How to Prepare for Your First Research Project

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Outline

• What is a research project?
• Literature review
  • Finding literature
  • A brief review of BGSU library website
  • Searching BGSU catalog
  • Finding articles
  • Using Google Scholars
• Finding data from ICPSR
  • What is ICPSR?
  • A brief overview of ICPSR website
  • Set up MyData account
  • How to find ICPSR data
  • How to search data-related literature
  • How to find measures of variables
  • How to analyze data online
• Conclusion
What is a research project?

A study that enhances new understandings of a social phenomenon for sociologists

Key components:

– A social phenomenon
– Enhancing new understandings of the phenomenon
  • What is the current understanding of this phenomenon in terms of its changes, causes, consequences.
  • What new insights you would like to add to this phenomenon.
– Sociologists
Relations between Literature Review and Data

- Current understanding
- 1. New Hypotheses
- 2. New empirical findings
- Literature Review
- Research project
- Data

Research project
Literature Review

Two sources of finding literature

– Class materials
– Library research

(http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/index.html)
Class Materials

• Text books
• Journal papers
• References in the books and journal papers
A Brief Review of BGSU Library Website

• Set up the library Account
• Several ways to conduct literature search
  – Searching BGSU catalog
  – Finding articles
  – Using Google Scholars
Searching BGSU Catalog

- Use “Keyword”, “Author” “Title” and “Subject” to search for books and articles
- Use OhioLINK
- Use WorldCat
- Use Electronic Book Center
- Use More E-Books
Finding Articles

• Relations between articles and databases
• Two default databases: EBSCO Academic Search Complete and the OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center (EJC)
• Finding articles within a particular database
• Finding articles in a particular E-journal
Using Google Scholars

- Use the keyword to search for articles
- Google scholars provides information on whether the articles are accessible electronically
Finding data from ICPSR

The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) is an international consortium of about 700 academic institutions and research organizations:

- Maintain an archive of more than 500,000 data files in political and social sciences
- Provide summer courses for researchers interested in learning issues of analyzing the data files, such as research design, statistics, data analysis, and social methodology
- Fund research on the emerging challenges of digital curation and data science
A Brief Overview of ICPSR Website

- Announcements
- Featured sites
- Nine Tabs:
  - Home
  - Find & Analyze Data
  - About ICPSR
  - Deposit Data & Findings
  - Digital Curation
  - Membership
  - Partners & Projects
  - Teaching & Learning
  - Help
- MyData login/create account
- Search box
Set Up MyData Account

• Click on “MyData Login/Create Account”
• Click on “Create A New Account”
• Fill in all the information and click on “submit”
• A webpage shows “Account Information”
• You can now log on to the account
How to Find ICPSR Data

Click “Find & Analyze Data” → “Find ICPSR Data”

• Search data by using keywords

• Browse data:
  – View all studies
  – View all studies for which online analysis is available
  – Browse by topic
  – Browse by geography (interactive map)
  – Browse by investigator
  – Browse by series
  – Browse recent updates & additions (last 90 days)
How to Search Data-related Literature

Click “Find & Analyze Data” → “Bibliography of Data-Related Literature”

• Search literature by using keywords

• Browse literature:
  – View all citations
  – Browse by author
  – Browse by journal
How to Find Measures of Variables

Click “Find & Analyze Data” → “Variables Database”

• Search variables by using keywords
• Browse variables:
  – List all studies in the variables database
  – List all series in the variables database
  – Advanced search
How to Analyze Data Online

• Click “Find & Analyze Data” → “Analyze data online”
• Search for data with Survey Documentation Analysis (SDA)
• Browse 612 data with SDA
Conclusions

• Doing research requires you to review past literature and using empirical data in order to bring new understanding to a social phenomenon.
• You use class materials and library services to find books or articles.
• You use ICPSR to find data.
• To better use BGSU libraries, you could look at the “Tutorials & Tools” on the library webpage.
• To better use ICPSR, you could look at the “help” section of the ICPSR website.
• For additional help with using ICPSR website, feel free to contact me at wuh@bgsu.edu and 372-3119.