UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

College of Humanities and Legal Studies

Faculty of Arts

Information Literacy Skills Unit

ILT 101
INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS

SESSION 3 : INFORMATION SOURCES AND THEIR USES

INTRODUCTION

- Resources in libraries include **general reference books** (e.g., encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases, directories), **textbooks** (on various subject areas), **novels**, **periodicals** (journals, newsletters, bulletins, newspapers, etc.), and **electronic resources** (which may be on compact disc (CD) or other external storage devices or online).

- These resources may be print and non-print materials

TYPES OF REFERENCE SOURCES

Library reference resources are essentially grouped into two:

- **Directional Search tools (Control-access-directional)—** They direct or point the reader to other materials where information can be found. They do not contain the actual information. Examples are bibliographies, indexes, and abstracts.

- **Source Type**—They contain the information needed. Examples of these are dictionaries, encyclopaedias, journals and thesauri, textbook.

WHAT ARE REFERENCE MATERIALS?

Reference materials or reference sources contain facts that have been brought together from many sources and organized for quick and easy use.

Characteristics of Reference Materials

They are meant to be consulted in the library. Such books are likely to have 'Reference Only', 'Not To Be Taken Out' or 'Not To Be Borrowed' labels on them;

They are not meant to be read from cover to cover

Kept at a separate section of the library, etc.

Examples of reference sources

Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias, indexes and abstracts, bibliographies, Maps and Atlases, periodicals.

DICTIONARIES

Definition- reference book or a set of books containing words and usually phrases, alphabetically arranged, together with information about them, especially their forms, pronunciations, usage, spelling and meaning.

Types: General dictionary, Subject dictionary, Specialized dictionary, Translating dictionaries (bilingual dictionaries or polyglot dictionaries).

Uses of Dictionaries

Dictionaries are used to define words, to verify spelling, syllabication or pronunciation; to check on usage of words; or to determine the etymology of a word.

Examples of Non-print/electronic dictionaries

- Cambridge Dictionary https://dictionary.cambridge.org/
- Oxford Learners Dictionary
  https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

...liography is the name given to a list of books, manuscripts and other publications ...matically arranged and described and which have some relationship to each other.

...es of Bibliographies

...thor- bibliographies list the works by and about one author.

...ject -bibliographies are restricted to a specific subject area.

...tional – bibliography contains list of all materials published in a country or about a cou... ...a given year.

...ok trade

...blisher's Catalog

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

es

liographies are useful sources in searching for

erials/publication on a subject or person

ey indicate the scope of the subject

ey provide a means to verify the details of publications.

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

Reitz (2013) defines an encylopaedia "as a book or numbered set of books containing authoritative summary of information about a variety of topics in the form of short essays, usually arranged alphabetically by headword or classified in some manner".

Types of Encyclopaedias

General encyclopaedias – The *Webster's New Explorer Desk Encyclopedia*

Encyclopaedia for different age groups (example for children and young adults)

Subject encyclopaedias as implied have subject coverage or focus on particular subjects.

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS CONT'D

Uses

Finding facts;

Provide general background or historical information;

Locate explanatory material or definitions;

Serve as guides to related topics within its pages or to outside sources of information (cross references and bibliographies);

Examples of Online encyclopaedia

Encyclopeadia Britannica https://www.britannica.com/

PERIODICALS

A periodical is a serial publication with a distinctive title and which appears at regular or irregular intervals. Examples daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly etc.

Types: **journals, magazines, reports, newsletters** and **bulletins**

INDEXES

An **index** indicates where information can be found rather than provide the information. In other words, an index is a Control-Access-Directional publication, which serves as guide to the contents of a document.

Types of Indexes

General index

Subject index

Newspaper index

Back of book Index

ABSTRACTS

Abstracts give full bibliographic details as in the case of indexes and in addition present a brief summary of the subject content of the article or report indexed.

Types of Abstracts

Informative—abstract captures all the essential facts, data, and information in the original document. (Purpose • Methodology • Results • Conclusion)

Indicative— abstract shows the principal areas covered by a document and the way the topic has been treated. (Scope • Arguments Used • Conclusions)

Examples of Abstracts: Subject abstracts, Dissertation Abstracts, The African Studies   Database

USES OF INDEXES AND ABSTRACTS

- For the selection and acquisition of library materials;

- They serve as aids for readers to evaluate the content of a document;

- They are used to facilitate retrieval of information by reducing the time users spend in locating information;

- They are used for compilation and production of a bibliography;

MAPS AND ATLASES

Map—a representation of the surface of the earth or a section of it showing physical features such as cities, roads seas etc. Example: google maps https://www.google.com/maps

Atlases- bound collection of maps of uniform dimension bound together in a single or volumes.

Types of Atlases

General reference atlas

Regional atlases

Road atlases

Thematic atlases

Uses

Locate places on the earth's surface

Determine the distance between two points

Determine the time zones of cities and countries.

READING LIST

- Aina, L. O. (2004).*Library and Information Science Text for Africa*. Ibadan: Third world information Services Limited, pp239-247.

- Bopp, R.E. & Smith, L.C. (Eds) (1995).*Reference and information services: an introduction*. Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited.

- Borgman, C. L. (2000).*From Gutenberg to the Global Information Infrastructure.* Cambridge (MA): the MIT Press.

- http://www.amazon.com/Blacks-Medical-Dictionary-42nd-Ed/dp/0713689021

- Reitz, J. M. (2013). *Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science*.Retrieved from http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis_e.aspx on 28th August, 2013.