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# **Research Methods and Professional Practice: Seminar: 3 Karen Outram**

Brought forward from Seminar 2 discussion: Seminar 3 case study

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## Unit 4 Seminar

### Title: Case Study on Privacy

Please read the case below and answer the questions. You need to determine the ethical issues involved with this case.

#### The Case

Ricardo works for the records department of his local government as a computer records clerk, where he has access to files of property tax records. For a scientific study, a researcher, Beth, has been granted access to the numerical portion "but not the corresponding names" of some records.

Beth finds some information that she would like to use, but she needs the names and addresses corresponding with certain properties. Beth asks Ricardo to retrieve these names and addresses, so she can contact these people for more information and for permission to do further study.

Now consider, what are the ethical issues involved in deciding which of these options to pursue?

- If Ricardo is not responsible for determining allowable access, should he release the names and addresses?
- Suppose Ricardo were responsible for determining allowable access to the files. What ethical issues would be involved in his deciding whether to grant access to Beth?
- Should Beth be allowed to contact the individuals involved? That is, should the Records department release individuals' names to a researcher? What are the ethical issues for the Records department to consider?
- Suppose Beth contacts the individuals to ask their permission, and one-third of them respond giving permission, one-third respond denying permission, and one-third do not respond. Beth claims that at least one-half of the individuals are needed to make a valid study. What options are available to Beth?

Be prepared to discuss your answers during the seminar session.

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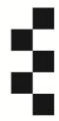
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## Data protection example: GDPR and confidentiality – why we need consent

- A patient puts in a subject access request to the NHS [SAR]
- The NHS administrator is unsure which data belongs to whom
- Various doctors/nurses/NHS providers names are on documents
- The administrator contacts the patient who put the SAR in and states records will be released when all data/GDPR rules are checked
- The Data Protection Act of 2018 states that information needs to be used fairly, lawfully and transparently, (Data Protection Act, 2018)



## Data protection:

- There are many ethical as well as legal requirements regarding gathering and releasing data. In the case of the SAR request, the data concerning the patient does belong to them, (regardless of whether it is written by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party).
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> party can redact their identity regarding a SAR request, (on e mails for example)
- BUT the data written about the patient is their own regardless of who wrote it
- Data protection/GDPR however will not allow personal details of those involved in writing commentary to be released; for example personal addresses...



## Data protection:

### ■ Data protection

- Data should only be used for the specific purpose for which it was gathered in the first place
- individuals have the right to access data held about them
- Data may not be disclosed to third parties without permission of the individual concerned
- If personal data is retained, this data must be appropriately protected, (on a password protected device for example)
- Personal data should be kept for no longer than necessary, (for example at the end of a research study it should be destroyed)



## Data protection:

- **Informed consent**

- Anyone you are involving in your research is informed of the research and their role within it and they should be advised that they may withdraw at any time.

- **Vulnerable groups**

- These can include children, pregnant women, people with a mental illness, prisoners, people over 65, people with learning disabilities, (this list is not exhaustive). Anyone classed as vulnerable will have a parent or guardian acting for them. The parent or guardian would have to sign and give consent for a vulnerable individual to engage in research EVEN IF the intended participant has the capacity to sign/agree to engage in a research project.



## Data protection: looking forward: Primary Research/your Capstone project

### Research participants

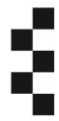
- Selection criteria – decide on a demographic specific to the research criteria, and remember the participants and research itself must be without bias
- Consider what consent will be required from participants to take part (or their parents/ carers/guardians)
- Will there be any financial incentive or otherwise to take part (which may affect the objectivity of the results)?
- Remember participants will be able to withdraw at any stage
- Will any deception be involved – for example, intentionally to evaluate a reaction or unintentionally, which might affect the results?



## Contents:

- **Unit 5: Interviews and Survey Methods**
- Engage with reading materials and lecture casts
- There is also a formative reflective activity in unit 5
- **Unit 6: Questionnaire design**
- Wiki activity: Questionnaires: formative [feeds into your e portfolio]: As follows:
  - Find a questionnaire and critique the design, both the format and the questions used.
  - Consider areas such as ‘why is this question included?’, ‘is the form of the question appropriate?’ etc. How can you improve the questionnaire?
  - Put your analysis in the module wiki and comment on others’ analyses.





## Unit 5 & 6 builds on the discussions from Unit 3&4:

- We looked at:
- Different methods of collecting research
- Using different tools to gather research
- Remember that research comes in the form of primary and secondary research and
- That all research is either interpreted using qualitative, [written] or quantitative [numerical/statistical] methodologies

# Unit 5 : Primary research methods

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## Unit 5: Interviews, Survey Methods, and Questionnaire Design

Welcome to Week 5 where you will be introduced to the use of interviews, survey methods and questionnaire design.

Conducting in-depth interviews is one of the most common qualitative research methods. It is a conversational piece, involving only respondent at a time. It provides opportunities for the researcher to get in depth details from the respondent.

A survey is one of the most important quantitative methods of collecting data. There are various types of surveys or polls, and they are used to explore opinions, trends, etc. Online surveys are more generally used, with easier accessibility for the target respondents.

We also need to point out an important difference, the one between a questionnaire and a survey. A survey is a comprehensive method used for the gathering and analysis of data and will involve a questionnaire. A questionnaire on the other hand, just refers to the set of questions with answer choices which is used to conduct a survey.

Image description: The figure below show how the surveying process is cyclic in nature. It starts with a survey questionnaire that leads to survey logic. In turn, this leads to survey distribution, and subsequently survey data collection and analytics.

Survey Questionnaire

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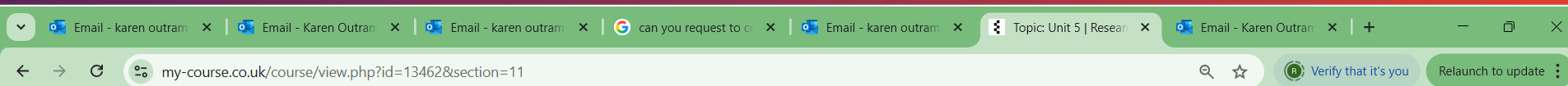
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 **Questionnaire Design** Mark as done

**Reading** | 4 hrs

The reading this week gives further insight into the research methods you can use and how they can be used. There are many examples to be found of bad surveys and we will consider the design in more detail in the next unit.


 **Unit 5 Reading** Mark as done


**e-Portfolio Assessment and Formative Activities** | 6 hrs


**e-Portfolio update: Data Collection** - Think about which data collection tool will be suitable for your area of investigation (in this module and/or in your Project module). How will you collect it and what analysis would you hope to perform? How will this answer your research question? This should also be included in the presentation of your Project Proposal in Unit 10.

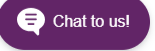
**Complete** the Wiki Activity below.

**Complete** the unit reflective activity below.

 **e-Portfolio Activity: Reflective Activity 2** Mark as done

 **Wiki Activity: Questionnaires**







## Unit 5 looks at:

- How interviews and surveys are used in research
- Conducting thorough and in-depth interviews [a focused method of gaining research – primary research]
- Watch the lecture cast in unit 5 and please engage with the reading unit materials
- This weeks readings and lecture casts will help us understand how surveys and interviews inform research and how different research types inform different outcomes for different investigations
- How pilot research can then inform focused research [surveys for example].

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## Unit 6: Quantitative Methods - Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

Welcome to Week 6 where we will introduce quantitative methods.

As a general definition, quantitative methods examine relationships between variables, which are measured numerically and analysed through a wide range of statistical and graphical techniques, at times even involving experimental design.

The unity of analysis here are data, which consist of the observed values of one or more variables of interest. They are usually organised into **data sets**. A data set can be thought of as a table, whose columns represent the different **variables**, and whose rows represent the individual **observations**. Each individual cell in the table contains the value that the variable takes for the given observation.

In order to extract meaningful and useful business intelligence from data, it is important that the methodology to be employed is valid for the variable or variables of interest. The first important distinction concerns the **level of measurement** of each variable.

When exploring data, it is helpful to try to summarise the data in some meaningful way. This is what **descriptive statistics** is about, which represents the focus of this unit.

One approach is to construct a graphical summary. In this section, we (very briefly) explore some of the more useful graphical summaries, although it is Unit 8 that will deal more specifically with data visualisation.

It is often convenient to summarise numerical data using a few simple summary measures. Most commonly, two such measures are used. The first of these is a measure of **location**, and represents the value taken by "a typical observation" – that is, by an observation that falls "right in the middle of the data". As well as knowing the magnitude of a typical observation, some idea of the "variability" or "spread" of the data is also useful. This is provided by a measure of **dispersion**.

### This week we shall:

- Understand quantitative methods.

## Unit 6 :

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**On completion of this week, you will be able to:**

- Understand and apply descriptive statistics.
- Identify the different levels of measurement.
- Produce measures of location and spread.

**Reading** | 4 hrs

The reading this week will give you more information on designing a questionnaire.

**Unit 6 Reading**

Mark as done

**Formative Activity** | 1 hr

Prepare for next week's seminar session by attempting the Seminar preparation questions, available in Unit 7.

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## Unit 6 requires:

- **Designing a questionnaire:**
- **In this unit for formative feeding into to e-portfolio you are asked to develop:**
  - **e-Portfolio Update:** Data Collection method
  - **Wiki Activity:** Questionnaires and
- **Learning Outcomes:**
  1. Understand the difference between a good questionnaire and a poor one.
  2. Understand how to obtain the responses you will need for your investigation.
  3. Understand how the data obtained can be analysed.



## Unit 6 requires:

- You will need to watch the lecture cast
- Read through all required unit 6 reading materials, [both essential and additional]
- I will be providing generic formative feedback for relevant e-portfolio activity. Remember that all feedback feeds into your summative, [and also the e-portfolio]



# Unit 6 formative activity :

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Unit(s)	Component	Deadline	e-Portfolio/Formative
1 - 3	Collaborative Discussion 1	End of unit 3	e-Portfolio
1	Reasoning Quiz	End of unit 1	Formative
1	Reflective Activity 1: Ethics in Computing	End of unit 1	e-Portfolio/Formative
2	e-Portfolio Activity: Literature Review and Research Proposal Outlines	End of unit 4	e-Portfolio/Formative
3	e-Portfolio Activity: Research Proposal Review	End of unit 3	e-Portfolio/Formative
3	Seminar 2: Peer Review Activity	End of unit 3	Formative
4	Seminar 3: Case Study on Privacy	End of unit 4	Formative
4	Literature Review Outline Submission	End of unit 4	Formative
5	Reflective Activity 2: Case Study: Inappropriate Use of Surveys	End of unit 5	Formative
5	Wiki Activity: Questionnaires	End of unit 5	Formative
7 - 9	Collaborative Discussion 2: Case Study on Accuracy of Information	End of unit 9	e-Portfolio
7	Seminar 4: Inferential Statistics Workshop and Statistics Worksheet	End of unit 7	Formative/e-Portfolio (worksheets)
8	e-Portfolio Activity: Research Proposal Outline	End of unit 8	e-Portfolio/Formative

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## Deadline Details

On this page you will find deadline details for when your work needs to be submitted throughout the module. Please note that all deadlines are in UK time.

The units should be completed in order, by the date indicated. These deadlines will also appear in your Learning Platform calendar.

Please Note: All grades are subject to change until they have been agreed by the External Examiner and ratified by the Examination Board.

### Submission Guidelines for Assignments

Please review our [Submission and Editorial Guidelines for UoEO Assignments](#) before submitting any assignment.

Unit	Component	Deadline
7	<a href="#">Literature Review</a>	23:55 hrs Monday 16th June 2025
10	<a href="#">Research Proposal Presentation</a>	23:55 hrs Monday 7th July 2025
12	<a href="#">Individual Module e-Portfolio including 1,000 word reflective piece</a>	23:55 hrs Monday 21st July 2025

### Formative and e-Portfolio Activities

To aid your development of an in-depth understanding of the syllabus, regular formative assessment is provided via case studies, exercises, and reflective commentaries. Furthermore, the formative feedback received will enable you to develop your understanding of what is required for the summative assessments. Although not all of these activities are weighted components that count towards your module grade, they are designed to help you gain a deep understanding of the module content and provide a foundation for understanding.

We recommend that you participate in all formative activities and make frequent entries to your **e-portfolio which is assessed in this module**.

You will find the main e-portfolio and formative activities below. Please make sure that you read the guidance in each unit to fully understand weekly study requirements. Also read the full e-Portfolio

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Looking forward to unit 12 again and how formative feeds into the e portfolio summative :

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### Unit 12: Project Management and Managing Risk

Welcome to Week 12 where we will be considering project management and how to manage risk within a project through adequate reporting and control tools.

Project management is the controlling of processes and activities that are related to a project. A Computing project refers to any project that deals with computing infrastructure and information systems. Whilst all projects may be focused, time specific and unique, what they seek to achieve and the environment within which they are being implemented can vary, greatly. It would be naive to assume therefore that a 'one size fits all' approach can be taken to project management. You will be introduced to some of the principal methodologies for managing projects.

It is unusual to encounter a project where project managers and team members feel all aspects of the project are under control. Selecting the best metrics to measure project performance is pivotal to the project's success. In turn, assessing risks can be problematic. The risk-free project does not exist, and it is not possible to avoid the risks completely. Many risks are not visible at the start of a project, but the most significant potential risks need to be calculated and planned.

The unit will also cover how to manage the inevitable changes that will occur within a project life. What can frequently happen during a project implementation is that a need or desire for change is identified. Sometimes this is because corrective action is required to keep the project on plan and within budget, sometimes it is because of environmental changes (i.e. the project itself needs to be amended and at other times it may be requested). To ensure that the impact of change is minimised and/or to identify how it will impact on the project plan, scope, outcomes, it is essential that the Project Manager controls changes through a change control process. The management of risk and change is important to ensure that project quality is maintained and to minimise impact on project cost and planned time frames whilst taking advantage of opportunities which may be identified during the process.



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# E-portfolio: generic guidelines

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**THIS MODULE**  
Research Methods and Professional Practice (All programmes)

1. Appraise the professional, legal, social, cultural and ethical issues that affect computing professionals
2. Appraise the principles of academic investigation, applying them to a research topic in the applicable computing field
3. Evaluate critically existing literature, research design and methodology for the chosen topic, including data analysis processes
4. Produce and evaluate critically the resulting research proposal for the chosen topic.

- Emotional Intelligence
- Entrepreneurial
- Critical Reflection

**2 Collaborative Discussion Forum Summaries** (These will cover learning outcomes 1, 2, and 3).

**Reflective Piece** This covers a key aim for this module.

The Portfolio should also include the following, as part of professional development aspect of the module:

- Feedback from peers and tutors
- Professional Skills Matrix and action plan (PDP)

Other artefacts developed during the module should be included in the portfolio. xxx You will need to describe/show how those artefacts relate to the module learning outcomes.

Skills to be gained here are:

- Time management
- Commercial Awareness
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Initiative
- Entrepreneurial
- Communication and Literacy skills
- Numeracy
- IT and Digital
- Interpersonal
- Critical Reflection
- Research

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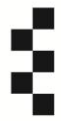
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## Re-cap : Developing a Literature Review

### **An effective Literature Review incorporates:**

- A focused approach to research
- The ability to identify cross-sectional research [for example: mixing the old with the new]
- Contemporary literature should come from publications ideally within the last 6 years and no older than 10-15yrs [maximum]
- Literature review must be based in deep research and not opinion
- You must be able to dissect your research and analyse and evaluate that research
- Remember that academic writing is grounded in debate and discussion, [looking at the pros and cons of discussion]
- Keep writing academic, concise, logical and focused, [don't indulge in wordy and emotive writing styles]
- Your writing should show a good and intrinsic knowledge of your subject



## Re-cap : Developing a Literature Review

### **A Literature review should:**

- Show clarity when looking at and answering the research problem
- Develop your research methodology
- Develop your existing knowledge of a topic
- Fully contextualise your research findings



## Recap : Developing a Literature Review: Academic conventions

- Please complete the Literature Review on a word document and consider academically appropriate professional presentation when completing this, for example:
- Putting your name, student number, where you are studying, the module your are studying on a title page and the unit you are responding to
- Contents page
- Use Arial font size 12
- Double line spacing
- Margin indentations should be approx. 2.5cm on either side
- Use regular citation
- Apply a list of references at the end of your Literature Review
- Ensure paragraphs are evenly weighted
- Ensure that syntax is academic and concise [use word count wisely]
- Take a critical approach to content [don't be overly descriptive or subjective in your opinion]
- Ensure that all research is paraphrased away from the original source – consider Turnitin content matches



## What makes a good Literature Review?:

- Literature reviews allow you to investigate:
- What has already be found [investigated] in a research topic
- This then gives the 'author' of the Literature Review knowledge regarding what already exists in their chosen topic
- This means it is clear where 'gaps' in research may be, and then what type of research or investigation will fill these gaps
- In summary it allows you understand what is unknown in your chosen topic after investigating research and data that is already published regarding your topic...





## What makes a good Literature Review?:

- As discussed in seminar 2 we are not looking for lists or literal interpretations of research
- The Literature Review should look at a good and extensive cross-section of research linked to the topic, [both old and new]
- The LR should evaluate and analyse research from different points of view, [from bona fide research]
- You should draw conclusions from your research by looking at the pros and cons of discussion and remaining objective yourself
- If you start your research from the perspective of a biased or subjective opinion [i.e: already assuming what the outcomes will be to suit a personal conscious or unconscious bias on the subject] this *will* show in the manner in which you interpret your research
- You should enter any research topic without bias or without pre-conceived ideas...
- The Literature review should show the ability to synthesise discussion and should show an intrinsic understanding of the topic, [via in-depth, cross-sectional, unbiased research]








## What makes a good Literature Review?:






- A Literature Review must:
- Cite
- Compare
- Contrast
- Critique
- Connect

Your discussion and research







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





























































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














































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**WRITING A LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Guiding questions to support planning, revising, and refining of a literature review \***

---

What is the focus and aim of your review? Who is your audience?

1.

---

Why is there a need for your review? Why is it significant?

2.

---

What is the context of the topic or issue? What perspective do you take? What framework do you use to synthesise the literature?

3.

---

How did you locate and select sources for inclusion in the review?

4.

---

How is your review structured?

5.

---



## Unit 2: Research Questions, the Literature review Guide Questions:

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**What are the main findings in the literature on this topic?**

6.

**What are the main strengths and limitations of this literature?**

7.

**Are there any discrepancies in this literature?**

8.

**What conclusions do you draw from the review? What do you argue needs to be done as an outcome of the review?**

9.

\* As with other sets of guiding questions in this book, select those questions that are relevant to your context, add others as appropriate, and decide the order in which you will address them to communicate effectively with your audience.

Source: Healey, M., Matthews, K., & Cook-Sather, A. (2020) *Writing about learning and teaching in higher education: Creating and contributing to scholarly conversations across a range of genres*. Center for Engaged Learning Open-Access Books, Elon University. 142-152.

Page 1 of 1 218 words Accessibility: Good to go

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## Google Scholar: link for Literature Reviews:

[https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5&q=literature+review  
&oq=literature](https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=literature+review&oq=literature)



## Looking forward to Units 7,8 and 9:

### Looking forward to seminar 4:

- Prepare for the next seminar session by attempting the worksheets on hypothesis testing and summary measures, available in Unit 8.
- Collaborative Learning Discussion 2
- **This formative discussion will last for 3 weeks.**
- Week 7: initial post.
- Week 8: at least 2 peer responses.
- Week 9: and then a summary response.



## List of references: Unit 5

### Essential Reading

Dawson, C. (2015) *Projects in Computing and Information Systems: A Student's Guide*. Harlow: Pearson.

- Chapter 2 Section 2.4.2 p 29.
- Chapter 2 Section 2.4.3 p 29-31.

Berenson, L., Levine, D. & Szabat, K. (2015) *Basic Business Statistics: Concepts and Applications*. 13th Ed. Pearson

- Chapter 7 Section 7.1 p 280-284.
- Chapter 7 Section 7.2 p 285-287.

Confessore, N. (2018) *Cambridge Analytica and Facebook: The Scandal and the Fallout So Far*.

### Additional Reading

Campos, D. (2015) *Populations vs Samples*.



## List of references: Unit 6

### Essential Reading

Dawson, C. (2015) *Projects in Computing and Information Systems: A Student's Guide*. Harlow: Pearson.

- Chapter 2 Section 2.4.4 p 31-37.

### Additional Reading

Brace, I. (2013) *Questionnaire Design: How to Plan, Structure and Write a Survey*. Kogan Page.

- Chapter 1 p 6-16.
- Chapter 3 p 28-3.
- Chapter 4 p 36-47.

Sage Video (2018) *Designing a Survey*.

QuestionPro (2021) *Questionnaire vs Survey: Is there a Difference?*

Survey Monkey (n.d.) *Survey vs Questionnaire: What is the difference?*

QuestionPro (2021) *Leading Questions: Definitions, Characteristics and Examples*.





# Questions?

