

## Working out the 'why' when finding resources – transcript

There are many different reasons as to why we need to find things to help us do what we need to do at University. It could be that it is a recommended core text for your course, or a lecturer suggestion in a handout. You might be reading around a topic for better understanding or preparing for a supervision or practical class. As you move through your course you'll find you need to find stuff because you're revising for an exam or writing a literature review. Or simply you could just be curious to learn more about a topic that interests you.

Without getting too philosophical, why you want to use something will influence how you search for it and find it.

We've broken this down into four key types of thing that you might be looking for so you can skip ahead to where you are in your searching process.

Known items, or things you know exist you just need to find them on a shelf somewhere or online. Relevant items are things that you haven't yet found exact matches for. Then you have the slightly more vague category of things you are almost certain are out there but you need to filter through them to get what you need. And then you have the fun mystery tour items which are the weird things you don't quite know what to do with.

So let's start with the easiest type of thing – known items. These are usually things that have been recommended to you on reading lists, in handouts, on Moodle, or just via a supervisor or lecturer.

Here's some things you can do to find the thing you know exists. Search for it on iDiscover to get exact locations and access options. Check if there is an online Reading List on Moodle or your course area online and then follow links and further info on the Reading List to the thing you need. With Reading Lists Online lots of physical stuff like books only lists department locations so you might need to use your reading lists in combination iDiscover to check other options like your college library. Check out our guide on how to search iDiscover really effectively for more info on that. And we're going to say this a lot but if you still can't find it, ask us for help!

So we've looked at the things that you know exist but now we're on to the slightly more complicated things you know probably exist but you haven't found it yet. These tend to be more journal article-based material. We buy lots and lots of books for you so they tend to be straightforward but journal articles are just a bit weird to find sometimes. Often you'll be given references from handouts, lecture slides, supervisions or you read a news article about a good new discovery and you want to read the original research. Either way, we're going to give you some tips on unpicking these slightly more cryptic references.

You've looked at some recommended reading in your handout and you've got this. Now hopefully it's all been included in the online version of your reading lists so you can just click download and keep working. But let's say it isn't or you've had this from a supervisor. What does each bit mean? Going from left to right, we have the author name, the year that the article was published, the title of the article itself, the name of the journal that the article was published in plus the specific issue of volume of that journal. Finally you have the page numbers that the article spans within a journal.

In the world of most things being available online, having this amount of detail isn't always critical to finding the article but sometimes it is if you have to go old school and find an article in a physical

copy of the journal because we don't have it available online. Use this information as a sort of treasure map to track down the information you need, plus remember these details when you have to reference what you read later on. You might need to help your reader find that article too at some point!

So in this example, everything you need to find the article is here and laid out very nicely by the lecturer who recommended this article. But what about these ones? They're shortened in places, are missing key information and have weird abbreviated versions of journal titles. Don't worry though, you can chuck them into Google and get it to do the figuring out for you. Often you have to trust that the article is the right one based on the context within which it is set – so something on neural circuits in a lecture about the brain is probably going to be the right one.

Once you know what article you want to look at you have some options.

If you're already in Google, you can navigate to the journal page for the article. Once there you can either go through the horrifically time-consuming effort of working out how to log in to access the article if it is behind a paywall or instead you can download the browser plugin LeanLibrary. Depending on your options it might tell you that this is available open access (which means its free for anyone in the world to look at), it might nudge you towards an alternative source for the article which often is a different provider who pulls stuff into one place in a similar way to finding a movie on a subscription service like Amazon Prime or Netflix. Or it might say that we don't have it and offers you next steps but we'll come back to that.

Another tool in your toolbox can be Google's specialist research version called Google Scholar. A lot of researchers use this to find stuff and you can get it to work even harder for you by switching on Cambridge University in your settings. This then gives you direct links to the resource you need (where available) via Cambridge paid-for subscriptions that we buy to support you.

And if you still can't find it then it might be helpful to double check it in iDiscover. If you can't find it by the article title, try searching by journal title. It might be that we have it but through a different route. Checking on iDiscover can sometimes confirm that we either do have it and something isn't working properly, or we don't and you need to get it some other way which we'll come back in our section about the fun mystery tour items you may come across.

So we've got to the might-be-relevant-but-not-sure category of thing. This is when you move beyond the resources you've been recommended and you're doing a bit more independent searching. You could do this for a range of reasons including reading around a subject because you're just interested, you need to go beyond your core reading to build a bit more understanding of a complex topic, or you are thinking about what you want to do a dissertation or project on in your Part II year and you're seeing what interesting research is out there to help you decide what to focus on or even what to include in your work. You might not have to do this level of searching early in your degree but it's good to be prepared for when you do.

When doing some initial searches to see what's out there, iDiscover is pretty good to get an overview of key resources. If you want to go into looking for something in more detail, or to get a more comprehensive view of a topic, you can consider starting exploring specialist databases that we subscribe to as a University. These databases index key research and pull it all together in one place so you can browse it in one go. All of our databases are listed on our dedicated Database A-Z LibGuide and you can filter by subject. Or you can pop over to our Databases page on the Biological Sciences Libraries website to have a look at a list that we've curated as good places to start.

And we're finishing off with the fun mystery tour items, or just the stuff you cannot work out what to do with or how to access them. First off...don't pay any fees to access something! We might have already bought it or can buy it for you, so save your pennies for a good cup of coffee instead!

If you find you can't get at what you need because it isn't available online or is somewhere you can't access like our Library Storage Facility? Well, you can try ordering it via our Scan and Deliver service.

We have to have it in Cambridge to scan it of course! If we don't have it in Cambridge, you can try requesting it through our Request a Digital Copy service which lets you order a chapter or article from another Uni library and should arrive in your inbox within 24 hours if its available.

You might find something you need but it says 'Available on designated PCs in the UL and most Faculty and Departmental libraries'. Not to worry we have these PCs in libraries across most of our libraries so check out the dedicated listing for where you can find one which will be linked to from iDiscover. And if you STILL can't find it, just get in touch. It might be that it's a weird thing we already know about or it's something we can buy in or request from somewhere else for you.

So that was a whistle-stop tour on finding things...enjoy adventuring through the weird information landscape that's out there and don't forget to stay hydrated!