

Developing a Research Strategy

Key Points

Steps

Select your topic

- a good topic should be interesting, controversial, current or familiar
- state it as a question
- do preliminary research - textbook, reference book

Define the key concepts and terms

- identify two or three important words
- consider alternative spellings and synonyms

Determine how much detail you require

- specific or general
- quantitative or narrative
- recent or historical

Determine what type of information you need

- facts and figures
- review or survey
- discussion of event
- analysis

Determine which information sources to use

- books, bibliographies, government documents - review or survey
- periodicals, journals, magazines - analysis
- news reports, TV, radio, newspapers - discussion of an event
- statistics - facts and figures

Locate the information sources

- books, bibliographies, government documents
 - look in the Novanet online catalogue
- periodicals, journals, magazines
 - search a periodical database such as Research Library
- news reports
 - search a newspaper database such as Virtual News
- statistics
 - search a statistical database such as E-Stat

Hint: make sure you take notes as you go

Flow of information

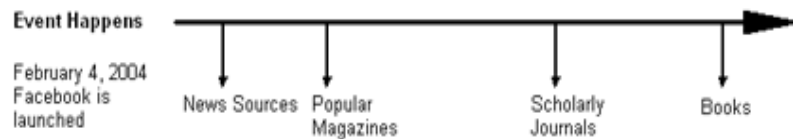
event happens

news sources (TV, radio, newspapers) - within 2 hours to 3 days

popular magazines - within 3 days to a few weeks

scholarly journals - within one to three years

books - anywhere from 6 months to 3 years



Types of information

- primary
 - unpublished documents created during time under study
 - press releases, diaries, letters, interviews, minutes,
- secondary
 - published research that analyzes and interprets
 - textbooks, journal articles, newspaper sources, government reports

Examples of choosing keywords

I need to find information on the controversy surrounding the therapeutic use of marijuana.

Topic words –	<u>controversy</u>	<u>therapeutic</u>	<u>marijuana</u>
Synonyms -	debate opinion	medicinal medical	cannabis pot

I want to find out about the role of women in Shakespeare's tragedies.

Topic words -	<u>women</u>	<u>Shakespeare</u>	<u>tragedies</u>
Synonyms -	girls females	Shakespearean	tragedy

How will global warming affect developing countries?

Topic words -	<u>global warming</u>	<u>developing countries</u>
Synonyms -	greenhouse effect climate change	third world developing nations underdeveloped countries