

Internet Research Methods

What is the Internet?

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What is the Internet?

Research on the Internet begins like any other research. Possible research areas are explored until a final topic is settled on; the reliability of sources is judged. Solid information is gathered, a working bibliography is framed, and databases at research centres are accessed. Using traditional research methods, it is possible to spend countless hours in the library, interviewing sources, and combing through card catalogues, journals, and indexes, while on the Internet a university or organization probably already has a web page on the topic selected, making information retrieval easier from one central location, a home computer.

Thousands of library catalogues, including all major university research libraries, are easily accessible online. Online catalogues allow a search by author, title, or subject, facilitating the compilation of a working bibliography in much less time than is required for traditional methods. The Internet has a searchable online database of thousands of journals and tables of contents. With all research, it is important to learn how to find information without wasting time. The best way to achieve this goal is to learn how to use the Internet search and discovery tools and to evaluate the findings in terms of relevance, quality, and reliability.

Our goal is not to list URLs (Uniform Resource Locators) that will change before this book is in print for a year, but to provide strategies for finding sites that are not likely to be outdated soon because of their quality, relevance, and reliability. This chapter describes various sources for secondary information available over the Internet.

The Internet makes longitudinal study more practically feasible and enables a more comprehensive search than was possible before its widespread use. Without much direct contact with primary sources, a researcher can still connect with many individuals from different locations interested in the same topic to access information held in common.

It is impossible to work comfortably on the Internet without established guidelines for judging the reliability of web pages. Being proficient at judging the reliability of a site is important because the frequent change and reconstruction of sites renders it a daily and recurrent task. The first step in establishing reliability of a web page is to search the Web[p. 12 ↓] for the author's name. If a biographical link is available, follow it. An author's homepage will sometimes contain helpful information such as education, affiliations, and body of work. The goal is to establish the author's qualifications; in other words, is the author an authority in the field? The next stage in judging reliability is to see if the site represents other sources fairly. Check the resources to see if there is adequate information and if that information gives a fair hearing of the topic. Next check the accuracy of data at a particular source by following links to cited sources. And as simply as if doing library research, check the currency of the site. What is the date on the material? When was the material last updated? When was the web page last updated? The ability to recognize bogus or limited sites quickly enables the researcher to spend time efficiently. It is important always to keep in mind that data are not knowledge. The inexhaustible distribution of data on the Internet has proceeded at a greater rate than its rational organization or coherence. Researchers have to overcome these problems when deciding the usability of a site.

The Web allows different search objectives. Any topic or subject can be researched. Corporate and commercial information has inundated the Internet. Both public domain and shareware programs can be downloaded. Directories of individuals can be utilised to contact people, while special-interest groups can be contacted through discussion groups and lists. This chapter looks at different resources for social science¹ search areas.

The range of secondary sources available for researchers includes, but is not limited to:

Subject-Based Discussion Groups

Electronic discussion groups (also known as listservs) are made up of people interested in a common subject or area of discussion who form a distribution list of their email addresses. Members of the group can send a message and have it automatically

distributed to everyone on the list. Administrative functions such as subscribing and unsubscribing (that is, joining or leaving) are generally automated. Email is the lowest common denominator of network access. Even if a user does not have Web access, [p. 13 ↓] the user can still have email access. Consequently, email-based electronic discussion groups have been among the most popular and successful of all academically oriented Internet tools. Thousands of different email discussion groups exist on almost every topic imaginable. Messages are typically announcements, questions, statements, or replies to other members. To receive a listserv's posting, a subscription request must be sent to the listserv from an email account.

Listservs include open lists where anyone may subscribe and post messages, moderated lists where a human moderator reviews messages before they are sent to the group, and closed lists where permission must be requested to join. Consult a mailing list directory such as the one at <http://www.liszt.com> for an extensive list and description of thousands of different listservs by topic. Another option is to browse a catalogue of listservs by accessing <http://www.lsoft.com>.

To contact a list of lists by email, send an email to <http://listserv@listserv.net>. Leave the subject line blank. In the body of your email write 'list global'. The document you receive from the listserv will be very long. For a shorter, more manageable list narrow your search by changing 'list global' in the body to 'list global/topic' where 'topic' is replaced with the subject you are interested in reading.

After subscribing, save the confirmation letter because it contains information about sending messages, contacting the listowner, suspending messages for a day or two, and unsubscribing from the listserv. Some confirmation letters will also give information on where to find the FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) for the list. Answers to questions about the netiquette (etiquette of the online group) observed by each particular group are usually found in the FAQ.

After joining a list, monitor the messages for a week or so to get a feel for the community. What topics are considered appropriate to each group will become clear, and the group dynamic will be apparent to the newcomer in a short time. Ask for private responses when appropriate since not all messages need to go to all group members. Do not clutter the listserv with off-subject messages, and reduce the number

of duplicate responses by replying privately. Another important piece of advice is to delete extraneous text when responding to previous posting.

Netiquette or etiquette on the Net prescribes some simple rules. Since tone and attitude are not easily discerned in a written message, it is important that the writer give clues to the reader about the intent of a post. Some important standards apply: for instance, using all caps means that the writer is being emphatic, even yelling. It is considered poor form. End all email with your name and email address to make it easier for others to respond. Always give a subject heading to posts, unless sending messages to list software for administrative purposes. Crosspost – that is, send a message from one list to another – only if the subject of the post will be of interest to the group. Examples of acceptable messages [p. 14 ↓] to crosspost are announcements of conferences, internships, or job vacancies. Warnings about viruses usually turn out to be false and should not be crossposted.

Practise conciseness when using email. Messages need not be short, but they should be to the point. People have little time and lots of email to read. Wordiness only muddies the message. Be tolerant of errors in the messages posted. Absolutely nobody wants grammar or spelling errors pointed out to them. Unless an error makes the message unintelligible, figure out what the writer meant and move on. If the post is unintelligible, reply privately to the writer, or wait for the poster to resubmit the message. Only quote the portion of a previous post that is necessary for understanding the message that you write. Long or full quotes waste space and time.

Since the primary goal of the Internet is communication, it is important not to inadvertently offend others who are members of the listserv. Also, be aware that what seems like a great and clever retort can end up being an embarrassing mistake when posted to thousands of readers on a listserv and then indexed for millions to read in the archives. So give yourself time to think through what you are writing. Finally, do not engage in flaming or flame wars. A flame is a message that is an angry reply to a posted email message. If you feel the need to reply to a flame, do so privately, and keep it off-list.

Library Catalogues

Most research begins in a library. But it is no longer necessary to go to the physical structure to get information needed on a particular topic. Online searches of library holdings are possible in a fraction of the time it takes to search in the traditional way. Library catalogues provide an index to materials owned by a particular institution. Searches are usually done by author, title, or subject. The full text of the material will not usually be accessible, although it is sometimes possible to find full texts of some sources.

When querying a library catalogue, the results received are often pieces of information about a physical resource of the library, rather than the resource itself, though libraries are now adding some full-text indexing features to their catalogues. While library catalogues may not provide indexes to journal articles themselves, the journal titles will be provided. Few library catalogues provide indexes to journal articles, and when these catalogues are available it is usually only for the students, faculty, and staff of the university where the catalogue is located, not to every Internet user. So, specific journal articles will probably be easier to find using electronic or paper indexes, most of which are not publicly [p. 15 ↓] available on the Internet but are still common in libraries. A couple of the electronic indexes are discussed later.

Searching a library catalogue is done for one of three reasons: to locate a book, journal or other material to check out of the library; to find bibliographic information; and to see what books or journals are available on a particular topic or by a particular author. Searching a library catalogue by Internet is not done to retrieve the material electronically, but to find out the availability of sources on a particular topic.

One problem with accessing library catalogues is that many types of software are used from site to site, each with its own command language. Many institutions modify their software to reflect their own needs, so that the same program may look different from site to site. Fortunately, library catalogues are designed to make searches easy to accommodate people with different levels of computer expertise.

Finding Library Catalogues with HYTELNET

Library catalogues can be difficult to use on computer. Usually the first step is to access the homepage of a university and then look for a link to its library catalogue. Each library catalogue looks a little different and many have a unique set of commands. If the university catalogue you have access to does not have the information necessary, HYTELNET, a directory of libraries developed by Peter Scott at the University of Saskatchewan Libraries, is a good place to start.

HYTELNET is a tool that helps bring Internet-accessible library catalogues into a single directory and provides some direction for using the catalogues. It provides a directory of library catalogues and uses Telnet to access them. The HYTELNET information page (<http://www.lights.com/hytelnet>) gives information about updates, client software, and changes. The main menu leads to several options for information including: Help files for library catalogues, Internet glossary, Telnet tips, and resources such as library catalogues and community information systems and bulletin boards, and specific texts and graphics databases.

Using HYTELNET

With a web browser, go to <http://moondog.usask.ca/>. Once at this site follow the link 'Library Catalogues'. From here follow the link 'The Americas'. Now look at libraries in the United States by following the link 'Type of Library'. Next follow the link 'Academics, Research, and General Libraries'. Then, scroll down until you find the library you would like to search. This link will give the following information: the Telnet address to access the catalogue; an indication if a user name is required or the appropriate login name to use; an indication of the software used and a **[p. 16 ↓]** link to the software information with a summary of search commands; and the command used to exit from the library catalogue when finished. Since it is necessary to know information about the search commands for the software the library has chosen, first follow the link to the catalogue software. Using a web browser, go back to the previous page: the library selected. To

connect to the library catalogue, follow the link. If it is a Telnet connection, type in the terminal type being used. Type 'Y' to confirm the choice. Then type 'A' to search by author. An introductory screen will appear. Type in the author using the example of how to enter author names. Press 'Enter'. The books and their call numbers are listed. Type the number of the item you are interested in for more information about that item.

Newspapers

LEXIS-NEXIS

LEXIS-NEXIS (<http://www.lexis-nexis.com>) contains the full text of thousands of newspapers, reports, and journals. If you were in the library you would connect to NEXIS, while LEXIS is a database of legal information, used by law offices and law students for research. Comprehensive information on which publications are indexed and provided by LEXIS-NEXIS is available from their homepage. LEXIS-NEXIS works by allowing searches of the information, using a search language that provides full Boolean search features for refining queries (Boolean operators are the words: 'and', 'or', 'not'. When these words are placed between keywords, they expand or limit the scope of the search.) The News library contains the full text of more than 2,300 newspapers, news wires, newsletters, and broadcast transcripts. Publications range from *The New York Times* to *Western Morning News* to *The Moscow Times*. After searching on LEXIS-NEXIS, results can be displayed, saved, or printed as full text of the articles to the citations of the articles. This database is expensive; however, most libraries have access to it. Since it is a comprehensive source for current news or business information, it is a valuable resource.

Check out these newspapers online:

<i>Detroit Free Press</i>	www.freep.com
<i>The Guardian – UK</i>	www.guardian.co.uk
<i>The Irish Times</i>	www.ireland.com
<i>The New York Times</i>	www.nytimes.com/
<i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>	www.sfgate.com
<i>The Washington Post</i>	www.washingtonpost.com

Dow Jones News/Retrieval

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Dow Jones News/Retrieval (<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/indexes/dowjones.html>) is another commercial information service like LEXIS-NEXIS also available on the Internet, but it is also expensive. Accessing it through a library or college is an option in many places. Its focus is business and financial news.

American City Business Journals

American City Business Journals (<http://www.bizjournals.com>) searches the archives of specialised business newspapers from 35 United States cities.

Indexes to Periodical Literature

Document delivery refers to the electronic transmission of journal articles. Document delivery developed not only for its convenience to the user, but also because libraries cannot afford to subscribe to every journal that students, faculty and staff might need. Most libraries subscribe to many core journals and to a commercial document delivery service that can transmit articles from the journals not in their collection.

Many document delivery services still do not send the requested documents by computer. So even if a document is requested via computer, the article is usually faxed. There are many document delivery services available to libraries, but one of the most useful is Ingenta. Ingenta follows from UnCover which began as a service of CARL, a consortium of Colorado libraries. In 2001, Ingenta purchased UnCover and merged their databases and services. It is a database of current article information taken from over 18,000 multi-disciplinary journals. The database contains brief bibliographic information for over 11 million articles published from autumn 1988 to the present. REVEAL, a service also on the Ingenta page, is an automated alerting service that delivers the

tables of contents of selected journals directly to your email box. The REVEAL service also allows users to create and enter search strategies for topics.

UnCover is available over the Internet and can be useful even without paying for full text articles. UnCover can browse the tables of contents of many journals in all areas of study, search for the article titles, journal titles, and names of the authors, and request that an article be faxed (with a credit card and payment or an affiliation with a university that subsidises the cost of the service). The cost per journal article is for the copyright fee and the faxing and varies depending on the length of the article and publisher.

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Although Ingenta is useful, less expensive options are often preferred. Libraries can usually get documents delivered through various interlibrary loan sources free of charge to the patron, although the process can take three to ten days. Most articles that are available through Ingenta for faxing are sent within 48 hours. Articles with a clock icon are available within one hour while articles designated with a computer icon are available for desktop delivery within one to 24 hours. Articles available for faxing or desktop delivery will be designated 'Mark for Order'. An article already available in the library may be designated 'Held by Library', and may not be faxed under a subsidy. Articles 'Not Held' may be ordered through traditional Interlibrary Loan by clicking on 'Email citation' when the article information is displayed.

Sometimes faxing of an article is not allowed because of the copyright. In such a case, an inter-library loan can be made. The library's interlibrary loan fax number is generally the default, so articles are picked up in the inter-library loan office, but the default can be changed to a personal or department fax machine in the profile.

Ingenta can be accessed either from the CARL homepage or from the library homepage of a particular university. If the library homepage has an Ingenta page, click on 'Connect to Ingenta'. First time and off-campus users must obtain a username and password, but only people associated with the university can get this information; further, often only university faculty, staff, and graduate students are allowed to charge their document delivery requests to the library's deposit account.

The Ingenta homepage (<http://www.ingenta.com>) provides access to the UnCover plus document delivery service and information and access to other databases. A password is needed to access most of the databases provided through Ingenta. Researchers with library privileges at a university should ask the librarian for the password.

To access the UnCover plus service, follow these steps. From the Ingenta gateway homepage, choose Ingenta UnCover. From the next page, choose 'The UnCover Homepage'. Information about the UnCover service can be obtained from the UnCover homepage. To connect to UnCover, follow the link 'Click here' to access the UnCover database. Telnet is automatically invoked and connects to the UnCover system. Choose a terminal type to continue. Next, choose from the databases listed. Unfortunately, almost all of them require a password, so the researcher can access only those databases to which the library subscribes. Type '1' and press 'Enter' to access UnCover. If you do not have a password, press 'Enter' and press 'Enter' again to continue. You are prompted to enter a profile number that will speed up future use of this service. Press 'Enter' to continue. At this point you set up a profile. Again, press 'Enter'. The UnCover main menu should appear. This is where to begin the search. To search by word in the journal title, article title, or subject area, use the 'W' command. The 'N' command allows a [p. 19 ↓] search for an author's name. The 'B' command is to search for a particular journal title, and to browse the titles and authors of the journal chosen.

As mentioned, Ingenta includes back issues only to around 1988 and so is most useful for more recent articles. The bottom of the screen gives the available options. The meaning of different options is not always clear, and which choice is the right one is not always apparent. To browse the journals choose 'E'. A sample table of contents will be next. Menu items at the bottom of the screen allow the marking of any of the articles for delivery. For more details about the article itself, simply type the number of the article. Once documents are marked for ordering, type the letter 'O', and wait for the prompt to enter credit card and address information. There is some risk in transmitting credit card numbers over the Internet so it is important to think about online safety. Always use a secure browser that complies with industry security standards, such as Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) or Secure Electronic Transaction (SET). These standards encrypt information, ensuring the security of each transaction. Most computers come with a browser already installed. Another option is to download a browser. Be sure,

also, to keep a record by printing a copy of the transaction with a confirmation number. Fortunately, CARL can be contacted by telephone to set up a profile so that personal account numbers do not have to be divulged via the Internet.

Once you have a profile number you may Telnet directly to UnCover. The Telnet address is <http://database.carl.org>. After establishing the Telnet connection, you will be prompted for the terminal type, then for the password. Press return until you are prompted for your profile number. From here follow the prompts to access information.

It is not necessary to use the document delivery feature of Ingenta to benefit from the service. Searching for journal articles with Ingenta can be useful and will not cost anything. Ingenta can be useful to check bibliographic information so that articles are cited correctly. The Ingenta helpdesk can be contacted in the UK: <http://help@ingenta.com> and in the US: <http://ushelp@ingenta.com>

REVEAL

REVEAL is an automated alerting service that delivers tables of contents from selected journals to an email account. In the REVEAL Search profile, the researcher selects a list of titles, keywords, author's name, or a combination. This list is run against the Ingenta database. If Ingenta finds an article or journal that matches the list of terms or titles, an email message with information about matching articles is sent.

REVEAL is also available through the Ingenta page. Again, a username and password are required and should be obtained from the **[p. 20 ↓]** library staff. At some universities only faculty and staff can use the service and users must register by first setting up a profile in Ingenta. Articles can be ordered through REVEAL by replying to REVEAL alert email messages. Place the word 'ORDER' next to the order number of the desired articles. Researchers associated with a university may have articles subsidised by the library. This subsidy is often available only to faculty and staff.²

Art Archives

Websites from international museums to local galleries designed to educate and entertain both the serious art student and the casual art lover can be found on the Internet. Many art museums offer everything from basic background information on a particular artist to sophisticated virtual-technology tours of a museum's entire collection. There are even online art museums that exist only on the World Wide Web. Art museums around the world are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to anyone with Internet access. Using the Web to learn about art allows the researcher to more easily follow an artist, a line of interest, school, or movement than if using the traditional method of art books and classes.

Some museums present their stellar art objects, while others display lesser known works and feature historical information. For information about an artist, it is easy to perform a keyword search on a web browser and download all the material.

Several national museums offer multimedia tours of their collections. The National Gallery of Art (USA) site (<http://www.nga.gov>) offers a comprehensive virtual tour of over 100,000 objects, including major accomplishments in painting, sculpture, and graphic arts from the Middle Ages to the present. The collection can be searched by specific artist or title or by medium and school. Tours are offered in several languages, including French, Spanish, German, Italian and English.

Visit these online art museums:		
Galleria degli Uffizi	Florence	www.uffizi.firenze.it/
The Hermitage	Russia	www.hermitagemuseum.org
The Louvre	Paris	www.louvre.fr/
Metropolitan Museum of Art	New York	www.metmuseum.org/home.asp
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts	Minneapolis	www.artsmia.org
Museum of Contemporary Art	San Diego	www.mcasd.org
The Museum of Fine Arts Boston	Boston	www.mfa.org
National Gallery of Art	Washington	www.nga.gov
The Smithsonian	Washington	www.si.edu

[p. 21 ↓] To learn about Van Gogh at this site, begin by clicking on 'Virtual Exhibition Tours' and then choose between the plugin and non-plugin tour. Technical requirements for both tours are described. The plugin tour allows a visual walk through of the rooms of the gallery, clicking on paintings for larger image views, details and more

information. Directions tell how to use the keyboard to zoom in and out and find important viewpoints. Details on the art work and Van Gogh's life can be heard by clicking on the RealAudio file. The non-plugin tour, while fixed, allows the user to select and enlarge paintings and also obtain information.

The National Gallery of Art homepage also gives the options of Collection Tours, In-Depth Study Tours, and Architecture Tours. Artists included in the in-depth tours are Edouard Manet, Thomas Moran, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Alfred Stieglitz. The Stieglitz tour includes an overview, biography, featured photographs, and techniques.

The Louvre online (<http://www.louvre.fr/>) features the history and collection of more than 6,000 European paintings dating from the late thirteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. A user can view both the exterior and the interior of the building complex by choosing the virtual tour mode. The plugin QuickTime will have to be downloaded to view close-up. Use the keyboard to zoom in, or click and drag the mouse to get a 360-degree view of the room and all of its masterpieces.

Researchers interested in how art masterpieces are cleaned and restored should go to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts site (<http://www.artsmia.org>) and use its Restoration Online feature. The daily progress of a recent restoration is featured as well as background materials on the work. This site requires QuickTime and Flash downloads.

A virtual museum, *ArtMuseum.net*, is an extension, not a replacement, of the physical art museum. ArtMuseum.net encourages visitors to become members, requiring only the completion of a questionnaire to gain access to additional content, including audio, advance information on upcoming exhibits, and a discount at the ArtMuseum.net store.

Various contemporary artists have curated a virtual collection of art shows by members who wish to share their works via the Internet. Art on the Net (<http://www.art.net>) is a non-commercial site. The homepage lists links and what they offer. Various artists have studios listed under the categories: Digital Artists, Hacker Artists, Musicians and Bands, Painters, Performance Artists, Photographers, Poets, Sculptors, Video Artists and Animators, and Visual Artists.

An excellent site for information about museums on the Web is the World Wide Web Virtual Library Museums page supported by the International Council of Museums (<http://www.icom.org/vlmp/>). The list is split into sub-lists by country or region. Once you choose a country, museums are listed alphabetically with links directly to each museum. This site lists all types of museums from planetariums to virtual library zoos.

Government Official Databases

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UK online

Run by the Office of the e-Envoy, part of the Cabinet Office, UK online (<http://www.ukonline.gov.uk>) provides access to over 1,000 government websites on the Internet. Content may be viewed in either English or Welsh and covers England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Do it Online gives you direct access to services such as completing a tax return or a passport application online, finding a tradesman to work in your home, or finding suitable childcare in your local area. In CitizenSpace information on voting and elections, representatives and how to complain about public services can be found. Logging in here will enable you to take part in discussion groups. Yourlife supplies guidance, advice and support through life events such as having a baby, searching for a job, dealing with death and grief. Perhaps the most helpful section is Quick find where you can search a range of websites by theme.

THOMAS

THOMAS (<http://thomas.loc.gov>) is one of the most valuable sources on US legislation. THOMAS covers legislation, congressional record, and committee information. THOMAS provides information about the activities of the United States Congress, including the full text of all bills and legislation. This information can be searched by type of bill and by keyword in the text of the bill. A feature called 'Congress in the News'

directs the user to bills in the media that are most frequently referred to and those most often requested from legislative librarians.

THOMAS contains legislation as far back as 1992. The following databases are offered by THOMAS: House Floor This Week, House Floor Now, Quick Search of Text of Bills. Under Legislation a researcher will find: Bill Summary and Status, Bill Text from 101st to 106th Congresses (1989-2000), Major Legislation since 1995, Public Laws by Law Number, and Votes (House Roll Call Votes and Senate Roll Call Votes).

In Congressional Record, you will find Most Recent Issue, Congressional Record Text, Congressional Record Index, Resumés of Congressional Activity, and Days in Session Calendars. Under Committee Information you will find Committee Reports, Committee Home Pages, House Committees, and Senate Committees. It contains the text of new bills within 48 hours.

Visit these government resources:	
The Library of Congress	lcweb.loc.gov/
The U.S. Department of Education	www.ed.gov/
The White House	www.whitehouse.gov

[p. 23 ↓] In addition to THOMAS databases, the THOMAS homepage provides links to The Legislative Process, Historical Documents, US Congressional Documents and Debates: 1774–1873, House and Senate Directories, and Library of Congress Web Links.

LOCIS

LOCIS (<http://www.galaxy.com/hytnet/US373.html>), the Library of Congress Information System, is a database of about 12 million records representing books, serials, computer files, manuscripts, cartographic materials, music, sound recordings, and visual materials in the Library's collection. It provides information about books and non-print materials catalogued by the Library of Congress, federal legislation, copyrighted materials registered with the Library of Congress, Braille and audio materials, bibliographies for people doing basic research, and foreign law material. The Library of Congress does not provide the full text of the materials. Since most of the

materials are copyrighted, they must be purchased or found in a library if you want to use them. The system is useful for retrieving information about published work that you will get from the library.

FedWorld

FedWorld (<http://www.fedworld.gov>) is a website maintained by the National Technical Information Service of the United States government. It offers multiple distribution channels to provide information links to reports from all agencies of the US government. FedWorld is useful for a variety of research needs including policy statements or analysis, scientific data, and geological information. The FedWorld homepage links to federal government information servers. This site offers a comprehensive central access point from which to search for, locate, order, and acquire government and business information. It has full text of many databases, including: Foreign News Alert Service, Supreme Court Decisions, 1937–1975, Wage Determination Act Database, and the Clean Air Act Database. Meta-Databases (systems that point to the actual data or how to get it) include US Federal Government Job Announcements, Descriptions of IRS Tax Forms, and Descriptions of 12,000 Federal Aviation Administration Files, among many others.

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Electronic Texts Including Literature

Although every researcher has respect for books – the weight of the volume, the feel of the page, the smell of the leather binding on an older edition – we have begun the shift from print to digital form. Nothing can replace the satisfaction of a fine edition, but there is also a need for quick and easy access to a growing mass of digital material.

Project Gutenberg

Many electronic text archives, such as those maintained by Project Gutenberg (promo.net/pg/), are composed of works in the public domain. Project Gutenberg began in 1971 when Michael Hart was given free computer time, which he decided to use by creating a file of online electronic texts. The philosophy of the project directors is to make information, books, and other materials available to the general public in forms that can be easily read, used, quoted, and searched.

Project Gutenberg is divided into three sections: Light Literature, Heavy Literature, and References. It is easy to look up quotations heard in movies, music or other books because of the easy to find e-text format. From the homepage, it is easy to browse the Index/Catalogue by title and author or to use the search engine to find and download books. Also the whole list of Project Gutenberg books is available as a plain text file or a zip file. Step-by-step directions are given on how to get books via FTP and the Web and how to subscribe to the listservs. A help page is also provided at this site.

The On-Line Books Page (<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/>) is another helpful site. Its homepage offers a search engine of over 10,000 listings. Searches can be conducted by author or title. Search results provide links to the texts.

In conclusion, it is easy to become familiar with a full range of secondary sources available on the Internet. The learning curve for becoming proficient in any one area is certainly worth the time saved when looking at long-term study in a particular field. As in any research, countless hours can be spent, but by fine-tuning the focus of your investigation, becoming efficient in online computer skills, and making an effort not to get lost in the innumerable links to fascinating, but useless, information, research can be accurate, appropriate, and efficient. A caution, parallel to the one stated at the outset of this chapter about verifying the reliability of an Internet resource, is to avoid the assumption that information not easily found on the Internet does not exist. Traditional libraries will not disappear.

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Notes

1 We use the term 'social science' for brevity, though, as explained in the Introduction, the issues raised in this book are relevant to a range of disciplines in what may broadly be termed the social, behavioural and human sciences.

2 In addition to articles available this way, or through direct library subscriptions to electronic copies of journals, in some disciplines (for example, linguistics and computer science) it is common practice for researchers to make pre-print versions of their papers electronically available in their own web pages or those of their research group. In this way, articles are freely available to anyone who has a computer that can download them. Similarly, it is not uncommon within a discipline for there to be electronic archives of papers, also freely available to anyone. For example, the URL <http://xxx.lanl.gov/> provides access to a range of archives in physics, mathematics, and areas broadly identified as computing, but inclusive of computational linguistics. Similarly, papers in cognitive science are available from <http://cogprints.soton.ac.uk/>. Other subject areas are similarly codified, and freely available.

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