Background Research Using Library Resources Electronically and in Print
A reminder ~ **Background Research**

- Background research is something that happens at the beginning of the research process when you are just learning about a topic.

- It is a search for general information to get the big picture of a topic for exploration, ideas about subtopics and context for the actual focused research you will do later.

- It is also a time to build a list of distinctive, broad, narrow and related search terms.

- It is a time to consider possible research questions.
Background Resources through the Library

**In Print**
- **Reference books** in the library
- **Books** indexed in:
  - Library Catalog (SearchIt)
  - Available from the shelves in Vancouver or delivered from other libraries by your request at no charge.

**Electronic Resources**
- **Electronic Reference Resources**
- **Electronic Books**
  - Indexed in Library Catalog (SearchIt)
  - Not available from other college libraries.
Print Reference Books

- This is a collection of material that is in the library building and kept in a specific section. This is usually near where the reference librarian is located. These books are NOT available for check-out and usually consist of encyclopedia, dictionaries, thesauri and atlases. These are books that usually have short entries about a topic that can be used during a library visit.

- Ask the librarian for help in finding an appropriate reference book.

- The Reference books are indexed in the WSU Search It catalog so you will notice that there are some books that do not circulate. Those are the reference books. The other books in the library are the “circulating collection” and they are available to check out.
e-Reference Books

The library also provides access to electronic reference material. To find it follow this path:

- From the Vancouver library home page click on the Resources by Subject link in the left menu bar.
- This is an image of part of the list that will appear.
- Click on the Electronic Reference Sources & ebooks database link. This will take you to some electronic Reference material.
You will find a list of many electronic reference resources with a description of the content for each one. Some of them are specific to a single subject area and some are general reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CQ Press Electronic Library</td>
<td>Collection of publications from CQ Press, including encyclopedias, covering American government, politics, history, public policy, and current affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gale Virtual Reference Library</td>
<td>Collection of online encyclopedias and reference books covering a variety of subject areas. Dates of coverage: Coverage varies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your Results Will Vary

- Each resource will have a different “look” just as different print encyclopedias and dictionaries look different but they will all have a search box and will give you results based on the words you use.
- These type of resources require that you search with broad terms.
- You will find that your results will vary. You will be taken to pages of text in books and encyclopedias and in some cases, videos.
- In all cases you will be able to collect background information and search terms to use later.
Print Books for Background Research

- Books have a broad and general scope making them useful for background research.
- As WSU students you can get books from all of the WSU campus libraries, from numerous other college libraries in the Northwest, and if time permits, from all over the globe through Interlibrary Loan (ILLiad).
- We will consider print and electronic books for this part of the lesson.
• Everything the library has is indexed in “the electronic catalog”. (like your iTunes list)
• Because books have more general content you usually need to use broad terms to search for the books you want. (jazz vs. John Coltrane)
• The WSU Catalog is called SearchIt.
In the center of the library homepage you will notice a section to Find Books & Materials. There is a link to the Search It, which is the name of the WSU catalog and that of our Summit partners, almost 40 academic libraries in the northwest.

Everything that is owned by the WSU Libraries and the Summit Libraries is indexed in Search and most of these items are available to you.

For now we will concentrate on looking for books but the other materials indexed in the catalog are government documents, articles and media material and a lot more.

Click on the Search It link.
Please sign in!

In the upper right hand corner of the screen you will see “Guest”. If you search as a guest you will NOT have access to everything you are entitled to as a student.

Click on Guest and you will see the “Sign In” link. Click on that and then..... Sign in with your WSU NID and password!! The same ones you use with myWSU.
Select where you want to search

When you type your search term in the box you will be given the choice of searching in the WSU Libraries or eReserves. Click on the WSU Libraries.

There will be a tab to the far right of the search box that gives you choices about what/where you want to search. For most searched you will select “WSU Libraries + Summit”
Before you look at the retrieval list look at the side left of the screen and see the different ways you can narrow your search to the type of material you want. This will help you to reduce the list of retrievals to a more manageable size.

You can select:
- Online or in the library
- Which library
- The type of material you want
- The author or creator of the work
- A more specific subject
- The publication date
- The language the book is written in
Finding a Book

Notice that under “Type” you can narrow the search to either Print Books or eBooks.

You can use the drop down to “Sort” your results by relevance, age, author or title. Often relevance is useful if you have a lot of retrievals.

Be sure to check out the other limiters!!
Retrievals

After you do your search you will get a list of items that looks like the one on the right.

You will also notice that some of the books say “online access” or “Available at” a specific location. Some say the name of a library “and other locations”. Sometimes the other location is Vancouver so check that out if you want the book.
The Full Record of the Book

Bibliographic Record

To see more about the content of a book, click on the Title to see the “full record “of the item. You can either scroll down to the detailed record or click on the DETAILS link.

The part you will want to pay particular attention to is the Subject list. These are the subject terms of our catalog Add them to your list of search terms!
If this is a book you want, scroll up to the “Availability and Request Options”. This will tell you where the book is located.

This book is available at the WSU Vancouver Library. You can find this book in the circulating collection by using the call number. (See the handout on “How to Find Books on the Library Shelves).
Request a book from another library

This book is in the Owen Science Library in Pullman. You just click on the “Request Item” link to have the book sent to you here in Vancouver.
Send the book to Vancouver

- When you click on the Request Item link you will get a box that looks like this. When you click on the drop down arrow, select Vancouver Library at the bottom of the list. And then “REQUEST ITEM”.

- Your book will be at the Vancouver Library in a few days. You will get an email to let you know when the book arrives at the Circulation desk for you to pick up.
Your Cougar card is your Library card. Always carry your Cougar Card – you also need it to print in the library.
Electronic Books

- You will see that some of the books are available electronically. Click on the Online access link which will take you to the full record of the book where you will find a link to the actual book.
Download the Book

Different books will have a different look once you click on the link to the book but you will see a place to either read online or to download the book. This book will download as a PDF document.

Once you have done that you can read the book—almost instantly!!
The eBook

This book has a table of contents on the left that you can use to navigate through the book.

The pages of the book will appear on the right.

You page through and read on your computer screen.

You can print from an ebook but it has to be done screen by screen.
Just a reminder…

- If you are trying to access electronic documents from off campus you will have to sign in/authenticate to do so. Because these resources are subscriptions for WSU students, faculty and staff they are password protected. The network ID and password are the same that you use to access myWSU.

- As is always the case— if you have any trouble or questions please call, click or come in to the library for assistance.

Ask @ the Library

Call- 360-546-9686
Email-
Chat from the library homepage
Right we’ve found Community Resources, IT access points, video and DVD rental, audiobooks and Meeting Rooms....Now we just need to find the books!

Library

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