Characteristics and Benefits of using a Variety of Sources in Research

Research is...the systematic process of collecting and analyzing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are concerned or interested.” (Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. Practical Research. Prentice-Hall, Columbus: OH. 2001).

Using a variety of sources lets the reader know you did your research and you looked at multiple sources and decided what was useful for your research.

Types of Resources: Books, Periodicals (Journals, Magazines & Newspapers) & Websites

Books: Use books when you need: in depth information on a topic, historical information about a topic, or a comprehensive overview of a topic, event or person

Encyclopedias: Encyclopedias are non-fiction books that contain factual articles on many subjects. Use an encyclopedia when you need: background information on a topic, key ideas, important dates or the concepts relevant to a particular field.

Periodicals: Periodicals are publications that appear “periodically”; they are published at specific times during the year---for example: daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly (every three months) or annually (once a year). The three specific types of periodicals that you will see most often in your research are magazines, journals, and newspapers.

Magazines: Use magazines when you need: up-to-date information about current events and general articles written for people who are not necessarily experts in the subject area.

Journals: Articles that appear in journals are generally written by scholars or experts in an academic or professional field. The articles may report original research or cover highly specialized topics; usually long, they provide in-depth analyses and bibliographies of references used in preparing the article or resources for further study.

Newspapers: Like magazines and journals, are published “periodically:” Newspapers provide current information about local, regional, national or international events as well as classified ads and editorials.

Web Information: The Web (Internet) is a good source to use when you want: up-to-the-minute information, to link to information from the library web page, company reports and information, government information or statistics. Since there is no “quality control,” the information you find on the Web may be unreliable and inaccurate. For example: the Clones R Us site looks very professionally done, yet is completely fictitious. Therefore, you will need to evaluate carefully what you find. If you have any questions regarding websites and their quality ask your instructor or a librarian.

Access, Service, Knowledge – ASK @ Your Library http://library.northshore.edu/
Please remember to ask your instructor or a librarian for help.
Library Hours for Fall/Spring: M-Th. 8am-8:30pm, Fri. 8am-4pm & Sat. 8:30am-12:00pm:
Library Telephone Numbers: Lynn: (781)477-2133, Danvers: (978)739-5526