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E-RESEARCH IN PROGRESS REVIEW LITERATURE

The groups' FAOs are linked through the Internet FAQ consortium at http://www.faqs.org/. These lists are designed to inform new users about fre quently asked questions and to help prevent regular readers from rereading responses to questions that have been dealt with on many previous occasions. Use quotes to reference only relevant material from a previous post to which you are responding. A brief quotation is useful to provide context; however, long inclusions of past comments only waste bandwidth and add to screen clutter. Follow the discourse for a few weeks before posting comments or questions yourself to insure that your particular question is relevant to the interests of the list members. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a potential posting, email it privately to the list owner for feedback before posting it publicly. The use of HTML coding and the addition of attachments to postings always add to the size of the message and may result in messages that cannot be read b all members of the list. A better solution is to post an announcement of the avail ability of the resource to the list. Usenet group,

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http://www.rmrple.com). Virtual conferences are time delimited in that they use combinations of synchronous and asynchronous tools to sup port presentation and dialogue for a limited period of time and usually on a particular topic (Anderson, 1996), Like their face-to-face counterparts, virtual conferences usu ally include keynote presentations, promotional displays, and small group discussions. Such conferences provide ideal means for e-researchers to gain low-cost exposure to major spokespersons in their field. Announcements of upcoming virtual conferences can be found on appropriate mailing lists, Usenet groups, or the home pages of spon soring organizations.

Direct Email

Writing directly to an expert in the field may be a useful way for the eresearcher to gain invaluable access to the "informal network." The use of powerful search engines usually allows one to enter the expert's name (in quotations and possibly with a key word appended, if the name is very common) and find a Web site with relevant information, including the expert's email address and phone number. However, the novice e-researcher should be careful not to abuse this availability and should utilize such contacts only when other, less demanding forms of communication have been exhausted. Most experts whom you would like to reference in your literature review are very busy people-if they were not, you probably wouldn't be interested in their work. In addition, most experts write books, publish articles, and create Web sites so that you can gain access to their ideas and comments. Attempts by the novice e-researcher to short circuit the process and go directly and personally to the expert, without check ing their public work, will likely be interpreted as bothersome and not be answered. As an example of an inappropriate request,

Comtinue Direct Email

filter relevant information from their own explorations of the network and forward appropriate messages, links, or referrals to them. 'This filtering can become institutionalized as the researcher sets up a formal or informal mailing list for messages or references that contain informa tion relevant to the members of the list. In the early days of networking, prior to the Internet, this transporting of information between networks was referred to as porting and porters were celebrated as "Unsung heroes of the Network Nation!" (Masthead, NerweaverMagazine). Making Effective Use of the Informal Network Resources To maximize the effectiveness of an inquiry, an e-researcher must be careful to ask a question or request assistance in an appropriate manner. s in any conversation, the researcher must be sure to use a manner and tone that is polite, respectful, and appre ciative. In addition, e-researchers must insure that they have done their own literature review and research work before asking others to do it for them. For example, a question such as "Does anyone know anything about school dropout for a research paper I'm doing?" will

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liography, because obtain ing a copy of the correspondence may be difficult or impossible for the interested reader. Instead, these guidelines suggest referencing such private or difficult to retrieve material as "private email correspondence from name on date" or "posting to list name on date" within the text of the document. Other guides suggest that this information be kept and made available to the interested reader and that it be referenced in the bibli ography in the format: Anderson, T. (16 September 200D). Subject: When will our book be published? [email to H. Kanulea], [Online]. Available email: heather.knulaa@ualberta.ca For more information related to the format for citing electronic references, the World-Wide Web Virtual Library maintains a listing of sites entitled Electronic Refer ences dScholarly Citations ofInternet Sources at http://www.spaceless.com/WWW/VL/ It is important to learn and consistently use the format in which your e-research results will eventually be published. Making use of consistent notation of all relevant fields from the very beginning of the research process will

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save you a great deal of tire in the long run. To aid in this data organization process, a brief discussion of personal reference management software appears in the next section, PLAGIARISM AND NETWORKED SOURCES Most academic writing has liberal doses of direct quotations from the works of others This practice lends authenticity to the literature review and, done properly, can even enhance the readability of the literature review. However, it is imperative that the work of others be properly acknowledged. Even if a quotation is not used directly, ideas that are paraphrased by the researcher need to be credited to the original source. Given the pervasiveness of ideas, papers, reference sources, and commentaries on the Net, e-researchers may feel they are drowning in a bewildering and immense sea of information, sources, and references. They may even have trouble remembering where or even if the idea or quotation they have gathered came from another source or is original work. There is no easy solution to this problem, except to remember that qual ity research is systematic. An electronic or paper notebook

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(see personal reference management software in the next section for an example) to record quotes and ideas, as well as their source, is an essential tool for all researchers and can be especially Important when beginning a literature review