Moving from a research question to a literature review

Helen Worrell, Archaeology and Anthropology Librarian
Plan for today

- **Part 1:** The literature review process
- **Part 2:** Searching
- **Part 3:** Search tools
- **Part 4:** Citations and bibliometrics
- **Part 5:** Alerts
By the end of the session, you should:

- Understand the literature review process;
- Be able to plan an effective and structured search for your dissertation or thesis;
- Know where to look for different types of information;
- Have evaluated different methods of searching;
- Have developed search skills that can be applied across different resources;
- Know where to come for future help.
Part 1:
The literature review process
1. Preliminary searching and browsing
   – Scan abstracts and skim-read papers
   – Identify current directions of research
   – How will you contribute new knowledge?

2. Structured searching with appropriate syntax
   – Identify the key articles and heavily-cited papers
   – Establish key authors, organizations and sources
   – Commit to in-depth consideration and re-reading of papers

3. Develop search
   – Track citations to follow research connections
   – “Cast net more widely” in terms of resources searched
   – Set up alerts for new content

• Stay focused on the research question and keep a search log
Part 2: Searching

Keywords

Thesaurus

Natural language

Boolean

Citation chaining

Synonyms

Cross-searching

Relevant scholarly research
Start with a clear research area

Visual depictions of Nuer initiation ceremonies
Search method 1:
Natural language searching
Search method 1: Google Scholar Library Links
Search method 2: Keyword searching
Search topic: Main concepts

**Visual** depictions of **Nuer** initiation ceremonies
# Search preparation: Keywords

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Concept 1:</th>
<th>Concept 2:</th>
<th>Concept 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Nuer</td>
<td>Initiation ceremonies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Nuer</td>
<td>Initiation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Film</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Ceremony</td>
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<td>Photography</td>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Customs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exploring my topic
Exploring my topic

**Oxford Bibliographies Online** are comprehensive subject bibliographies, which provide an up-to-date overview of the most recent and authoritative scholarship in a given field.
Exercise: Search preparation

1. Write a short sentence about your research interest
2. Underline key concepts
3. Write down alternative words/phrases for each concept
4. Discuss with your neighbour.
Search syntax: Boolean logic

AND
University and Oxford

OR
University or Oxford

NOT
University not Oxford

NARROWS SEARCH

BROADENS SEARCH

NARROWS SEARCH
Further search syntax

Truncation and wildcards
  e.g. Pot*, wom?n

Search for a phrase by using quote marks
  e.g. “Stone Age”

Parentheses
  e.g. (Pottery OR ceramic) AND China

Limit to particular fields
  e.g. title, abstract, keywords

Apply search filters
  e.g. date, format
Example: Combine 3 searches

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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 3</td>
<td>#1 = Visual OR film* OR phot*</td>
<td>#2 = Nuer OR Sudan* OR trib*</td>
<td>#3 = init* OR ceremon* OR cultur* OR custom*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My structure search string:
(#1) AND (#2) AND (#3)

(visual OR fil* OR phot*) AND (Nuer OR Suda*) AND (init* OR ceremon* OR culture* OR custom*)
Exercise: Building a structured search
[p. 3-4 of workbook]

1. Create a structured search from your keywords
2. Apply the search in Anthropology Plus or Proquest IBSS:
   http://search.proquest.com/ibss
3. Explore the database search functionality
4. Refine your search
Search Method 3: Database subject headings

- Use database subject headings to identify new and useful search terms
- Terms are assigned by the database editors from a set of controlled vocabulary (thesaurus)
- **Broader terms** – brings together synonyms and related terms under one heading
- **Narrower terms** – helps refine your search
Search method 4: Scholarly search engines

- **SOLO Articles and more**
  - Scholarly search engine
  - Cross-disciplinary resource
  - Some subjects are covered better than others
  - Lacks specialist search options
Part 3: Search tools

Internet search engines

Abstracting and indexing services

Full-text databases
Access online resources provided by the Bodleian Libraries

- **SOLO** [http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk](http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk)
- **OxLIP+** [http://oxlip-plus.bodleian.ox.ac.uk](http://oxlip-plus.bodleian.ox.ac.uk)
- **E-Journals** [http://ejournals.bodleian.ox.ac.uk](http://ejournals.bodleian.ox.ac.uk)
- **LibGuides** [http://ox.libguides.com/](http://ox.libguides.com/)
Useful eResources: Anthropology Plus

What: Bibliographic Database
Anthropological Literature (Late 19th century to present) from Harvard University
Anthropological Index (1957-present) , Royal Anthropological Institute

Focus: Anthropology
How: Use your search string
Useful eResources: Proquest: IBSS

What: Bibliographic database
Focus: Social Sciences (from the LSE)
How: Use you search string
Part 4: Citations and bibliometrics

Impact

Researcher 3 Cites researcher 2 Cites researcher 1
Use citations to:

• Locate current research based on earlier research
• Find out how many times, and where, a publication is being cited
• Identify who is referencing a particular paper
• Explore how a particular research topic is being used to support other research
• Analyse the impact of a publication on other research in the field
• Track the history of a research idea
• Keep track of your own research
Where can you get citation information?

- **Web of Science**
  - Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)
  - Over 3150 titles\(^1\)
  - Citations from 1956-present
- **Scopus**
  - Social Sciences & Humanities subject collection
  - Over 9,400 titles\(^2\)
  - Scopus is in progress of updating cited references going back to 1970
- **Google Scholar**
  - ??

2. http://www.elsevier.com/online-tools/scopus/content-overview#content-overview
Identify current research based on earlier research

- Web of Science citation counts
Exercise: Citation searching and bibliometrics [p. 14 of workbook]

1. Use your structured search in Web of Science Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) OR Scopus
2. Sort your results by Relevance – note some titles which have been highly cited.
3. Sort your results by Times Cited – note some titles which look relevant.
4. In SSCI, using Journal Citation Reports – look at the journals that have the most impact in your subject area.
Using bibliometrics to assess impact

- Citation counts
- h-index
- Journal impact factor
Researchers h-index

• “The *h*-index is based on the highest number of papers included that have had at least the same number of citations”*

*Scopus: “h-graph” at http://help.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/2349/p/8150/incidents.c$portal_account_name/10360

In the Citation Report you can see the h-index for your search results.

The orange line indicates that this author has an h-index of 8.

i.e. 8 papers that have had 8 citations or more.
Journal Impact Factor

• Use ISI Web of Knowledge Journal Citation Reports (JCR) to look at the impact of a particular journal title, or see how a title is ranked against like journals
• “The journal Impact Factor is the average number of times articles from the journal published in the past two years have been cited in the JCR year.”*

Part 5: Alerts

- RSS / email
- Tables of contents from selected journals
- New articles matching search terms
- New citations referencing ‘parent article’
Search Alerts

• Create and save sophisticated searches
• Receive alerts when new publications match your search
  – Newly published material
  – Material newly added to the database
• Saves you having to re-visit databases and running your searches again manually

• Can receive alerts via:
  – Email
  – RSS
Citation Alerts
WoS and Scopus

• Create an alert for specific articles
• Receive alerts when new publications cites your chosen articles
  – Newly published material
  – Material newly added to the database
• Saves you having to re-visit databases and running your searches again manually

• Can receive alerts via:
  – Email
  – RSS
Journal Table of Contents Alerts

JournalTocs: [http://www.journaltocs.ac.uk](http://www.journaltocs.ac.uk)

- Subscribe to journal titles relevant to you
- Receive alerts with a table of contents when a new issue is published
- Saves you having to check when new issues of relevant journal titles are released

- Can receive alerts via:
  - Email
  - RSS
Exercises: Search Alerts

**Exercise:** Setting up a search alert in Proquest. (p. 16)

**Exercise:** Keeping up to date with journals. (p. 17)
Graduate Research Skills

Thank you for your attention.

• Further questions (or feedback)
  Email Helen.Worrell@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

• Recommend a book:
  http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/libraries/recommendations