rutgers University Libraries

Looking for Information

Knowledge is of two kinds: we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.  

-- Samuel Johnson (1709 - 1784)

❖ On Library Indexes and Databases
  • Use Subject specific indexes/databases
  • Use Electronic Journals
  • Use subject guides for reference and other compiled information

❖ On The Web
  • Use subject directories
  • Use Search Engines
  • Use subject collection websites/portals
  • Use metacrawlers

❖ On the Library Catalog
  • Use Browse & subject searching
  • Use Keyword searches
Searching for Information

On Library *Indexes and Databases*

search for *articles* from journals, magazines and newspapers

➢ Use Subject specific indexes/databases

*Academic Search Premier* (EBSCOhost)
Criminal Justice Abstracts
Social Science Abstracts
Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science)
*Sociofile*

❖ *Related Databases:*
How do you Search? …Ways of Searching

- Simple or keyword searching
- Advanced / Power Searching
  (Librarians call it “Boolean Searching”)
Let us try to search a library database

RU Libraries’ Web site
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu
Is it a Scholarly Journal or a Popular one?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Scholarly/Research</th>
<th>Popular/Magazine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>To communicate research ideas</td>
<td>To inform and entertain the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage</td>
<td>Other Scholars, researchers, students</td>
<td>General Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Narrow/specific subjects</td>
<td>Cross-disciplinary, Broad variety of topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional, academic associations colleges, universities and commercial publishers</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers</td>
<td>Scholars, Researchers, Experts</td>
<td>Journalists, publishing employees, reporters and researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Assumes general background information or knowledge; discipline specific jargon; peer review/refereed; bibliographies and references present; detailed procedures and processes</td>
<td>Little technical language or jargon; Few or no references cited; no bibliographies; general summaries of background information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>American Journal of Sociology; British Journal of Sociology…</td>
<td>Time; Newsweek,…..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You can also check…..

Databases such as

**Academic Search Premier (EBSCO HOST)**
or
**Ulrich’s International Periodicals Directory**

which inform you if a certain periodical/journal is *peer-reviewed or refereed*. 
Searching for Information

- **On The Web**
  - Use subject directories
    - Yahoo Directory listings: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)
  - Use Search Engines
    - [Google](http://www.google.com), [Altavista](http://www.altavista.com)
  - Use subject collection websites/portals
    - SOSIG: [http://www.sosig.ac.uk/social_science_general/](http://www.sosig.ac.uk/social_science_general/)
    - Dmoz project: [http://dmoz.org/](http://dmoz.org/)
  - Use meta crawlers
    - [http://www.profusion.com](http://www.profusion.com)
Simple OR Keyword search

- Fast
- Flexible
- Especially Relevant for Distinct word searches, e.g. Xylophone
  - The results set can be very large, unorganized, confusing and tedious to browse even though it contains your search term.

  - If your search
    - has no distinctive words, or phrases
    - or you are searching for an overview to cover a broad topic
    - or need a narrow aspect of broad or common topic

Simple Search can be frustrating  

...try an advanced search
In Google you don't need to type AND, OR, ",", NOT.
Google offers specialized searches on the following topics:

- **Apple Macintosh** - Search for all things Mac
- **BSD Unix** - Search web pages about the BSD operating system
- **Linux** - Search all penguin-friendly pages
- **U.S. Government** - Search all .gov and .mil sites
- **Universities** - Stanford, Brown, BYU, & more

©2001 Google
Look at your topic..No..no…Carefully…..

(Katzer 1982)
Look at your topic..No..no…Carefully

• When we approach a topic to research we may already have an opinion or maintain a certain view about it…

• ….as we search and read more about it, we build/modify our position based on the information we get.

The process of modifying or changing our position/opinion/belief as we gain more information helps us understand the issue/topic better.

(Brem 2000)
Checking for Information and evaluating it for accuracy is very much testing a hypothesis…. But BEWARE it can also be self-fulfilling (that is….once we have an opinion/make a judgement, we tend to look for information/articles that supports this opinion/belief)

Consciously look for/think of opposite view points and consider carefully what is being written/said about your topic

(Brem 2000)
“Consider the *structure* and *reliability* of a source”

**Structure**
- Is the information contained/restricted/developed within the database? If so, is the information better? Does it have better standards?

**Reliability**
- Remember you are including “this reference” in your paper…is it reliable?

*(Brem 2000)*
Which one would you consider yourself to be?

“Absolutist”

You consider issues as “black-and-white”- unconstrained of any perceptions and valuations

“Multiplist”

You consider issues as having multiple potential with almost equal validities

“Evaluativist”

You consider issues as having “some better and some worse answers and ....can identify them by weighing the evidence”.

(Brem 2000)
Hope you chose..... “Evaluativist”

Evaluate!
Evaluate!
Evaluate!

“Take your information to the CAFÉ”
Challenge, Adapt, File & Evaluate

(Katzer 1982)

(Trenni Kuchi
kuchi@rci.rutgers.edu 02/2003

(Harris 1997)
The CARS Checklist for Research Source Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credibility/Authority/Trust</th>
<th>trustworthy source, author’s credentials, evidence of quality control, known or respected authority, organizational support. Goal: an authoritative source, a source that supplies some good evidence that allows you to trust it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>up to date, factual, detailed, exact, comprehensive, audience and purpose reflect intentions of completeness and accuracy. Goal: a source that is correct today (not yesterday), a source that gives the whole truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonableness/Neutral/Advocacy</td>
<td>fair, balanced, objective, reasoned, no conflict of interest, absence of fallacies or slanted tone. Goal: a source that engages the subject thoughtfully and reasonably, concerned with the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support/Currency/Coverage</td>
<td>listed sources, contact information, available corroboration, claims supported, documentation supplied. Goal: a source that provides convincing evidence for the claims made, a source you can triangulate (find at least two other sources that support it).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Source: http://www.virtualsalt.com/evalu8it.htm

(Harris 1997)
Examples

Martin Luther King - Papers Project
http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/

Martin Luther King - An Historical Examination
http://www.martinlutherking.org
Attention Deficit Disorder
http://www.all-natural.com/add.html

NIMH Attention Deficit Disorder
http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/adhd.cfm

The True but Little Known Facts about Women and AIDS
http://147.129.226.1/library/research/AIDSFACTS.htm

AIDS Surveillance in Women
http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/hiv_aids/graphics/women.htm
You don’t want this kind of publicity NOW or when you become the prime minister!
Popular style manuals used for writing research papers

Check IRIS - the Library Catalog

**ASA style guide**

**Chicago Manual of Style**

**MLA Style Manual**
References used in this presentation


Thank You!

Please feel free to contact me

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Fax: 732-445-3472  
Email: kuchi@rci.rutgers.edu  

Questions?