

On Literature Reviews: Databases/Tools/Templates

INT 93

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How to Search Articles

Google Scholar

- Pros:
 - Links to other sources
 - Can select date range
 - Quickly see if your question has been answered
- Cons:
 - Not always up-to-date
 - Working papers scarce (cutting edge)
 - Not always in your field

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Working Papers

- Pros:
 - Most cutting edge research
 - Will likely cite all articles prior
- Cons:
 - Difficult to find (rely on experts/NBERS)
 - Not peer reviewed (may have mistakes)

Library Databases

Benefits

- Pros:
 - Only economics articles
 - All peer-reviewed
- Cons:
 - Only economics articles
 - Need VPN or UCSB internet connection
 - Interface not as nice as Google Scholar

Steps:

- Go to [UCSB library website](#)
- Click on [Articles and Databases](#)
- Search Engine will provide you with the following databases:
 - EconLit
 - RePEc (Research Papers in Economics)
 - National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) Working Papers

Which Method is Best?

My Suggestion:

- Use a combination of each of these
 - Start with working papers (use NBERs)
 - These will lead you to prior works in their literature reviews
- You will find which ones work best for you
- No method will get every paper:
 - Likely, someone will suggest a paper to you

Keeping Track of Literature

Zotero

Big No-Nos

- Using a file folder with downloaded papers
- Using a Microsoft Word Document with copied links
- Keeping a Google bookmark folder
- I have done all of these...this is inefficient, and frankly, a waste of time!

Solution: Zotero

- Free software dedicated to this problem
 - Free
 - Integrated with Microsoft Word/Google Docs
 - Integrated with Google Chrome
 - Can create citations for you

Downloading Zotero

Steps:

1. Go to the [Zotero download page](#)
2. Click on your type of operating system (Mac/Windows)
3. Install
4. In addition, install the Zotero Connector (Chrome App) and Google Chrome

Zotero Demonstration

How should I take notes?

Reading Research:

- Many strategies, but generally:
 - Think about the problems/areas your research relates to
 - Group articles under each of these areas
 - Take notes

Example:

- ShotSpotter Technology on Response Times
 - General groups:
 - Police technology (body worn cameras, tacticle equiptment)
 - Rapid response
 - Gun Control

Template for taking notes:

You can use either Microsoft Word or Google Doc here!

Grouping

Paper Name

- Main idea of the paper:
- Main results:
- How your paper is different:
- How your paper relates:

Literature Document Demonstration

What makes a good research question?

Good Research Questions

Big implications (inform policy, a missing measure etc.), but small Scope
(focused)

Bad Example:

- What factors contribute to poor health?
 - Overly broad: pick a factor!
 - Poor health is loosely defined
 - Obesity?
 - Depression?

Good Example:

- How do physicians practice environments affect patient outcomes?
 - One factor:
 - Policy implications
 - Outcomes discussed further reading

Finding Good Research Questions

Methods

- Read news articles
 - Non-researched claims are made all the time
- Talk to people
 - Non-researched claims are made all the time
- Read opinion pieces
- Read non-fiction economics books
 - Non-researched claims are made all the time
- Read academic papers
 - You can often think of extending another's work
- Question everything!
- How to get started on research in economics?

Integrating Research

Keep in mind..

- Your research is about what YOU do!
- Do not emphasize others research in your work, but kindly refer to them when describing what you do.
- Some tips:
 - Each paragraph dealing with literature, highlight portions where your work is talked about.
 - There should be highlight in each sentence.