McKillop Library

Introduction to Library Services for Doctoral Students
General research guide: https://salve.libguides.com/GraduateStudents

A Few Research Strategies

Identify language used for your topic by topic experts
Your list of results can be as useful as the articles and books themselves. While you're scanning the results of your search, look for the specific words or phrases used to describe various aspects of your topic. Note new words on a pad of paper and use those specific words or phrases to rework your search.

Find the subject headings, or controlled vocabulary, for your topic
Try a search using your search words. You can rework your search using the strategy above, but you may find that keyword searches can yield irrelevant results. One way around this is to review your result list of books or articles. Once you find a really good one, look for subject headings to quickly lead you to more relevant articles on your topic. Ask a librarian if you're having trouble finding the subject headings.

Make use of citation chaining
Back in time:
Bibliography, hyperlinks, or footnotes
Look at what your article/report/page is citing, find those sources. Look at what that article/report/page cites, find those sources, and so on.

Forward in time:
Google Scholar "cited by"
Find a key article in Google Scholar and click on "cited by" to see who has quoted that article since it was written.

Identify key experts
Do the names come up again and again? Do an author search to find everything that person has written.

Consider contacting experts
Ask specific questions about your topic for information that is not yet published. Follow their social media feeds or blog posts.

Identify key organizations
Look at the lead organizations for your issue, find everything they've published on your topic, monitor their publications, and identify their experts on staff. Follow their social media feeds or blog posts.

Leverage social media
Your field may use social media as a form of scholarly communication. Identify the accounts for experts in your field and the hashtags they use to discuss your topic.

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Efficiency Tips

Try using quotation marks in Google or JSTOR searches around key words or phrases to get more specific results.

Use CTRL F or the search function in articles and e-books. If you think an article or e-book is on topic, open it online and do a quick search. Hit CTRL F for PDFs or webpages, and the built-in search function in e-books. Type in your search term and see how many times it shows up, and in what context in the text to see if the source is useful to you.

To search article databases or use e-books from your dorm or off campus:
Always go through the library's webpage. Otherwise, you won't be able to access the books or articles for free. From the library's webpage, you'll be asked to sign in with your firstname.lastname and email password.

Some Useful Search Tools

EBSCO HOST	EBSCO has thousands subject specific and multidisciplinary journals in most fields. EBSCO's features include the ability to search by subject heading. Try an all-EBSCO search to cast the widest net with your search terms, or restrict by subject database to see your topic through the lens of a particular discipline.
WorldCat	WorldCat Discovery is the library's catalog. It includes books, and its best feature is its comprehensiveness for book searches. Your search can include most of the library holdings in the US and sometimes internationally.
JSTOR	JSTOR includes thousands of journals, mostly offering "retrospective" coverage, or journal issues going back to the 1800s but often not the last 10 years. You can limit your search by discipline, date, and language in JSTOR.
SAGE journals	Sage includes major journals on technology and social sciences.

Open Web Tools

Google Advanced Search	Optimize your use of Google with Google Advanced Search, which can let you restrict by geography and domain, such as .mil or .ru.
Google Scholar	Use Google Scholar to try a natural language search millions of documents from universities, publishers and other generally scholarly sources.