

# Academic skills

**Week Four**

**Project Development Seminar III: Secondary Sources**

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# Agenda

## Structure

Identifying your secondary sources

Electronic databases (and how to search in them)

## Targeted Learning Outcome

Knowing your secondary sources and where to find them

- What is a secondary source? Especially for the topic you are planning to research and write about.
- How do you plan using your secondary sources (as a methodological framework, as an argument you agree or disagree with, as a contextual background)?
- How many of them do you need? (... the more the better..?)
- True or false – scholarship (articles, chapters, analysis, monographs) are **always** secondary sources

# For example:

## What are the secondary for some of your topics?

- For Gianluca's research on representation of Latin Americans in Hollywood audiovisual production
  - Statistical data (number of Latin American characters / performers)?
  - Documentaries about certain cases / Biographies
  - Historical analysis of representation of Latin Americans in literature / music / arts...
- For Demijan's research on Harry Potter fanbase growing up
  - Qualitative research built around similar hypothesis (fans growing up with the fiction)
  - Scholarship on fandom and fanfiction
  - Making-of documentaries about the films and the book

# Primary / Secondary source

(to put it differently...)

- Although we tend to value primary sources much higher, good piece of scholarship combines both.
- A **primary source** is a source that you are analyzing as the writer. In other words, there is **no mediary between you and the text**; you are the one doing the analysis.
- A **secondary source**, then, is a source that has also done analysis of the same (or a similar) topic. You will then use this source to discuss how it relates to your argument about the primary source. A secondary source **is a mediary between you and the primary source**. Secondary sources can also help your credibility as a writer; when you use them in your writing, it shows that you have done research on the topic, and can enter into the conversation on the topic with other writers.
- Secondary sources support your original thesis – they give you tools for analyzing primary materials; arguments you can work with or against; they provide you with necessary context.
- If you are looking for a background or contextual information for your paper, please remember to exclude questionable websites or obviously biased writing.

# Electronical information databases (EID)

- **Electronical sources** are sources of information, which are stored and accessed digitally, through the computer webs or other ways of digital data distribution (DVD, CD-ROM etc.)
- They are accessed either freely or through licensed electronical databases
- **Free electronical databases** – unreliable information risk is high >> you need to verify, review and think about who published the article, when, where, language, references, bibliography etc.)

Reliable ones:

- [Google Scholar](#) – provides scientific data (scholarship, technical manuals and guidelines, reports...)
- **Digital libraries and open archives** – created by universities or national libraries, full text of academic theses and dissertations, published work by academic researchers..., for example: <https://www.openaire.eu/>
- **Academic journals with open access:** <https://doaj.org/>

# Also open access repositories, databases and catalogues

- Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD)  
<http://www.ndltd.org>
- The Directory of Open Access Repositories <http://www.openoar.org/>
- Europeana <http://www.europeana.eu>
- Internet Archive <http://www.archive.org>
- Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org>
- [Worldcat](#)

# EID – licensed databases

- The second group will provide you with access to quality information (scholarship, reviewed articles, significant publishers), no need for researcher's own verification of provided data
- Better search engine – annotations, key words, time period, language, source material... (under „advanced search“)
- Search is carried out in multiple databases, maximum effort for full-text results
- More exact and accurate results
- Access covered by educational or cultural institution, individual access can be expensive
- EID provided by MUNI:
  - [ProQuest Central](#)
  - [EBSCO](#)
  - [SpringerLINK](#)
  - [ScienceDirect](#)
  - [Wiley Online Library - Journals](#)
  - [JSTOR](#)
  - [Taylor & Francis Online](#)
  - [Oxford Journals - Humanities](#)



# EID – e-books and media databases accessed by MUNI

- [EBSCO eBooks](#)
- [ebrary Perpetual Titles](#)
- [GALE e-books](#)
- [Wiley e-books](#)
- Books in [JSTOR](#)
- [eReading](#)
  
- [PressReader](#) – full-text articles from more than 5000 dailies and magazines in 60 languages from more than 100 countries.

# However...

- The best way to access the plethora of licensed databases is through one portal:
  - <https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/search/basic?sid=c4e78644-9b58-4ede-a86c-89bbe585666f%40redis&vid=1&lg=1>
  - <http://discovery.muni.cz/>
- 
- Or the access directly to EID:
  - <https://ezdroje.muni.cz/index.php?lang=en>

# General online search rules

- Which source you are looking for (according to your field of interest, research topic, research question, type of document)
  - => What am I searching for? Articles, books, facts, statements; in English, Czech, Spanish, Russian...)
- If your search provides you with too much sources and materials, you should narrow your search, if you get too little, you should widen it.
- Read through the Help page with examples, tutorials, FAQs
- Use all the functions the search software provides: indexes, advanced search...

# How to formulate your database search

- **Boolean (logical) operators**

- they define relations between searched terms, phrases and words (narrow or widen the search)

- AND** – looking for both terms, narrows the search down

- f.e.: *education AND children*

- OR** – at least one of the terms, widens the search, f.e: *education OR learning*

- NOT** – excludes documents or materials with the word, f.e.: *education AND adult NOT children*; *advanced search: adult AND (education OR learning OR teaching)*

- **Proximity operators** (distance, positional)

- they define the distance between words, their order and/or sequence

- NEAR** – searches accordingly to the distance between words, sequence not being a factor (usually up to 10 words max)

- ADJ** (adjacent) – the words are next to each other

- WITH**

- **Phrases** “ ” – chains of words, which has to be next to each other in the exact form and sequence in the searched material

- **Truncation** \* – shortening of the word in order not to exclude various forms of the word (nouns, adjectives, verbes)  
(*socio\**)

- **Wild cards** ? \* - two or more ways of spelling of exist (*globali\*ation*)

# Take-aways

- For some researchers, methodological framework is what determinates the topic.
- Even if this is not your case, you should be able to formulate what interests you vis-s-vis object of analysis – questions, opinions, discourse, performance, structure...
- Secondary sources also help you with finding contextual information (in case you need them)
- Especially with context, be carefull not to overload your essay with background information
- You will be asked to list your primary and secondary sources at the end of your paper. Knowing the difference between those two groups of materials will also demonstrate, that you have a firm hold over your thesis and argumentation.

# Next time

- Date: 20. 10.
- Instructor: Richard
- Topic: Analysis Refresher Seminar I
- Outcome: Sharpening our critical analysis skills.
- Prepare: Richard will provide you with Quentin Tarantino's short TV interviews on MS Teams page. Have a look on them and think about what these materials let you research about this auteur extraordinaire (what types of research question you can formulate on the basis of these sources).