What is Document Content Analysis?

- Research method where existing documents and reports are the sources of data
- Gather and evaluate information from documents
  - Includes: reports, laws, public policies, government publications, media articles, private papers (ex. journals, letters), emails, meeting minutes
- The research interprets and analyzes the data extracted from the documents

Limitations/ Drawbacks

- Requires a lot of reading (often have to read and re-read a document)
- Some documents may contain bias or untrue information
- Researcher interpretation of qualitative (textual) data is subjective and can be vulnerable to bias
- Difficult to stay organized when many documents are involved

Methodology

Step 1: Find the appropriate documents for your given research

- Internet search (digital/electronic documents)
- Library search (physical documents)
- Contact a government agency or a business to request documents
- Newspaper archive

Step 2: Stay organized!

- Label everything with the Authors, Title, and Year of the Document, so that you do not lose track of where your information came from!

Step 3: Apply an "Analysis Criteria" to the Document

Document Analysis Criteria

Document Analysis Criteria:

Title of Document: _____

Author/Source: _____

Date Document was Prepared: _____

Date the research or event being described took place: _____

Purpose of Document: _____

Table of Contents? Yes No

Tables, Graphs, Graphics? Which appear the most useful? _____

Intended Audience of the Document: _____

Methodology

Step 4: Based on your research question, choose one or more of the following evaluation methods:

- Identify *key themes* and relationships
  - within the document
  - in comparison with other documents
- Extract useful *quantitative data* (numeric) from the document
  - Example: Diesel emissions for the particular year
- Extract useful *qualitative data* (text) from the document
  - Example: Quotes from officials

Ex: Campus Climate Action Plans

Example Research Question: *How do the GHG emissions differ across the CSU campuses?*

	Document Title, Year	Transportation Emissions	Energy Emissions	Operations Emissions	Carbon Offsets	Total Emissions
CSULB	Climate Action Plan, 2014	36,040 Metric Tons, CO2	19,390 Metric Tons, CO2	4495 Metric Tons, CO2	?	59,930 Metric Tons, CO2
CSU-DH						
CSUN						
CSU-LA						

Data Collection and Organization

Extract Important Quantitative Data (numeric) from the Report:

Fill out the Table with examples of important quantitative information:

Topic	Figure/Table #	Page #	Important Information
CSULB GHG Emissions	Table 4	18	Total 2010 Emissions = 59,930 Metric Tons