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Overview of Library Resources

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Overview of Library Resources

The definitions in this tutorial will help you select and evaluate resources that fit the criteria your instructor has requested for your research.

This tutorial will also help explain why not all information you need can be found on the Internet and why library resources are essential to your research.

Two Basic Sources of Information

- ***Primary Sources***: Contemporary accounts of events recorded in diaries, letters, memoirs, journals, speeches, manuscripts, interviews, etc. They may also include photographs, audio or video recordings, or original literary or theatrical works.

- ***Secondary Sources***: Materials about the primary sources that interpret, assign value, or draw conclusions about events.

Two Basic Types of Library Materials

Most libraries offer materials that have been purchased by the library but are free to users.

- *Physical materials* reside on-site. These may include books, media, journals, archives, etc.

- *Online materials* usually can be retrieved on a computer wherever there is Internet access. These may include ebooks, streaming media, journal articles, websites, digital archives, etc.

Types of Online Library Resources

All online material is *not* freely available on the Internet. Most libraries provide access to online resources that would charge fees to individuals.

- *Subscription resources* are paid for by the library and users must login to have access.

- *Free resources* do not require subscriptions, but libraries collect links to reliable sites organized by topics of interest to their users.

Types of Subscription Resources

Subscription resources are aggregated by vendors from proprietary sources and sold in packages to libraries with licensed agreements for usage.

- *Databases* are collections of information materials such as journal articles, abstracts, ebooks, newspapers, images, streaming media, etc.

- *Indexes* are listings of citations, references, websites, documents, etc. pointing to the sources where full-text materials are found.

Types of Free Internet Resources

- *Website*: a group of pages maintained by a person or organization. The domain type may help indicate reliability and accuracy. For example,
  - .edu = academic institution with scholarly information
  - .gov = federal government site
  - .org = nonprofit, may include bias by advocacy groups
  - .com = commercial, may be biased to make sales
- *Wiki:* website that is collaboratively edited; content depends upon credibility of the editors and authors.
- *Periodical*: Publications of professional organizations, newspapers, news services, etc. Accuracy may depend upon the credibility of sources used and bias of writers.
- *Social Media*: Includes personal opinions, not verifiable.

Evaluating Information Resources

- *Scholarly vs Popular*: Scholarly resources are written by experts in the field and supported by research, while popular resources are written for general audiences and usually lack references to support assertions.

- *Refereed (or peer-reviewed):* Articles are reviewed for credibility and quality by authorities in the field of study before acceptance for publication.

Library Resources Provided by IWS

- [Catalog](#): A database of 10,000 physical materials available from the IWS library.

- [ATLA/ATLAS](#): An online index of resources on religion and a full-text collection of more than 220 major religion and theology journals.

- [eBooks on EBSCO](#): Books on worship and Bible commentaries that can be accessed online.

- [IWS Thesis Collection](#): You can request digital copies of IWS theses from the library. Email library@iws.edu.

- [Additional Resources](#): The library has selected some free Internet resources that may help in your research.