**Quick Top 10 Tips to help research**

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**1) Planning what, where, when and how:** When you are undertaking more extensive research you need to come up with a plan of action on how you’re going to research, what types of sources you are aiming to use, where you might find these and when you’re going to do it. Increasingly, you will be encouraged to look for more “physical” sources such as books and journals or more “specialist” sources in the form of online databases. Not all of these can be researched on your computer.

**2) What is Wikipedia and how should you use it?:** Some people will tell you not to use wikipedia, it is true that it can be changed and edited at any time so you should use judgement and scepticism when accessing information from it. At the same time, it is an impressive collection of knowledge and however much you’re told not to use it – we know you still will. The best advice in this case is to think about when you use it, it should be your first port of call, it should not be the place where your research ends!. Use it as a base upon which to spread your research, gain ideas and links to further research.

**3) Bibliographies are your best friends:** Now that you’re getting in to serious research, you will notice that more of the sources you are using have their own bibliographies. These can be gold dust! You will find increasingly that you will not find one single article that answers all of the questions in your research (if you do, you probably have a bad research topic) therefore you will increasingly be required to draw small pieces of information from a number of sources. Therefore, if you find a source that has been a little bit useful, the bibliography will probably direct you to other sources that could be equally or more useful to your research.

**4) Look for pieces and not the whole thing:** As mentioned above, you shouldn’t be looking for whole articles that answer most of your question. Good research may require you to piece your information together paragraph by paragraph from a large range of sources.

**5) Mix up your resources drop your reliance on the internet:** From this point on in your academic careers, webste only references are less and less acceptable. You will be expected to read books, journals, newspapers and other resources.

**6) Draw on people:** There are lots of subject specialists in the I&S department. They will probably be teaching you next year in your chosen subject and it would be great for you to make contact with them and introduce your area of interest. They will also probably be able to give you advice or ideas on where to find information on your chosen topic.

**7) Keep it current:** When you do access different sources, be sure to keep an eye on the publishing date. Sometimes this can be easier for books, but you should always check web sources too. Just because you access a website today, it might not be current.

**8) Stay open and flexible in the early stages:** We’ve said here that you might struggle to find large tracks of information from one source. It may also be the case that you have a great idea but can’t find anything specific in detail in any articles. Many research projects can change or adapt on the basis of the information available. It may be that in your initial research you actually come up with a much better idea, or your focus shifts to a differetn aspect of the question you are researching. This is entirely normal and some of the best projects will change early on in the process.

**9) Don’t settle for the first result, keep digging:** The first piece of information you find that is relevant may not be the best. Be prepared to dig deeper. Be critical of the information you find and look for alternative, contrasting or more detailed information. If you find moreinformation that back up or agrees with your first, then you become more certain that this initial information may useful.

**10) Keep track of your references:** Being organised in tracking your sources is a really good habit to develop. If you keep making a note of the sources you use and log them, it will save you a lot of time in producing your bibliography at the end of the project. Going back and trying to remember and detail your references is a nightmare!