Social Work 1A6:
Intro to Library Research

Sep 17, 2007
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Outline

1. You need scholarly information!
2. Exploring the Virtual Library
3. Exploring the Physical Library
4. Evaluating Information
Scholarly (peer-reviewed) information:

- is also known as ‘refereed’ information
- is written by and for researchers, academics, professors
- is written in the language of the discipline, not for a general reader
- is reviewed by other experts before it is published
- has few advertisements
- provides illustrations only to support the research (graphs, charts etc.); NOT glossy pictures
- clearly indicates sources used (references or bibliography)
Social Work Examples:

Scholarly/Peer reviewed (most are online):
- Australian Social Work
- The British journal of social work
- Canadian Social Work
- Native Social Work Journal (paper only)

General Interest (Not “refereed”)
- Maclean’s
- Newsweek
Scholarly Information is found.....

- in books, in journals, on websites....
- by using search engines (SE)
- there are thousands of SE. 2 examples:

  **Scholars Portal Search**
  - library database subscription
  - need your MAC ID

  ![Google Scholar](logo)

Look for **find it @mac** to link to library subscriptions

*McMaster University Libraries*

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Why use a book for information?

- broad overview of a topic
- good source of background information
- provides context
Why use a journal for information?

Articles are:
- focused on a specific sub-topic
- in-depth
Explore the Virtual Library.....

1. Library webpage [http://library.mcmaster.ca/](http://library.mcmaster.ca/)
2. To find books -> Search *Library catalogue*
3. To find articles (using Scholars Portal Search):  
   1. Click on *Databases* Tab  
   2. Type *scholarsportal*  
   3. Choose *scholarsportal search*

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Evaluating Information....

- Use more than one source

- How do the different sources fit with each other? Complementary? Contradictory?

- Use more than one type (book, articles, websites)
Evaluating Information. Think about:

- Accuracy (errors? Comprehensive?)
- Authority (who wrote this?!? What are the author’s credentials? Is the publisher reputable?)
- Objectivity (minimum of bias? fair, balanced and reasonable? without conflict of interest?)
- Currency (when written? Updated?)
Explore the Physical Library.....

- **Long Hours** (till 2am Oct-Dec; Feb - Apr)
- **Book a Group (3 or more) Study Room**
- **Find books** and sign them out (student card)
Puzzled? Confused? Got Questions?
Need Help? Just Ask!

Visit: Research Help Desk, Mills 2nd Floor

Call: 905.525.9140 x 22533

Email: library@mcmaster.ca

MSN: library@mcmaster.ca

AOL/Yahoo!: maclibraries