# Academic Skills
## on the LEAPS Summer School



# Finding academic resources
Tuesday 5th June 2018

# Nicola Edwards & Rong Flynn
# Main Library Helpdesk

# INTRODUCTION

In this session we will consider:

- What is an academic resource?

- Why should you use them?

- How do you find them?

In order to get you better marks

# FINDING ACADEMIC RESOURCES

When completing assignments at University, you will need to show that you have looked at a range of academic resources which you refer to in your assignment and which you use to support your own argument/ideas.

You should -

- Show you have read widely;
- Show you have read in depth;
- Reference your sources

## FINDING ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- *Resource* – a book, journal article, dataset, film, video, podcast, image, manuscript, map, etc.

- *Academic Resource* a book, journal article, conference paper, etc. which has been assessed by subject experts (peer-reviewed)

# FINDING ACADEMIC RESOURCES

"Getting information off the Internet is like taking a drink from a fire hydrant." Mitch Kapor



Photo © Will Sherman

# FINDING ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Information overload

- Googling is a time-consuming and hit-and-miss way of searching for academic information;

- You will get thousands of results, very few of which will be useful other than as general background information;

- It will be difficult, if not impossible, to assess pages which have been written anonymously;

- It will be very difficult to assess a page just by reading the blurb on the results page.

# EVALUATING RESOURCES

Googling 'Genetic Engineering'

- 177,000,000 results
- There were a few results from the first 2 pages that were useful as a general introduction (e.g. BBC-GCSE, Britannica.com )
- Wikipedia – anyone can edit!
- Sustainable Table – what is their agenda? Biased in favour of non-GMO foods
- Livescience – reliable author?

# FINDING ACADEMIC RESOURCES

•**Scholarly/Academic (peer reviewed or refereed)** i.e. work assessed and evaluated by other specialists in the field before it is published. If using a database – use the 'peer reviewed' checkbox. If this is not available look at the 'editorial statement' in the journal itself.

•**Authority** Who created it? What are their credentials. Are they an academic or someone on the web with a pseudonym? Who would you trust?

•**Bias** Does the creator have a political, cultural, professional bias? You don't necessarily need to know their background, but you may be able to infer this from the work itself. Links on a website may also indicate this.

•**Currency** When was it created? Old is not necessarily bad – it may be a seminal work in the field.

•**Documentation** Does it include a list of sources which would suggest that the creator has read widely and is not just expressing his or her own opinion without understanding the arguments? For websites, you might also want to look at the links. Are they trying to steer your attention in a particular direction?

# FINDING ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- Resources in the Library are generally chosen by lecturers, who are specialists in their field, for teaching purposes;

- Resources are also chosen by specialist subject librarians who will be using similar criteria.

## FINDING ACADEMIC RESOURCES

In the University Library, there are:

- 3.5 million printed volumes

- 700 000 e-books

- 100 000 e-journals

We pay lots of money for these – you *won't* find them online for free

# Reading lists

List of essential and/or recommended readings for your course

- When? - course reading, essays, tutorials

- Why? – provide guidance for your research. Also provide a foundation for further research/reading

- What? – may contain a variety of academic resources such as…

# Reading lists

List of essential and/or recommended readings for your course

- Books & e-books

- Book chapters

- Journal articles

- Newspaper articles

- Web sites

- DVDs

# A Film Studies reading list

Sikov, Ed. (2010) *Film studies: an introduction*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Brophy, Philip. (2004) *100 modern soundtracks: BFI screen guides,* London: British Film Institute.

Sbardellati, John. (2008) Brassbound G-Men and celluloid reds: the FBI's search for communist propaganda in wartime Hollywood. *Film History.* v.20(4), 412-436.

Watson, Paul. (2003) Critical approaches to Hollywood cinema: authorship, genre and stars, Nelmes, Jill. *Introduction to film studies,* London: Routledge, pp130-183.

# Finding resources from your reading list

- Book

Sikov, Ed. (2010) *Film studies: an introduction,* New York: Columbia University Press

- Journal article

Sbardellati, John. (2008) Brassbound G-Men and celluloid reds: the FBI's search for communist propaganda in wartime Hollywood. *Film History*. v.20(4), 412-436.

- Book chapter

Watson, Paul. (2003) Critical approaches to Hollywood cinema: authorship, genre and stars. IN: Nelmes, Jill. *Introduction to film studies,* London: Routledge, pp130-183.

# Finding resources from your reading list



http://discovered.ed.ac.uk

➢ Can search through <u>all</u> library resources
- Books & e-books
- Journal titles & journal articles
- DVDs
- Database content

# Library website
http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/library
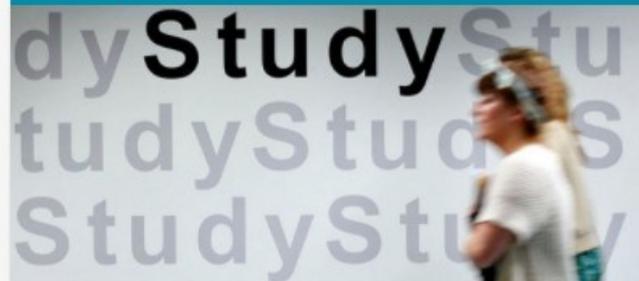
# Beyond your reading list

Expanding your reading

- Look at similar shelfmark for more items on the same subject

- 'Virtual browse' on DiscoverEd

- Search for other material by the same author(s)

- Look at the bibliographies of articles/books to find what the author used for their research

- 'Keyword searching' – use keywords from articles or other resources

# Beyond your reading list

Keyword searching

- What does it involve?

  - ➢ Identifying the key concepts of your topic – helps you decide your research focus

  - ➢ Coming up with alternative keywords to search with

  - ➢ Combining your keywords and apply various search techniques to improve your search results

- Why is this useful?

  - ➢ Helps you find relevant resources

  - ➢ More efficient searching process

# Further information

Some useful links to help you with your research

- Finding resources

  http://edin.ac/13RB2TZ

- Subject guides

  http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/subject-guides

- Databases by subject

  http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/databases-subjects

- Information about databases and searching online

  http://edin.ac/1TI4GWC

## Student card

- Please always bring it with you onto campus

- Your card is for borrowing, and for swiping in and out of the Main library

- We're able to issue four day passes if you forget your card

# Adjustments for students with disabilities

The Library works closely with the Student Disability Service to provide adjustments for students.

9.5% of the student population disclosed a disability in 2014-15, a significant proportion of the whole population.

Some examples of adjustments:

- Double loan time on Short Loan and Reserve books

- Staff assistance with locating texts

- Access to study room

- Accessible technology (Dragon, Texthelp, OCR, Mind Mapping etc.)

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/new-students

# Help

Good luck!!

If you have any problems please just ask…

[IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk))

0131 650 3409

In person at Main Library

Site library Helpdesks can also provide help and assistance.

*(Moray House Library is the site library for the School of Education and has a lot of material on the topics you cover).*

Check opening and staffed hours at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/library-opening