General Information about Finding Resources

General search techniques within psychology is the same as in other disciplines, and should include a review of information from periodicals, book chapters, books, and the Internet.

A good resource to use for getting started is the library’s guide for research: http://library.columbusstate.edu/how_do_i/research/index.php. This site contains useful information about using library resources and evaluating Internet sources. It is written broadly for students of any major, but you will find it useful if you take the time to review it. Two major library resources it covers:

- GIL-Find (used for Books)
- GALILEO (used for periodical publications, book chapters, newspaper articles, etc.)

There are a wide range of general databases that might be useful to you, and they are described in the library’s Research Guide: Academic Search Complete, JSTOR, Omnifile Full Text (HW Wilson), and Research Library (at ProQuest).

What is a database?

See http://www.usg.edu/galileo/skills/unit04/index.phtml.

How do I use these databases or conduct searches?

See http://www.usg.edu/galileo/skills/unit04/index.phtml.

NOTE about using the GALILEO databases: If you are off campus, you will need the GALILEO password, or you can log in to CougarNet and then go to GALILEO.

Another search strategy many students find helpful is the use of Internet search engines.

1. First, Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/) is useful for completing a search of the literature about your topic. The search can be done like any other Internet search, so it should be comfortable for students to use. The drawback is that you’ll mostly receive “hits” that take you to publishers’ websites. The publishers’ websites then will prompt you to pay for a copy of the complete article. NEVER PAY FOR A PUBLISHED ARTICLE (while enrolled in college). You already pay CSU fees for access to a rich set of articles and resources. Once you find a source you want using Google Scholar, you can use Galileo or Google to try to obtain it for free. If you are unable to get the full-text, e-mail your instructor with the article information. He/She can order an inter-library loan (ILL) to obtain a copy of the article.

2. Second, Google (or another search engine, such as Bing) is useful for obtaining full texts of articles that might not be available through the CSU library (i.e., Galileo). CSU does not subscribe to all psychology journals, so the full text of some journal articles will not be available through the library databases. Often, the full text can be found through the Internet using a search engine, like Google. The article might be posted on an author’s webpage, hyperlinked through the author’s vitae, etc. so that the article is available publicly (but not through the CSU library). Just make sure you are reading and using a version of the article that is consistent with the published version you are citing.
Finding Resources within Psychology

The main purpose of this document, Information Resources for Psychology, is to provide additional information, beyond that already included on the CSU website, about using databases that have particular relevance to our field, psychology. The databases included here are available for CSU students through GALILEO. Other schools or institutions may offer different resources than these.

Psychology Databases

There are three databases at CSU that contain information specifically from psychology:

- **PsycARTICLES**
  Description from GALILEO: PsycARTICLES, from the American Psychological Association (APA), includes full-text, peer-reviewed scholarly and scientific articles in general psychology and specialized basic, applied, clinical, and theoretical research in psychology. The database contains more than 137,000 articles from 66 journals published by the APA, its imprint the Educational Publishing Foundation (EPF), and from allied organizations including the Canadian Psychological Association and the Hogrefe Publishing Group. It includes all journal articles, book reviews, letters to the editor, and errata from each journal. Coverage spans 1894 to present; nearly all APA journals go back to Volume 1, Issue 1. PsycARTICLES is indexed with controlled vocabulary from APA's Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms.

  All “hits” you receive in PsycARTICLES will lead to resources available in full-text. All resources obtained using PsycARTICLES also are of trustworthy quality since it is published in an APA journal. This database, of the three psychology databases, will return the lowest number of hits.

- **Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection**
  Description from GALILEO: Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection includes articles from 410 full-text journal covering information concerning topics in emotional and behavioral characteristics, psychiatry & psychology, mental processes, anthropology, and observational & experimental methods.

  You likely will receive many hits using the Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection, but the breadth of the search is much wider than with PsycARTICLES and many of the results might be from sources outside psychology. Pay attention, with a critical eye, to the sources generated when using this database. Also, many of the “hits” will produce sources that are not available directly in full text form. (See the section at the end of the document about use of the Find It tool/button for obtaining full text of sources if they are not immediately available in the database.)

- **PsycINFO**
  Description from GALILEO: PsycINFO, American Psychological Association’s (APA) resource for abstracts of scholarly journal articles, book chapters, books, and dissertations, is the largest resource devoted to peer-reviewed literature in behavioral science and mental health. It contains over 2.5 million citations and summaries, and ninety-eight percent of the covered material is peer-reviewed. The database also includes information about the psychological aspects of related fields such as medicine, psychiatry, nursing, sociology, education, pharmacology, technology, linguistics, anthropology, business, law, and others. Journal coverage, which spans from 1887 to present, includes international material selected from more than 2,200 periodicals in more than 27 languages. PsycINFO is indexed with controlled vocabulary from APA’s Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms.

  PsycINFO will generate more results, “hits”, than the PsycARTICLES database, and the quality of the information will vary more than with PsycARTICLES. Many of the “hits” will not be linked directly to full-text sources, so the full text might have to be obtained using Find Now, Google, or an Interlibrary Loan (ILL).
Research Topics Overlapping with Social Science
Try databases from Sociology, Anthropology, etc.:

- **Social Science Journals**
  Description from GALILEO: This database offers indexing and full text for hundreds of academic journals, providing extensive coverage across a wide range of social science disciplines including anthropology, criminology, economics, education, political science, psychology, social work and sociology.

- **Social Sciences Full Text**
  Description from GALILEO: **Social Sciences Full Text** covers the latest concepts, trends, opinions, theories, and methods from both applied and theoretical aspects of the social sciences.

- **Sociological Collection**
  Description from GALILEO: **Sociological Collection** includes more than 475 full-text titles. It provides information on all areas of sociology, including social behavior, human tendencies, interaction, relationships, community development, culture, and social structure.

Research Topics Overlapping with Biology & Medicine, Nutrition & Sports
Try databases from life sciences and medicine:

- **MEDLINE**
  Description from GALILEO: **MEDLINE** provides thousands of citations for journal articles in all areas of medicine, including dentistry and nursing. Topics include clinical medicine, dentistry, education, experimental medicine, health services administration, nursing, nutrition, pathology, psychiatry, toxicology, veterinary medicine, and more. This database corresponds to the print indexes, *Index Medicus*, *Index to Dental Literature*, and *International Nursing Index*.

- **BioMed Central**
  Description in GALILEO: A fairly large collection of mostly free full text life science journals. Topics range from genomics to ecology.

- **General Science Full Text**
  Description in GALILEO: **General Science Full Text** is designed specifically for students and non-specialists and provides articles from popular science literature through a core collection of professional research journals.

- **Highwire Press**
  Description in GALILEO: The "world's largest" collection of links to free full text biology journals. Note: journals cover mainly genetics, physiology, cell biology, biochemistry, and related topics. Ecology and environmental science are not part of the mix.

- **Consumer Health Complete**
  Description in GALILEO: **Consumer Health Complete (CHC)** is a comprehensive resource for consumer-oriented health content, including full text from many health reference books and encyclopedias and thousands of health reports as well as physician-generated videos and hundreds of medical images and diagrams. CHC provides content covering all areas of health and wellness from mainstream medicine to the many perspectives of complementary, holistic, and integrated medicine. This full-text database covers topics such as aging, cancer, diabetes, drugs and alcohol, fitness, nutrition and dietetics, children's health, men and women's health, and more.
Research Topics Overlapping with Education

- **Education Full Text**
  Description in GALILEO: *Education Full Text* provides access to periodicals and books appropriate for education students, professionals, and policy makers. Topics include a wide range of contemporary education issues, including government funding, instructional media, multicultural education, religious education, student counseling, competency-based education, and information technology.

- **Education Journals (ProQuest)**
  Description in GALILEO: *ProQuest Education Journals* gives users access to over 790 top educational publications, including more than 615 of the titles in full text...

- **ERIC**
  Description in GALILEO: *ERIC (at EBSCOhost)*, Educational Resources Information Center, database covers all aspects of education and educational research. ERIC provides access to education-related resources, including journal and non-journal bibliographic information. Journal articles are assigned ERIC numbers that begin with EJ (e.g., EJ777687). Non-journal documents are assigned ERIC numbers that begin with ED (e.g., ED493647). Types of non-journal materials indexed in ERIC include books; conference proceedings and selected presentations; literature reviews and bibliographies; Congressional hearings and reports; reports on federal/state standards, testing, and regulations; research reports; U.S. Department of Education and contractor reports; and working papers from established research and policy organizations. Materials indexed through July 2004 also included lesson plans.

*Journals vs. Magazines*

Be sure to review the library’s suggestions for how to distinguish between a magazine and a journal.

*Journals in Psychology for Review Articles*

Below is a list of journals in psychology that specialize in lengthy reports, often called literature reviews or meta-analyses, that summarize work in particular content areas. These journals are useful places to start a search for published research related to your topic of interest. These review articles will summarize an area of research for you, and often will articulate “gaps” in the literature where additional clarification or study is warranted. They also are rich sources of published resources; don’t be bashful about using their citations and references to guide where you look next.

- *Psychological Review*
- *Psychology Bulletin*
- *Review of General Psychology*
- *Annual Review of Psychology*

You can search for articles in these journals by visiting the journals’ websites or by using GALILEO and entering a specific journal name using advanced search options.
Judging the Quality of Information You Find

Researchers should strive to find peer-reviewed articles and chapters written by credentialed experts.

What is Peer Review?

Peer review is a process that allows experts in a field to read and judge researchers’ works before it is published. The reviewers usually make decisions about whether a research report, called a manuscript, should be accepted or rejected.

There are four steps in the peer-review process.

1. Submission of Manuscript by Author(s) to a Journal
2. Editors Send the Manuscript to Reviewers to Solicit Feedback & Decisions
3. Editor Makes a Decision about the Manuscript.
   - Accept with minimal revisions
   - Accept with major revisions
   - Reject with suggestion to resubmit
   - Reject with suggestion to seek another publication outlet
   - Author Revisions and Publication of Manuscript
4. Author Revisions and Publication of Manuscript

Not All Peer Review is Equal

But how do you know if the article you are reading is good? How do you know that the source of publication usually releases quality information? There is no simple way to answer these questions. Consider:

- Length of the articles.
- Number of authors.
- Complexity and number of studies included.

There are several guidelines available to help evaluate the quality of articles and journals:

- [http://lib.colostate.edu/howto/evaljrl2.html](http://lib.colostate.edu/howto/evaljrl2.html)
- [http://www.vtpi.org/resqual.pdf](http://www.vtpi.org/resqual.pdf)
- [http://libguides.bc.edu/journalquality](http://libguides.bc.edu/journalquality)

The last website listed above (Boston College) contains a list of ways to judge the quality of the source (i.e., the journal). One of those indexes is the journal’s impact factor.
Journal Impact Factors
In recent decades there has been a sharp rise in the number of journals published in psychology and other disciplines. This increase in journal numbers is good in the sense that it allows many opportunities for researchers to be able to share their work and findings so that more scientific work becomes public. Alternatively, the increased number of journals also means there is a wider range in quality of journals and the work they publish. To address the issue of journal quality and reach, scholars recently have attempted to quantify how information from a journal is judged and used by experts in a field. This is known as a journal’s impact factor: http://wokinfo.com/essays/impact-factor/. You might see this term increasingly in the next decade and you likely will see the emergence of additional quantitative descriptors of journal or research quality. See, for example: http://theinstitute.ieee.org/briefings/business/evaluating-the-quality-of-research.

Here is a link to the top 50 journals in psychology: http://guides.library.umass.edu/content.php?pid=52227&sid=383170. If you are reading an article in a journal that appears on this list, you can be fairly certain the work is of high quality.