

## Literature Searching

A literature search (or “literature review” or “information review”) is a review of the current state of a subject. It should encompass all the literature on the given subject (this does not simply mean books, it encompasses periodical articles, videos, CDs, web pages etc.) and also (if relevant) any other information such as interviews and reports. You should have conducted a literature search even before starting to write

A literature search has several functions:

- It acknowledges the work of others
- It informs and modifies your own research
- It places your research in context
- It presents an accurate picture of “the current state of affairs” in your chosen subject area

When conducting a literature search it is important that you exhaust every possibility, every avenue, even if you find very little or nothing at all. The process must be thorough and comprehensive enough to eliminate all possible sources. The results of your literature search may be that there is no literature on your chosen subject!

When researching any subject try to include as broad a range of sources as possible – and that means not just books! E.g. journals, newspapers, the internet, documentaries. This guide covers various types of sources and it is advisable that you use most of them.



This guide provides an introduction to accessing the wide range of resources in LIPA’s LRC but also highlights general information handling skills. Obviously this guide is not exhaustive and what follows are broad guidelines, which you can work from and develop.

### Learning Services Website

Learning Services has its own website at [www.lipa.ac.uk/LRC](http://www.lipa.ac.uk/LRC)

This site provides detailed and up-to-date information on all LRC services and support including subject information and guides to bibliographies and referencing, and links to electronic resources.

## Beginning a Literature Search

- **Define your search** - Always begin by defining your subject, make decisions about what to include or exclude.
- **Key words** - Analyse your topic and make a list of the key words, think of related subjects and alternative words.
- **Scope** - Decide upon the range of your subject, the language, time scale, and place. E.g. *research on material in English concerned with dance in the North West 2005-2010*.
- **Planning** - Give yourself plenty of time! Plan a rough time scale, set a deadline for the end of research and the beginning of writing.
- **Keeping records** - Always keep detailed references to make compiling your bibliography and references a much easier task. There are an increasing number of free reference management tools available on the internet to help you, such as [www.zotero.org](http://www.zotero.org) and [www.citeulike.org](http://www.citeulike.org). Microsoft Word can also help you to create references and bibliographies, guides on this are available from the LRC. Whichever method of record keeping you choose, you'll need to include the following information:

Books: Author/Title/Publisher/Place/date/Page Numbers

Journal Articles: Author/Title of article/Journal Title/Issue and Volume number/Page numbers



## Finding Materials

**IPAC** - the key to materials in the LRC is the Internet Public Access Catalogue (IPAC). Always start here. The location and availability of all types of material (CDs, scores, books, videos) can be found on the IPAC. You can search by author, title and subject. There are two IPAC terminals in the LRC. The IPAC can also be accessed via the internet at [www.lipa.ac.uk/ipac](http://www.lipa.ac.uk/ipac)



Liverpool John Moores University Library Catalogue – all LIPA students can borrow material from LJMU's libraries. <https://aleph1.ljmu.ac.uk/F>

Other University Library Catalogues – University library catalogues from all over Britain can be accessed via the Internet. If you find materials that you need for your project you can either go to the holding library and use it as reference only or request the item on Inter Library Loan (see section on I.L.L.s).

## Reference Materials

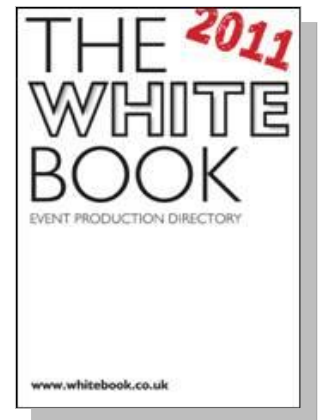
Reference materials are extremely useful if you need to find some basic information (e.g. an address) or an introduction to a subject. The LRC has a Quick Reference section, which is located in the rolling shelves.

Dictionaries and encyclopaedias are good starting points for definitions and background information.

**e.g. International dictionary of theatre (3 volumes) QRef 792.03 HAW**

Other reference sources such as yearbooks and directories can provide information concerning addresses, suppliers, arts organisation

**e.g. Performing arts yearbook: Europe 2010 QRef 790.205 IMP**



## Bibliographies

Bibliographies at the back of books or at the end of journal articles can lead to other material relevant to your subject. Web of Science has a "Citation search" feature which allows you to search the bibliographies of articles.



## Journals and Newspapers

To keep up-to-date with ideas and developments consult journals and newspapers. Journals often contain recent ideas and also book reviews and additional references. Visit the journals collections section of the Learning Services website

## Online Databases

The LRC subscribes to a number of useful online databases. These databases contain the details of thousands of articles. Some of the databases such as the **International Index to Performing Arts** and the **International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance** make the full text of most of their articles available. Other databases such as **Web of Knowledge** only provide the reference and abstract details of each article. Don't be put off by this though, if you find a useful reference you can ask the LRC to help you find the full article.

All of the LRC's online databases and other electronic resources are accessible through the **Electronic Resources** section of the Learning Services website at [www.lipa.ac.uk/LRC/eresources](http://www.lipa.ac.uk/LRC/eresources) and from the front page of **LIPAMoodle** <http://moodle.lipa.ac.uk>. Look out for the '**LRC Electronic Resources Click Here**' button and use your usual LIPA username & password to login.

## Internet

A huge and ever growing amount of information can be accessed via the Internet, but remember to evaluate it carefully. As useful starting point look at the links on the Learning Services website subject pages. It may be worth trying the Google Scholar search engine <http://scholar.google.com> for results which are related to academic research.



Some subject authorities may write blogs on their specialist field. To search the internet for relevant blogs try using a blog search engine, such as <http://blogsearch.google.com>. Remember as always to evaluate your findings carefully, a blog might be based on opinion rather than fact.

### Information From Other Sources

- **Inter-Library Loans** - Most materials not available in the LRC (books, journal articles, reports) can be obtained through the inter-library loan system. This service can take up to several weeks to supply material, so please plan ahead. Ask for further details and a form at the LRC desk.



- **Liverpool City Libraries** – William Brown St, Liverpool L3 8EW, tel. 0151 225 5435. A good source of information for Management, Drama and Music. The Central Library has a large business library which includes access to market research resources such as Mintel reports. NOTE: the City Library is currently closed for refurbishment. Some stock will be relocated. Check their website for further information.

- **Useful Contacts (Organisations, Associations.)** Organisations, Societies, and associations can often supply invaluable information in the form of guides, leaflets, catalogues and other publications. Often these will be free.

**e.g. Arts Council of England – various free publications concerning diverse aspects of the arts.**

Also consult the various directories located in the Quick Reference Section for addresses, telephone numbers, and contact names.

### Conclusion

- Use a wide range of sources from a variety of places, not just the internet.
- Compile your bibliography while doing your research and ensure it is accurate.
- Good time management and planning are essential.
- Ask LRC staff for help!

**For further help and advice ask at the LRC.  
Staff will be happy to help you!**

**[LRC@lipa.ac.uk](mailto:LRC@lipa.ac.uk) 0151 330 3111**