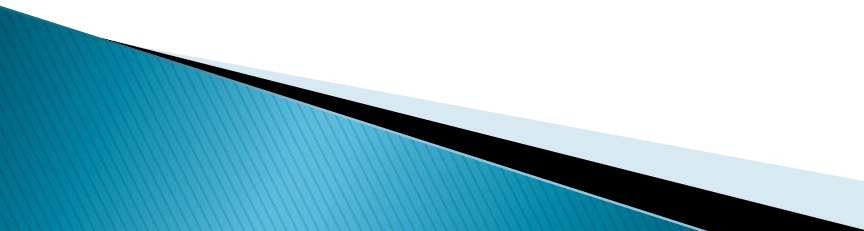# Information Sources in Academic Writing

Pre - Ph.D. Course Work
Paper I

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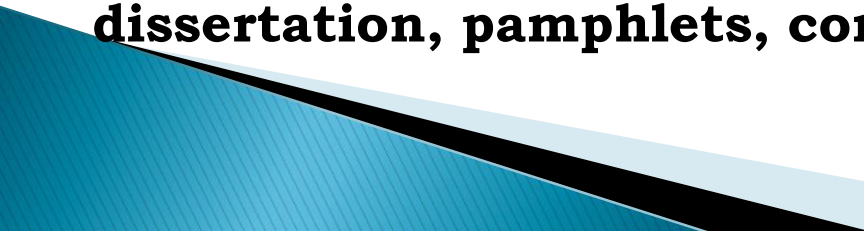**9334121405**

Information Sources in Academic Writing

- ▶ **Information in research is processed data**
- ▶ **Research-materials can be drawn from a wide range of different research resources**
- ▶ **Information sources comprise of documents, organizations and human beings**
- ▶ **Information sources can be books, websites, people, observations, speeches, documents, images and videos**
- ▶ **Information source can be in print, electronics or others (like artifacts, literature etc.)**
- ▶ **To obtain timely, relevant and quality information for your study or research work, you need to know the various sources of information**

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources of Information

Primary Sources	Secondary Sources	Tertiary Sources
• Autobiographies	• Biographies, encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks	• Chronologies
• Correspondence: email, letters	• Textbooks and monographs on a topic	• Classifications
• Descriptions of travel	• Literary criticism and interpretation	• Dictionaries
• Diaries	• History and historical criticism	• Encyclopedias
• Eyewitnesses	• Political analyses	• Directories
• Oral histories	• Reviews of law and legislation	• Guidebooks and manuals
• Literary works	• Essays on morals and ethics	• Population register statistics
• Personal narratives	• Analysis of social policy	• Fact books
• First-hand newspaper and magazine accounts of events	• Study and teaching material	• Abstracts
• Legal cases, treaties	• Articles, such as literature reviews	• Indexes
• Statistics, surveys, opinion polls	• Commentaries, research articles in all subject disciplines	• Bibliographies
• Scientific data, transcripts	• Criticism of works of literature, art and music	• Manuals/Guide books
• Journal articles		
• Records of organizations and government agencies		
• Original works of literature, art or music		
• Cartoons, postcards, posters, map, paintings, photographs, films		

Primary Sources

- Primary sources mean original studies, based on direct observation, use of statistical records, interviews, experimental methods of actual practices or the actual impact of practices or policies.

- Authored by researchers who have original research data

- Present information in its original form, not interpreted or condensed or evaluated by others

- Usually evidence or accounts of the events, practices, or conditions being researched and created by a person who directly experienced that event

- First formal appearance of results in print or electronic formats

- Most original and current source of information often not seen by anyone else before publication. These are in the form of journal articles, books or monographs, reports, dissertation, pamphlets, conference papers etc.

Contd…

- Articles published in scholarly journals
- Eye witness accounts
- Journalistic reports
- Financial reports
- Government documents
- Archaeological and biological evidence
- Court records
- Ephemerals (posters, handbills)
- Literacy manuscripts
- Minutes of the meeting
- Diaries, journals, photographs
- Data from the census bureau or a survey done by a researcher
- Original research, like data from an experiment
- Newspapers are primary sources when they report current events or current opinions
- Speeches, interviews, email, letters
- Religious books
- Personal memories and autobiographies
- Artworks

Secondary Sources

- **Provide non-original or second hand data or information**

- **Secondary sources are written about primary sources**

- **Research summaries reported in text books, magazines and newspapers**

- **Has information about original or primary information which is usually rearranged and modified for the ease of consumption by users. Thus, any work reporting the findings of others becomes secondary source**

  e.g., A newspaper article is a secondary source if it is written about a primary source

- **Contains organized repackaged knowledge rather than new knowledge**

- **More easily and widely available than primary sources**

- **Serves as a bibliographical key to multiple primary sources of information**

Secondary Sources

Index type

- Index
- Bibliography
- Indexing periodicals
- Abstracting periodicals

Survey type

- Review
- Treaties
- Monogram

Reference type

- Encyclopedia
- Dictionary
- Handbook
- Manual
- Critical tables

Tertiary Sources

- Consist information which is collection of primary and secondary sources of information

- Further removed from the original material and are a distillation and collections of primary and secondary sources

- Any work which list primary and secondary sources in a specific subject area

- Any work which indexes, organizes and compiles citations, and shows secondary (and sometimes primary) sources

- Materials in which the information from secondary sources has been digested reformatted and condensed to put it into an even more convenient and easy to read form

- Any source not falling in the category of primary and secondary sources

Variety of Information Sources

Print	Electronic	Others
• Speeches	• Internet	• Diaries
• Patents	• e-mail communication	• Letters
• Photographs	• Interviews	• Artifacts (e.g. coins, inscriptions, rock art, wall decorations, manuscripts)
• Newspaper articles	• Video recordings (e.g. television program)	• Works of architecture, literature, and music (e.g., paintings, sculptures, musical scores, buildings)
• Journal articles	• Audio recordings (e.g. radio programs)	
• Theses and dissertations	• Websites	
• Survey Research (e.g., market surveys, public opinion polls)	• Communications through social networking applications (e.g. Face book, blogs, RSS, YouTube)	
• Proceedings of meetings, conferences and symposia		
• Original Documents (i.e. birth certificates, wills, marriage licenses, trial transcripts)		
• Records of organizations, government agencies (annual reports, treaties, constitutions, government documents)		

Quick Guide for Selecting
the Right Type of Reference Source

For information about...	Choose...
• Words	• Dictionaries
• General information/Overview of topic	• Encyclopedias
• Names & addresses of people, organizations, institutions, companies	• Directories
• Profile of people	• Biographical Dictionaries
• Places/Maps	• Gazetteers or Atlases
• Facts and Statistics	• Almanacs
• Formula, Tables, How-to-do-it	• Handbooks and Manuals
• A person's work	• Reviews and Criticisms
• Dates, outlines, historical timelines	• Historical tables, Chronologies, Historical yearbooks
• Periodical Articles	• Indexes and Abstracts
• Books and other sources	• Bibliographies or Guides to Literature...

To sum up

- In an information rich society, it is crucial to remember that not all information resources are equal

- Evaluating information sources is an important part of research process

- Not all information sources are reliable or true, nor will all information be suitable for your paper/project

- Researcher must be able to critically evaluate the appropriateness of all type of information sources prior to relying on the information

- As a researcher, you must evaluate the information sources you find and decide whether the content is scholarly, accurate and authoritative

(Note: Source type may vary according to situation)

References

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