

THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT RESEARCH

What are the four procedural stages of the research process?

- Asking the right questions
- Exploring a balance of views
- Achieving adequate depth
- Evaluating and interpreting your findings

What are the five critical thinking stages in the research process?

- Is this information accurate, reliable, and relatively unbiased?
- Do the facts verify the claim?
- How much of the information is useful?
- Is this the whole or the real story?
- Do I need more information?

What are the three levels of depth in the research process?

There are three levels of information:

1. Surface level – publications from popular media, written for the general public.
2. Moderate level – Trade magazines, business reports, and technical publications, meant for people with some background knowledge.
3. Deepest level – Academic journals and professional papers, written for experts and professionals in the field.

What is the difference between evaluating findings and interpreting findings?

- Evaluating findings means checking if the information is reliable and accurate.
- Interpreting findings means figuring out what the information means or what conclusions you can draw from it.

What are primary and secondary research?

Primary research means getting information directly from the source by conducting interviews and surveys and by observing people, events, or processes in action.

Secondary research is information obtained second hand by reading what other researchers have compiled in books and articles in print or online.

What are the two ways of locating online secondary sources?

- Subject directories are collections of useful website links, picked and organized by people (like editors).
- Search engines like Google and Yahoo! automatically look for websites that match the words you type in. When using search engines, make sure to refine your search to avoid getting too many results.

What cautions should you observe when using Google and Wikipedia?

Google – It's okay to start with Google to get ideas and figure out how to begin your research. But soon, you'll need to focus your search and look for more detailed and reliable sources.

Wikipedia – Wikipedia can be a good place to get a quick overview of a topic. But since it's not always 100% accurate, don't rely on it alone. Instead, use it to understand the topic and to find better sources listed at the bottom of the page.

What are five other online secondary sources?

- General, commercial, and academic Web sites
- Government Web sites
- Online news outlets and magazines
- Blogs
- Wikis
- Facebook, Twitter, and online groups
- Digital libraries
- Periodical databases

What tool should you use to locate traditional secondary sources at the library?

library's online public access catalog (OPAC). This catalog can be accessed through the Internet or at workstations in the library.

What are the four types of primary sources?

1. Unsolicited inquiries include letters, phone calls, or email inquiries to experts or others who can clarify or supplement information you already have.
2. Informational interviews allow you to uncover highly original information by spending time with an expert and asking pertinent questions. But be careful that expert opinion can be biased or inaccurate too.

3. Surveys help you form impressions of the concerns, preferences, attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions of a large, identifiable group (a target population) by studying representatives of that group (a sample).
4. Observations and experiments offer proof to back up assumptions about a topic. They should be your final step, because you now know exactly what to look for.