**Chapter 5: Getting a Handle on Your Research**

Use this guide as a way to order to progress in your project over the next several weeks.

1. List a few ACADEMIC questions that you might need to answer; then a few WORKPLACE-based questions. Understand how these differ.

Understanding the Research Process  
  
View the PLANNING BOX in this section. Focus on the following early on in the research process:

* **Analyze your audience.** Think of one besides me! Who do you need to convince? Be creative in developing your audience.  
    
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* **Analyze your purpose.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Analyze your subject.** What do you already know about your subject? What do you still need to find out? Using techniques such as freewriting and brainstorming, you can determine those aspects of the subject you need to investigate.

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* **Visualize the deliverable.** a report + oral presentation. Make sure you know the requirements.
* **Work out a schedule and a budget for the project**—we ‘ll do this in class
* **Determine what information you need to acquire.** Make a list of the pieces of information you don’t yet have.
* **Create questions you need to answer in your deliverable.** Writing the questions in a list forces you to think carefully about your topic!

Follow these three guidelines as you gather information to use in your document.

* **Be persistent.** See a reference librarian! Join a listserve and post questions!
* **Record your data carefully.** Write information down. Record interviews. Paste URLs into your notes. Bookmark sites.
* **Triangulate your research methods:** don’t settle for only one or two sources

# Choosing Appropriate Research Techniques

Using the CHOICES AND STRATEGIES guide, try to come up with at least TWO “example questions” followed by a list of the appropriate research techniques**.**

Question:

Techniques:   
  
  
Question:

Techniques:

# EVALUATING THE INFORMATION

We’ll do a lot of this! You need to find information that is

**Accurate** **Unbiased Comprehensive Appropriately technical Current Clear**

Run through the following on “Evaluating Print and Online Sources” with ONE of your secondary sources. you should probably memorize the Guidelines Box in this section.

What is the source’s authorship?

Publisher reputation?

Does the author seem knowledgeable?

Is the info accurate and verifiable? How do you know?

Is the work timely (especially important for internet-based sources)?

# Doing PRIMARY RESEARCH

You don’t NEED to have both interviews and questionnaires or surveys. They probably won’t both be appropriate, and good surveys take a lot of time.

INTERVIEWS: Think of who you might interview and WHY. Write down the following:

* **What questions do you want to answer?** Only when you know this can you begin to search for a person who can provide the information.
* **Who could provide this information?** The ideal respondent is an expert willing to talk.
* **Do your homework: what do you need to find out beforehand from** professional literature/secondary research?
* **Prepare good questions.** Good questions are clear, focused, and open—see Guidelines Box

SURVEYS: If you think you want to create a survey, remember:

* Some of the questions will misfire
* You won’t obtain a lot of responses
* The responders probably won’t be representative

Develop a few questions based on the information you need; see the Choices & Strategies Box

What do you want to find out?

Type of survey question to create:  
  
  
  
What do you want to find out?

Type of survey question to create: