

HERMANN MEMORIAL LIBRARY / SULLIVAN COUNTY COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE

LIBRARY SERVICES: A FRIENDLY GUIDE FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

By Richard Arnold, Public Services Librarian

Library—  
Here is where people,  
One frequently finds,  
Lower their voices  
And raise their minds.

--Richard Armour. *Light Armour*, McGraw-Hill, 1954

THE PHYSICAL AND THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY

The duality of the printed paper page versus the digital media file delivered through a network at light speed, is still very much of an issue in libraries as of the beginning of the twenty first century. For the time being you can still have both print and electronic resources in most libraries, including ours. For the time being many journals, newspapers, and reference books will be found to exist in both paper and digital formats. Why don't we just let go of the paper, as the prophets of the not-too-distant past were claiming would happen by now? But we can't seem to easily give up on printed paper as an information storage medium, something that can be handed from one person to another, transported, and owned. Just look at how much paper is used by students every day as they print off Web pages and articles from the computers in the reference area. And paper books are still very much in demand everywhere.

Therefore, when you think of what the Hermann Memorial Library offers you, think of all the information we have in paper PLUS all the information we have access to electronically: the real, physical library, and the virtual, electronic library.

When you are here in the physical library, you can borrow books and take them home with you. You can request books from other libraries which will be delivered for pickup in our library in a matter of a few days. You can read paper newspapers, magazines and journals, and you can do that wonderful old-fashioned thing, you can *browse*. And while here, you can use one of our computers and access all of our electronic resources too, and take home paper copies of journal articles that you printed from the computer. You can also take advantage of the service of a personal consultant, a librarian, anytime the library is open.

But through our presence on the World Wide Web, you may access many of our services and textual resources online, and remotely, from wherever you happen to be, 24 x 7. This

is the virtual library! Through our proxy server, and with your campus computer network username and password, you will be authenticated to search all the online databases we subscribe to, and which are only available to our students. And through the library's email link, through our staff email addresses, or from our Meebo "Ask a Librarian" chat link on our home page, you can ask questions and receive answers almost as easily as if you were in the physical library.

## YOU AND YOUR LIBRARIAN

You might be asking yourself: "Why do I need a librarian?"

**"Librarians are almost always very helpful and often almost absurdly knowledgeable. Their skills are probably very underestimated and largely underemployed."**

— *The Social Audit Consumer Handbook*, Macmillan, 1978,  
p. 41  
Charles MEDAWAR

The librarian is your information broker, the organizer, classifier, and evaluator of information, and also, even primarily, a teacher, a guide, and mentor of information-seekers like you.

Not everybody you see working in the library is a librarian. Staff members who are not professional librarians can help you check books out, circulate reserve items, process interlibrary loan requests and can be helpful in many ways. But for your information needs, the professional reference librarian is trained and experienced to help you find the answer to your research questions.

OUR LIBRARY STAFF WELCOMES YOU!

Here are the people who will help you:

*Director of Library Services*

Jon Grennan

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Contact for Library Administration & Collection Development

*Public Services Librarian*

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Contact for Reference Service & Information Literacy Instruction

*Access Services Librarian*

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Contact for Library Automation & Cataloging

*Library Clerk*

Jacqueline Fox

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Contact for Circulation, Interlibrary Loan & Reserves

*Library Clerk*

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Contact for Circulation and Shelving

*Reference Librarian (Daytime Adjunct Mon.-Thurs. and Sunday Afternoon)*

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## INFORMATION SEEKING IN YOUR COLLEGE CAREER AND IN YOUR LIFE CAREER

**Information is the manager's main tool, indeed the manager's "capital," and it is he who must decide what information he needs and how to use it.**

— "Managing the Information Explosion"  
*The Wall Street Journal*, April 10, 1980  
Peter F. DRUCKER

You may think of the library as a quiet place to study, away from the noise and distractions of the dorms. This is true. Or you may like to come to the library to browse the latest issues of your favorite magazines and newspapers while waiting for your ride. You are most welcome to do so. Or, like many other students, you may come to the library to use an item that a professor has told your class is on reserve, perhaps an article or textbook.

By far the most students end up in the library because they have a research paper or project, or one of those information literacy assignments that will be found in most every course taught in the college.

Because doing research--getting information on any topic whatsoever in any course you are taking--will be such an important part of what you will be required to do throughout your two years at community college, and beyond, we felt that we should begin right from the start of your college career, to teach you those skills and attitudes that you will need to be a successful researcher.

### WHAT IS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT?

In the First Year Experience, we try to promote, support, and demystify the process of forming intelligent questions and identifying academically appropriate answers consisting of authoritative print and online information sources found in the library and on the World Wide Web.

That is a rough definition of the concept, and the goal, of information literacy, or information management, as it has become known throughout SUNY. Moreover, the State University of New York has mandated information management as a general education competency requirement for all students, and has furthermore asked all campuses to evaluate how effective their program is in teaching these competencies.

Partly in response to this SUNY-wide mandate, therefore, we have developed an information management learning module just for students in the First Year Experience that includes lecture, discussion, demonstration, question and answer, and hands-on experience with basic information management tools and computer technology. The module will be delivered in your classroom, or in the Library Instruction Room (E105) by a librarian in collaboration with your Freshman Seminar professor. As part of the module, you will also be given a packet of informative hand-outs to introduce you to essential concepts, and to help you complete an assignment.

The key piece of the information management module that you will be participating in is the assignment which will be graded by your professor and will count for a certain portion of your final grade for the course. Read through the assignment (it will be available on ANGEL) and ask questions. For this assignment, you will be instructed to select a topic from a list of predetermined thesis statements and choose appropriate databases to find relevant, timely, authoritative and scholarly information sources (a Web document, a book, and a journal article), and then to record these sources on a correctly formatted annotated bibliography in MLA style. Additionally, you will be asked to answer in writing some questions about how you conducted your research, for instance, what was your search strategy, what exact words did you use to search, and where did you look to find your sources. You will write an annotation for each source that you cite that describes and evaluates it according to criteria of scholarly purpose, currency, objectivity, authority and relevancy. Finally, you will be asked to compose your annotated bibliography as a text document in Microsoft Word, and insert it in the completed assignment, which you will submit to your professor via ANGEL.

Your active participation in the information management module is essential for your success with the assignment. If you're thinking that you are already proficient in searching, and don't need to attend these sessions in order to succeed in college, think again. Studies have shown that students' self-assessment is often flawed and they are often overconfident about their own information management ability and experience. Even if you feel that the material covered by the lecture is not new to you, ask questions that you feel would help you learn more, and stretch the boundaries of your own knowledge. Quite on the other hand, some others of you might be struggling to understand this material, or have little prior experience with information technologies. If this is your situation, you can get further help from the tutoring service in the Center for Learning, or one-on-one consultation with the librarian or professor. In either case, students always can get individual attention, especially if they have the responsibility for themselves to ask for help.

## HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH MY RESEARCH?

Successful research first demands critical and creative thinking about your proposed topic: this can be more difficult than the gathering of information sources.

Ask yourself some important questions about your topic:

- What is the academic field or discipline to which my topic belongs? How does it fit into that discipline and relate to other disciplines? For example, if you were researching autism, consider what each of the following disciplines would have to say about it: Psychology, Education, Sociology, Medicine, and even Law.
- What are the historical factors that have shaped the topic? Is it a brand new topic, never seen before this time? Or does the topic have a long history?
- Do I want to take a stand on one side of the topic or another? Is my topic inherently controversial? If so, who are the groups and individuals on either side of the controversy, and what do they have to contribute to the topic?
- What significant words or terms can I come up with that precisely describe my topic?—these are called “key words” or “key terms”. Hint: don’t use articles, prepositions, or very common, general words. Prefer nouns over verbs, adjectives and adverbs, to describe your topic.
- What type of information do I need and where is it most likely to be found?

## WHERE DO I LOOK IN THE LIBRARY FOR INFORMATION ON MY TOPIC?

As a student doing a research paper on a topic, chances are you will start off knowing nothing or little about that topic. You'll want to get familiar with it, and you may not know where to turn. We suggest you start with an encyclopedia article to give you background and an outline of your topic; then as you get deeper into your topic you will want to find more focused information from sources such as magazines and journals. The following chart gives you an idea of what source types you might investigate for the type of information you need, and lists some of the most frequently used finding tools that are available through the library's web site. This is not an exhaustive list of information types or tools, however.

*And remember, always there is a librarian on hand who can help you think through your topic and pick the right information sources for you.*

Type of information	Appropriate source type	Examples of Specific finding tools
Current events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Wide Web</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Transcripts of radio/TV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google, Yahoo, and other search engines</li> <li>• New York State Newspapers database (Gale)</li> <li>• National Newspaper Index (Gale)</li> <li>• Custom Newspapers (Gale)</li> <li>• News Blogs</li> </ul>
General interest articles, editorial opinion essays, articles on popular culture, information about business products and services, consumer advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magazines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson Select Plus</li> <li>• ProQuest Platinum Periodicals</li> <li>• Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)</li> </ul>
Scholarly, or peer reviewed articles, reports on original research, in-depth analysis-- NOT an overview of a topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journals</li> <li>• Scholarly reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson Select Plus</li> <li>• ProQuest Platinum Periodicals</li> <li>• Academic Search Complete (EBSCO)</li> <li>• Specialized subject databases, such as PsycArticles, or ERIC</li> <li>• Google Scholar</li> </ul>
General overview of a topic, timelines, guides, statistics, or quick facts or answers to specific questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Wide Web</li> <li>• Encyclopedias and other reference books (in paper and electronic format)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google, Yahoo, etc.</li> <li>• Online Book Catalog of SCCC</li> <li>• Gale Virtual Reference Library</li> </ul>
In depth treatment of a subject, exhaustive, often retrospective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books (sometimes called monographs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Book Catalog of SCCC</li> <li>• World Cat (OCLC)</li> <li>• Subject Bibliographies</li> </ul>

The table above shows where types of information can be located

## NOW THAT I'VE DECIDED WHAT TYPES OF INFORMATION I NEED, AND THE APPROPRIATE SOURCE TYPES--WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MECHANICS AND THEORY OF SEARCHING THE DATABASES?

First, you will notice that different databases have different search engines with different rules and conventions. You cannot assume that you can search the same way in all databases.

The following checklist gives you some important features to look for in any database you may be working with for the first time.

- When you are in any database search engine (such as the SCCC Book Catalog, Google, or EBSCOHost's Academic Search Complete), examine the search page and be sure to read the searching help screen to determine the conventions and rules for that search engine. Often database search engines give you a choice of two separate searching input screens, a "basic" and an "advanced"-- each with its own features, capabilities, and rules. Look at both carefully: if your search is complex, maybe you'll want to use the "advanced" search.
- Some search engines, such as in EBSCOHost, will allow you to put in your search in natural language, which means you can simply type in a question in sentence form. Beware! Don't assume you can do a natural language search in all search engines. Anyway, as you become more proficient (and more demanding) at searching, you will usually find that natural language searching does not give the best results.
- Most database search engines will let you put limitations on your search results that are of practical value. For example, you may be allowed to specify a publication date or a date range you'd like to search, or you may limit your results to one specific type of publication (such as a peer-reviewed journal article), or to articles that are available full text and/or contain a certain minimum number of pages.
- Investigate whether the search engine you are using permits searching in various fields of the record, such as author field, title field, abstract field, subject field, or the full text field. This feature can be quite helpful to you.

- Look for the use of *Boolean Operators* with *key word* searching. The major operators are AND, OR, and NOT. Examples:

AND	<p>Both terms must be present in document</p> <p><i>“community colleges” AND “information management”</i></p>
OR	<p>Either term must be present in document</p> <p><i>“community colleges” OR “two-year colleges”</i></p>
NOT	<p>One term but not another term must be present in document</p> <p><i>universities NOT colleges</i></p>

- If the search engine allows the use of a nested Boolean expression, place parentheses around your "OR" operations, for example: *(whales OR dolphins) AND intelligence*. Boolean expressions can be long and complicated. You may want to run separate, simpler searches and combine search results sets, a feature which is allowed in some search engines. Other search engines support the use of + and - before terms to indicate a Boolean "AND" and "NOT".

- Look for the use of phrase searching--most often it is allowed by entering the phrase within quotation marks, e.g. "community colleges". Sometimes you are allowed to enter a phrase by using an adjacency operator that tells the search engine you want this word next to that word in a particular order.
- Does the database you are using support subject searching? If so, then the documents have all been assigned one or more subjects by a cataloger, using a standard vocabulary of subject terms, often referred to as a "thesaurus". The subject terms are linked to other broader and narrower subject terms, each term having its own "scope notes"--and this branching structure is sometimes referred to as a subject tree. For an example, look at the thesaurus in the PsycArticles database: the subject tree structure can be of immense help in zooming in or out on a topic. For books, a subject is assigned from the huge *Library of Congress List of Subject Headings*.

## HOW DO I EVALUATE THE INFORMATION SOURCES I HAVE GATHERED?

The following are some important questions you need to ask as you review each information source that you have pulled up in your library searching. They are general questions that are applicable to many different source types, from Web pages to magazine articles to books. However, the library has produced a special handout specifically about evaluating sources found on the World Wide Web that may be of further help to you.

- **Relevancy.** Does the information I have retrieved answer or help answer my specific research question or topic? Does the article or book support the point of view that I am taking? How do the various information sources I have retrieved relate to one another?
- **Currency.** Does my article or book reflect current thinking on a subject? What is the publication date? If I am researching a historical event, I will probably want to obtain information that is contemporary with the event, by those who experienced it. This is called a primary source.
- **Objectivity.** Where is the article or book coming from? Is it representative of a certain point of view? Or are different points of view evenly balanced? Is it an objective presentation of facts, or is it a personal testimony, or is it the view of a special interest group with its own agenda? Not all information sources actually purport to be objective; keep this in mind. But if it does present itself as objective, is it really?
- **Authority.** What are the credentials of the author? Are they given somewhere in the document? Is the author affiliated with a university or research institute? Does the book or article have its own bibliography, giving references to other works upon which its ideas are based? Or is the book or article a personal account or testimony based solely on the experience of the author?

- **Purpose.** Does the author have a purpose? Does he or she want my vote, my money? Or to tell me what to do? Does the author want to educate me, warn me? What is the intended audience?

Based on your evaluations, you may wish to exclude some sources from consideration, revise your search, and look for other sources. If you need help applying this checklist, just ask your professor or a librarian.

## STEALING SOMEBODY'S IDEAS? WHY DO I NEED TO GIVE CREDIT TO OTHERS' WORK?

You have grown up in the Internet age, and, well, you all know what it is to Google a name or a subject, and then cut and paste some text and images that you find and repackage them to suit your needs. Because information is so easily available on the Internet you may feel that it belongs to everybody to use as their own for any purpose whatsoever.

Wrong. Intellectual property has always been protected by the copyright law, and this law has been extended to cover works in digital format, i.e. Internet texts and images, as well as the more traditional paper format.

So, if you copy somebody else's intellectual work, and present it as your own, or promote it or distribute it for your own commercial gain, this act is illegal. It is also grounds for penalties on this campus as described in the student handbook.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, to **plagiarize** is "To use and pass off (the ideas or writings of another) as one's own", or "To appropriate for use as one's own passages or ideas from (another)".

But the copyright law also allows "fair use" of published material, such as you might find in a book or web site. This means that for your college essay or research paper, you may use or quote from another's work, if the purpose is academic, not commercial, and if proper credit is given to the original author.

## HOW DO I GIVE CREDIT IN MY PAPER TO AN AUTHOR WHOSE IDEAS OR WORDS I HAVE USED?

When you cite another person's words or ideas within your own paper, you must furnish enough information to exactly identify the source used, so that it would be easy for your audience to find that source.

- A **bibliography** is a list of your sources you used to research your paper.
- Each **citation** (description of a source) is written according to one of several existing styles or formats, specifying the elements of the citation, their order, and their punctuation. In your community college experience, you will be required to use two different bibliographic styles, called the **MLA style**, and the **APA style**.

Guides created by the library for you are available in both paper and digital versions for both styles of bibliographic citation. These guides will show you how to construct a bibliographic citation for each of the different kinds of sources you will be likely to use as college students. Examples are provided, with comments and explanations to help you. Always, if you still have questions how to apply the different rules of citation, ask a librarian!

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Want to make writing your MLA or APA style bibliography even easier?

Try NOODLE TOOLS, the online citation builder and learning tool that the library has subscribed to.

Just type in what NOODLE TOOLS tells you from your source, and it will format, order, and punctuate a finished bibliographic citation for you, that you can save or print! NOODLE TOOLS has been a favorite of SCCC students and faculty. Try it! Go to the Library website: look for the link to NOODLE TOOLS and set up your own account with username and password.

## ACTION ITEMS

- Bring your college student ID card to the library circulation desk, and get registered for the current semester as a library borrower. Just fill out a card and we'll do the rest. You will need to update your registration with the library at the beginning of every semester.
- Take an exploratory walking tour of the library. Find out where the books are located for each of the courses (academic subjects) you are taking. For instance, if you're studying mathematics, find out the Dewey Classification number for mathematics, and go to that area in the upstairs stacks. Note that the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme applies to both circulating books and reference (non-circulating books): look in both circulating and reference collections.
- Say "Hi" to the library staff; we'd like to know a little more about you, so that we can better serve your needs. Ask questions. All smiles will be returned.
- Step up to one of the library computer workstations and familiarize yourself with the library's website. The URL is <http://www.sullivan.suny.edu/library.asp> All of our library finding tools are here online, including the book catalog, a list of print and electronic journals, and links to a variety of subscription databases of articles, and reference works.
- Obtain your Campus Computer Network username and password. You will need this information to authenticate you to use our subscription databases from any off-campus location. You can get your username/password from the Current Students page of the college's website; follow instructions given there; or, if you still need help, the library staff will gladly show you how to do it.

## FACTS ABOUT THE LIBRARY—DID YOU KNOW?

- We are officially called the "Hermann Memorial Library".
- With 60,000 plus volumes, it has by far the largest and most comprehensive collection of books in all academic disciplines to be found anywhere in Sullivan County.
- We have over 500 journal, magazine, and newspaper subscriptions in paper and/or microfilm format, and we have access through our 29 subscription databases to approximately 26,800 electronic journals.
- In campus wide student surveys of satisfaction, we have consistently received high ratings for our services and facilities.
- At least one reference librarian is on duty at all hours the library is open to help you with your research, seven days a week.

- We have ten computer workstations in the first floor reference area; these computers may be used to access the Internet and the library's databases.
- We have a Library Instruction Room, E105, where we teach information literacy in lectures and workshops. We can seat 20+ students, and have an overhead computer projection unit and screen for demos. We also have a rolling cart of wireless laptop computers that can be used for instruction.
- Upstairs we have rooms for private or group study, as well as one-person study carrels, and study tables in the reference area with seating.
- Did you know that you may connect with the college network with your wireless laptop computer in the library? See the campus computing office to help you with setting up your wireless configuration.

#### ACTION ITEM!

Did you know you can see what books you have out and renew them online, by yourself?

#### Instructions for Renewing Books in the Library Catalog

- Access the library catalog on the web at:  
<http://saranac.sunyconnect.suny.edu:4870/F>
- Click the **User Info** link in the blue menu bar of the top frame.
- "Please identify yourself": Enter the barcode number at the bottom of your college id card (begins with **06092**) and enter the same number once more under "Verification".
- From the user info screen you can see the number of loans you have out: click on that number. Now you will see a detailed list of titles you have borrowed.
- Click **Renewal All** on the right side below the top frame to renew all items at once. (Alternatively, you can renew items individually by clicking on their item numbers and then clicking the **Renew** button on each of their item screens.)
- From the *user info* screen click **Change Password** to access the screen to change your password, if you wish.
- Click **End Session** on the left side of the yellow menu bar to log out.

## KEY CONTACT POINTS

- URL of the Library Home Page on the World Wide Web:  
<http://www.sullivan.suny.edu/library.asp>
- To reach the Library by phone:(845) 434-5750 x 4389 The phone is *always* picked up during open hours
- To e-mail the Library:  
[library@sullivan.suny.edu](mailto:library@sullivan.suny.edu)
- To reach the Learning Center by phone (Room E213):(845) 434-5750 x 4328
- To reach the Campus Computing Services (Computer Lab) by phone (Room G009): (845) 434-5750 x 4325
- To chat with a librarian use the “Ask a Librarian” box on the Library Home Page. You may simply type in your question if a librarian is online at the moment.