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## WR 325: Rhetoric of Professional Writing The Problem-Solution Report

### Secondary Data Sources

This handout will provide some tips and information on finding secondary sources of data for your project. We'll look at places to find demographic information and statistics, as well as go over finding articles for more complex topics.

Links to these resources can be found on the WR 325 research guide. You can access this from the "Help Guides" section of the English Literature subject guide.

### On-campus issues

You need information on an issue affecting Loyola. What are some ways you can get that information?

What if you want to see how Loyola fits into the broader picture for this issue?

### Digest of Education Statistics

An annual report of the National Center for Education Statistics – compiles data including numbers of schools, teachers, students, etc., from kindergarten through graduate school.

- Also click through to the homepage for NCES using the logo at the top left – you can access additional data and statistics from the homepage.

Also look at statistics links on General Reference research guide, and check the websites portions of other subject guides to see if there's anything helpful.

### Higher Education News

A variety of publications and websites are dedicated to covering news and trends in higher education. Following is a short list of places to look – this is definitely not comprehensive!

#### Inside Higher Ed

Inside Higher Ed is an online source for news and opinion pieces covering all aspects of higher education. The site has a lot of great blogs written by campus administrators on a variety of topics, as well as breaking news.

#### Chronicle of Higher Education

The Chronicle is published weekly in print, and updated daily online. It also covers higher ed news, but tends to offer more in-depth reporting. If you find an article that you'd like and are asked for a login, call the Research Assistance desk and we'll be able to download the article and send it to you.

## Off-campus issues

What if you need information on an issue affecting Baltimore?

- Is there a **city/county government office** that would be involved in your issue?
- What are the **local newspapers**?
- What else would you try?

We have a **Baltimore & MD** research guide that links to a lot of this info.

### Local & Regional Newspapers

You can search just the Baltimore Sun from the library website. What other papers might you want to try looking at? Where would you find those?

Lexis Nexis is another database where you can focus on news articles. This includes major papers as well as smaller regional newspapers.

Once you're in the Lexis Nexis Academic database, use the "Search the News" box at the top left.

Enter your search terms in the box. You can do a more complex search by clicking on the "All News" link in that box. You can also control the date range of your results, and also select a state to focus on.

On the results screen, you can use the menu at the left to focus in on particular publications – use the "Sources by Category" box.

If you're looking for a particular paper (be it a large daily or a smaller regional paper), try using Lexis Nexis to start. In the "Search the News" box, click on the "Sources" link, and this will enable you to search for particular publications. If nothing comes up, that means it's probably not included in this database. At that point, you'll want to see if the paper has a website, and try and search whatever archives they provide online.

### National Newspapers

If you want a national perspective on this issue, you can search the National Newspapers research database to get articles from the Baltimore Sun, New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post and the Christian Science Monitor. From the "Find Articles & Other Resources" section of the library homepage, pick "N" from the A-Z menu. Then click into National Newspapers.

## Statistics & Demographic Information

Do you need some statistics, demographic information or census data to back up your points?

### The Census and the American Community Survey

- The Census homepage contains links to Census data, as well as business statistics such as the Economic Census and the Survey of Business Owners.
- The American Community Survey is an ongoing survey conducted by the Census Bureau, which collects additional information and can be used as a supplement to regular Census data.

### Statistical Abstract of the United States

The Statistical Abstract collects data from government agencies and other sources, on a wide variety of topics related to the social and political climate in the country. You can find information on topics ranging from violence to spending to entertainment.

## Finding Articles

You may want to find some research to back up your argument. The best way to do this is to use the library databases. Let's try an example search.

Let's say you are interested in investigating **whether or not bike lanes decrease traffic**.

For library research, you will find it easier to discriminate between useful (relevant) and non-useful (irrelevant) articles for the literature review if you turn your statements into a question. A research question will help you establish a thesis statement.

What question do you want to answer for this exercise?

Before you begin a search, you must determine the best terms to use. **Keywords are used instead of phrases or sentences** to break down the search into the important terms.

What are some of the terms you would use for this search?

Where will you start your research?

What conclusions can you come to about using the Internet for college level research?

Library research in college often requires finding *articles* in *scholarly journals* on a topic of interest. Many students head straight for the *Internet* to begin their research. However, the Internet is not likely to provide the types of articles you need for this level of research.

Let's try a different type of database for research on our topic.

Go to the Loyola/Notre Dame Library (LNDL) homepage and select *Databases by Title* (select *Academic Search Premier*) or chose *Resources by Subject* (select *General Reference* and then select *Academic Search Premier*).

Let's begin by trying this search. What would you enter in the search boxes to get started?

How many records did you find?

That's not a whole lot. How can we use these results to change our search and get more articles to look through?

Take a look at the **Subject** box on the left-hand side of the screen. How do you think these terms are generated? How can you use them?

Let's try replacing our terms with two subjects, and doing a subject search. I'd try *bicycle commuting* and *traffic congestion*. Enter the terms and then select "SU Subject Term" from the drop-down menu to the right of the search box. What happens?

How can we expand this search to find some additional results? Let's try adding in *cyclists*.

When you combine connectors *and* and *or* in the same search, you must tell the computer how to group the terms. To do this, use parentheses. If you look for articles on *lions OR tigers AND bears*, the computer will look for all the articles on *lions OR tigers* and then combine those results with articles on *bears*.

This really isn't going so well, is it? What would you try next?

Let's focus back on the core issue, and just do a simple search for that to see what we get. I'll stick with *cyclists* as a subject search. What kinds of things do we see?

OK. Let's try focusing this in again. But instead of doing another subject term, let's stick with a keyword search for our second term. Come up with something to try on your own and let's see what we all get.

Let's look at result #9 *Detecting motorists and bicyclists...*

Who is the author(s) of this article?

In what periodical does it appear?

What is the volume number of the periodical? The date?

On what pages does the article appear?

Is this a *scholarly journal*? Is this a *research* article?

Can you "get" the full text of this article on the computer?

Look at result #4 *Rough Riders in the City*

Can you "get" the full text of this one?

How useful would this be for your research?

Let's look at result #3, *Design speeds and acceleration characteristics . . .*

Can you get the full text of this one?

Click on **Article Linker**. If not online, what options do you have for getting this article?

## Finding a specific article

Many of the articles you found mentioned this article:

Urban Bicycle Route Safety Rating Model Application in Jersey City, New Jersey. By: Allen-Munley, Cheryl; Daniel, Janice. Journal of Transportation Engineering, Jun2006, Vol. 132 Issue 6, p499-507, 9p, 5 Charts

You decide you want to locate full text of this article. How can you find it?

(HINT: Start on the homepage, and try the Find E-Journals section.)

## Finding Books

But what about **books**? Return to the library homepage and search for **books** on *commuting*. How many records did you find?

How do these look? If they're not quite right, you can **use what you find to find what you need**.

Take a look at #6 **Traffic**

Take a look at the record – notice the **Subjects** section. Click on the subject.

In this case we just don't happen to have a whole lot of books on this particular topic. Where else can you look to try to find out about a book on your topic? How would you get that book if we don't have it?