Library Quick 'n' Dirty Transcript

Ashford University Library

You just found out you have to conduct research for a paper in your course, but you are not sure how to get started.

Perhaps you feel overwhelmed or confused about using the Ashford University Library

Do not worry!

In these videos, we will take you down the path of conducting academic research, give you the tools you need to navigate the world of information, and, guide you through each step of the research process

Before you know it, you will be able to conduct research on your own!

Let's get started.

This tutorial will help you build the foundation you need to conduct research in the Ashford University Library.

For starters, the Ashford University Library is a digital Library.

This means that resources you would find in a physical library such as books, magazines, journals, and multimedia have been converted into digital formats and stored in databases, allowing you to access them by going to our webpage on a computer.

 As you progress through your courses at Ashford, many of your assignments will require that you use scholarly resources.

Scholarly resources include scholarly journals, certain books, and other publications.

Scholarly journals are a collections of articles written by scholars or academics in a field of study, or by someone who has done research in a field.

These articles report original research or experimentation to the rest of the scholarly community.

Before publication, these articles and books go through a rigorous peer-review process, where other experts in the field review the material for authenticity and reliability.

Resources that are not scholarly are often referred to as popular resources.

Popular resources include things like magazines, newspapers, some websites, and professional blogs.

They are usually written by journalists or other professional writers and cover topics of general interest intended to inform and entertain the public. They are reviewed by an editorial staff, usually for style and format.

Often times, the information in popular sources is reliable, and can be valuable to your research.

In the Ashford University Library, you will find these resources in databases.

You may ask yourself, why do I need to search in databases when I can search on the internet?

Search engines can be great for finding general information, but when you are conducting academic research, there are several reasons why searching in databases is a good choice.

When you search for something on the internet, the results you see are usually based on popularity, rather than the quality of the information.

Because search engines often 'guess' or approximate what you are looking for, the most relevant information can be buried deep in the thousands of pages of results.

Remember, too, that anyone can publish anything on the internet, which produces a lot of bias, unreliable websites.

Publishers often lock down the high quality, scholarly publications, making them accessible through subscription databases only.

The AU library subscribes to many of these databases which gives you access to a wealth of quality information

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Here are a few tips for searching in databases:

Databases don't understand meaning, they will not try to 'guess' what you want the way search engines do-- they retrieve information based on your commands.

Because of this, you can't type in an entire sentence, a question, or a long phrase into the database.   If you do, you are telling the database to find all of those words in any order.   This will give you will probably get a lot of irrelevant results or perhaps, nothing at all.

Instead, you will want to identify what you want to search.   From there, figure out main ideas.

Then, turn those main ideas into keywords or short phrases.

These keywords or short phrases will go into the search boxes in the database.

Try to keep one concept per box

You may also need to use quotations around phrases. When you do this, you are commanding the database to look for the words together in that order.

 By following these suggestions, you will be researching in no time!