Research Tools: Selecting the Right Secondary Source for your Research

Reference Books

Encyclopedias, handbooks, guides, bibliographies statistical books, dictionaries, biographical dictionaries, multivolume general histories, atlases, chronologies, directories

Purpose

- *Background information*
- *Summative for current research theories*
- *Bibliographies pointing to core literature*
- *Short but broad overview of topic*
- *Id names, dates, facts*

How to Find

- *Research by Subject: History: Course Guides: Norris Or*
- *http://libguides.lib.muohio.edu/history: Course Guides: Norris*

Examples

- *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*
- *Atlas of Nazi Germany*
- *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*

Books

Peer reviewed, has an editor

Purpose

- *Presents original research and draws conclusions*
- *Usually a broad but unified topic (in contrast with a journal article)*
- *Has documentation (not a recommended reading list)*
- *Less current than a journal article*

How to Find

- *Use an online catalog (Miami's, OhioLINK, Worldcat)*

Examples

- *Thurston, Robert W.* ***The Witch Hunts: a History of the Witch Persecutions in Europe and North America****. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007.*

Journals

Refereed, expert author, peer reviewed, (i.e. not magazines or newspapers)

Purpose

- *Presents original research and draws conclusions*
- *Topics are usually very specific to a time, place, event (in contrast with a book)*

How to Find

- *Use a specialized index listed in the subject guides*

Examples

- *Norris, Stephen M. "Images of 1812: Ivan Terebenev and the Russian Wartime Lubok."* **National Identities** *7(1) (March 2005): 1-21. Historical Abstracts, EBSCOhost (accessed April 6, 2010)*

Internet

Directories, search engines

Purpose

- *Especially good for encyclopedic facts and dates*
- *Reliability and accuracy problems*
- *Many views, but watch for bias*

How to Find

- *See below*

Examples

- *Best of History Websites http://www.besthistorysites.net/*
- *Google http://www.google.com*
- *www-VL History http://vlib.iue.it/history/index.html*

http://libguides.lib.muohio.edu/history