Developing an Effective Search Strategy

PADM 6876: Capstone Seminar in Public Administration
savannahstate.libguides.com/padm6876

Autumn M. Johnson, MLIS
johnsona@savannahstate.edu
912.358.4331
Library Room 204
What did we do in previous semesters?

- Recognize the difference between a scholarly source and a popular source
- Know where to find the “Catalog” and GALILEO Discover tool
- You know how to access electronic resources from off-campus
- Know who your liaison librarian is
By the end of the class, you will be able to:

• Develop and modify keywords that describe an information need in order to search with maximum flexibility and effectiveness.

• Construct search strategies using appropriate commands for the information retrieval system selected (e.g., Boolean operators, truncation, and proximity for search engines)

• Access the library’s catalog and research databases (GALILEO) in accordance with institutional policies.

• Identify the value and differences of resources in a variety of formats

• 35 – 15 – 10
What are the characteristics of one of a “peer-reviewed research article”?

- Author’s credentials in the field are established (e.g. institutional affiliation.)
- ABSTRACT.
- Based on original research/analysis/experimentation. Not personal opinion.
- Technical jargon.
- Special sections (e.g. Methods, Results)
- REFERENCES. Extensive Documentation
- PAGES!!!!!!!!!!!!!
But Why?

By examining previous literature can help you identify...

• Models used by other researchers or professionals
• Definitions and terminology for variables
• Techniques for measuring variables
• Sources of data
• Strategies for collecting data
• Suggestions for future research
Where do we find them?!
Developing an Effective Search Strategy

1. Formulate a research idea/topic/question
2. Identify key search terms or phrases
3. Use standard techniques to broaden or narrow search
4. Identify and Assess information
Narrowing Topic Ideas

• What subtopics relate to my broader topics?

• What do you find interesting about the topic?

• Do you have sufficient time and resources to conduct the study?

• Does it meet the professor’s requirements?
Narrowing Topic ➔ Possible Research Question

• Avoid the “all bout” paper.

• Ask open-ended “How” and “Why” questions

• Consider the “so what” of your topic.

• MEETS PROFESSOR’S REQUIREMENTS
Formulate a Research Question or Topic

How can park services benefit from public-private partnerships?

At the top of your page write YOUR research question for this assignment.
Identify Keywords or Phrases

**Never** use sentence structure, such as your research question or thesis statement.

A **keyword** is a word used to search library catalogs (Gil-Find), article databases (GALILEO) and search engines in order to locate results that match that word in a specified part or in any part of the item, such as the title or in the full text.
Identify key search terms and phrases

How can park services benefit from public-private partnerships?
Identify key search terms and phrases

What are the 2-3 keywords/phrases that get to the core of your research? Write those in the shaded boxes!

Add keywords that have similar meanings or near similar in the column below!
Use Search Techniques

Search techniques are the methods you use to search library catalogs (GIL-Find) article databases (GALILEO), and web search engines (Google Scholar) to find information.
Using Search Operators

AND

Type **AND** between your keywords to narrow your search. The database or search engine will only retrieve those articles or web pages that contain both words.

Using **AND** will decrease the number or hits or articles or pages in your result list.

Public-Private Partnerships **AND** Parks

Public Private Partnerships **AND** Recreation

Public-Private Sector Cooperation **AND** National Parks
Using Search Operators

Type **OR** between your keywords to broaden your search.

Using **OR** will increase the number of articles or web pages in your result.

Use **OR** between keywords that are synonyms or have similar meanings.

Parks **OR** Recreation

Public Private Partnerships **OR** PPP

Public Private Partnerships **OR** Public Private Contracts

Image Credit: chimichanga.tumblr
Using Search Operators

Type **NOT** before a keyword to exclude that keyword from your search. Using **NOT** will decrease the number of articles or web pages in your result list.

The best use of **NOT** is when you are searching for a keyword that may have multiple meanings.

- Public Private Partnerships **NOT** Infrastructure
- Public-Private Sector Cooperation **NOT** Estonia
- Public Private Partnerships **NOT** Transportation
Quotation Marks

Quotation marks can be used to identify phrases.

By using quotations marks, you are telling the computer to only bring back pages with the terms you typed in the exact order you typed them.
Quotation Marks

“Environmental Risk Assessment”
Instead of Environmental AND Risk AND Assessment

“Sustainable Development”
Instead of Sustainable AND Development

“Urban Transportation Policy”
Instead of Urban AND Transportation AND Policy
Truncation

Truncation allows you to search various forms of a word by finding alternate endings. The character (*) is placed at the end of the first few letters of a search term or at the end of its root.

Teen*
Retrieves
Teen
Teens
Teenage
Teenager
Teenagers

Crimin*
Retrieves
Criminal
Criminals
Criminological
Criminology
Parentheses

You can use parentheses to build a search with a combination of operators.

Using parentheses in your Boolean search, is a lot like using them in arithmetic - the search inside the parentheses is done first.

Public Private Partnerships AND (Parks NOT “Arcadia National Park”)

(Public Private Partnerships OR PPP) AND (National Parks OR State Parks)
Using “Advanced Search”

Using an "advanced search" will help limit the number of search results, and the results found should be more relevant for your research question.
Finding Scholarly Articles

GALILEO

Articles

Journals

Good Idea
Be an ACTIVE PRESesarcher!

• Record your search; Modify your search terms

• Write down any names, keywords, or subject headings that sound relevant

• RECORD ALL BIBLIOGRAPHIC details of resources you might use!
Be flexible!

- Sometimes, you may find that your topic simply isn't workable.

- You may not have to change your topic completely, simply try looking at a different aspect to see if that topic is more manageable.
Now you try... (30 Minutes)

• Find **TWO** scholarly articles on a topic you are considering using GALILEO Discover.
• Record your search + all the bibliographic elements needed to cite it.

**BUT WAIT!**
• Is this **scholarly**?
• Is this **relevant** to your topic?
Where do you go from here?

How do you find additional information?
So where’s the article?!

Why can’t I get it right away?
• Abstract and Index (A/I) Databases
• Publishing Embargos (12-24 Months)

What can I do about it?
• Use the “Find It” Tool if in GALILEO Database
• Request it via Interlibrary Loan
TIP #1

Rethink your keywords!
TIP #2

Use what you have + Journal Locator
TIP #3

Search other databases!
TIP #3

Search other databases!
TIP #4

Use the LibGuide, Use the LibGuide, Use the LibGuide!!!
References


In your future....
Have Questions? Need Answers?

• Check the LibGuide
• Check the LibGuide
• Check the LibGuide.

• Or email, call, or visit me!

Autumn Johnson
Library Room 204
912-358-4331
johnsona@savannahstate.edu