Researching Economic Topics

ECON 3111 Writing in Economics

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January 15, 2018
Today we will talk about...

• Researching Economics Topics
  – Access to Research Tools & Resources Tips
    • Access to electronic & print resources
    • Evaluating sources: choosing the best information
    • Bibliographic Management Software - RefWorks
  – Research Steps
  – Locating and managing economics secondary literature: a demo
    • sources for reviews and overviews of the literature
    • EconLit, JSTOR, Web of Science, GoogleScholar
Researching Economic Topics

2 QUESTIONS?

- What do you like about research?
- What do you find most challenging?

Image source: blog.valorebooks.com
Access to resources
Off-campus Access to Online Resources

Always start your research from a Dal Libraries page, e.g.,
http://dal.ca.libguides.com/economics

On Campus

At Home
Access to Resources

- Borrowing Privileges
  - Register your Dalhousie ID card as a library card

- find out if what you want is located at Dal

- If not there are many more locations to serve you…
  - Novanet Libraries & beyond
    - Document Delivery - Request an Article/Book
CHOOSING THE BEST INFORMATION

How can you tell what information is “better”?
How do you know that a source is credible?

Evaluating Sources: (watch out for..)
- Credentials
- Purpose
- Currency
- Relevancy
- Accuracy - should I believe it?

Scholarly Sources
- Peer reviewed
- Academic
- Books published by University Presses

Remember that authority is constructed and contextual!
Managing your Research

• Please keep track of your sources as you work - do not rely on your memory

• RefWorks helps you to keep track of each source you use, compile, edit and format bibliographies by importing references directly from online databases, the web, or by entering them manually and insert them into your finished paper in the citation style of your choice (e.g.. APA, MLA).

• To access RefWorks please go to https://libraries.dal.ca/research/refworks.html

• * I recommend using the "New Refworks" – so access it click on "please visit this page" – click on "New RefWorks site at ProQuest"

• If in doubt consult a librarian
Writing is thinking. “See it as part and parcel of the research process from the very start” (Dudenhefer, 2013)

A good paper takes time…..!
Research Steps:

1. Find a subject of interest & engage with the literature on the subject
   ✓ What are the major issues? Why is the subject important? What problems have previous researchers encountered? How have they attempted to circumvent or minimize them? What are the standard models used in the literature? Are the results consistent from study to study, or are they mixed? Where is more research needed? (Dudenhefer, 2013)

2. Pick a Topic
   ✓ How can you make a contribution to economics? – find a niche

3. Break down topic into key concepts
   ✓ What keywords or phrases describe your topic? Are there synonyms (words that mean the same or nearly the same)? Related Words?

4. Analyze your information need
   ✓ What important questions remain to be addressed? In what direction is research on the topic going? Do sufficient data and models exist? (Dudenhefer, 2013)

5. Locate your Information
   ✓ A good starting point is looking at reviews and overviews - consult economics encyclopedias e.g. The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics and/or consult specific key journals e.g., Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) & Journal of Economic Perspectives (JEP).
Quick Tips for Locating economics secondary literature

Be open minded and prepared to evolve your search strategy

Consider narrowing or refining your topic (time period, demographic group, geographic region, & event or policy action).

Identify topic keywords e.g.
- depression
- recession
- economic decline
- great depression

Truncation/Wildcard symbols *, ?, #, e.g.,

Type Canad* to retrieve citations with Canada, Canadian, Canadians

Type lab#r to retrieve articles with labor, labour

Phrase Searching (Quotation marks)
“great depression”
“economic decline”

Use Boolean Operators to build a search string e.g.
(depression OR recession OR “economic decline”) AND “lab#r market” AND Cana*

Good information can lead to more good information. Who did they cite? Who cited them?
Need Economics Research Help?

Online:  
http://dal.ca.libguides.com/economics

My Office:  
In the Killam Library, 3rd. Floor, Room 3622

My Email:  
makani@dal.ca

My Telephone:  
(902) 494-3661

Ask @ the Killam Library  
Killam Library Service Point
Thank you. Any Questions?