

Turn Your Idea into a Publication

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Part One: Research for Publication

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Overview

- Generating ideas for publications
- Forming and refining a research question

Coming up with ideas – help!

- Day to day work
- Talking with colleagues
- Research areas suggested by the profession

Generating Ideas

Reading the Literature

- “Further studies are needed to fully assess the variety of university policies governing ETDs. A deeper examination of university motivations and measures taken to better inform students and faculty about scholarly communication issues would also be of great benefit.” *Do Open Access Electronic Theses and Dissertations Diminish Publishing Opportunities in the Sciences?*¹
- “For future research, ongoing studies on best practices in DSpace repositories are needed for institutions to make informed implementation decisions with limited institutional support. As DSpace functions are consistently developed and evolving, this study can be replicated to find the emerging common practices and trends of DSpace repositories and functions. Finally, some comparative studies on other repository systems are also desirable to support more innovative system development, inter-system integration, as well as system migration.” *Functionality Analysis of an Open Source Repository System: Current Practices and Implications*²

Formulating a Research Question

“Well-crafted questions guide the systematic planning of research. Formulating your questions precisely enables you to design a study with a good chance of answering them.” *By Design: Planning Research on Higher Education*³

- Is the research question something I/others care about? Is it arguable?
- Is it too broad or too narrow?
- Is the research question researchable within the given time frame and context?
 - Refine the question getting more specific as you go
 - Share with colleagues to get feedback
 - Build on the work of others by conducting a systematic literature review

From idea to research question

Personal experience – overwhelmed by amount of professional information

- Questions:
 - Do academic librarians feel they need to keep up with the literature?
 - Do other academic librarians feel overwhelmed?
 - Do they make use of technology to manage professional information needs?
- Literature Search
- Research question – What are the challenges academic librarians face in keeping current with professional literature? What methods do academic librarians use to keep up with professional literature and are these methods perceived to be effective by those using them?

*Academic Librarians, Professional Literature, and New Technologies: A Survey*⁴

Refining a question

Original Question: What happens when two libraries merge?

- Refined: What happens when two university libraries merge?
- Refined: What are the challenges, the benefits, and the potential problems resulting from the merger of two university libraries?
- Refined: What are the challenges, benefits and potential problems when merging the technical services operations of two university libraries?

When One Plus One Remains One⁵

Refining a question

- What are the challenges encountered by academic librarians when trying to incorporate evidence into their practice?
- What are the main factors that aid or hinder academic librarians' use of evidence in their decision making?
 - “This study aims to address this question by revealing determinants of evidence use in the decision making of academic librarians, via a qualitative, grounded theory methodology. Determinants are factors that have a direct influence on whether evidence will be incorporated into decision making within professional practice.”

Determinants of Evidence Use in Academic Librarian Decision Making⁶

Examples from the literature

- “To this point, the study was guided by the research question: To what extent can a leading multimedia database complement a school library STEM collection?”
*Ready for STEM? A Leading Commercial Multimedia Database as a Source for Media-Rich Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Assets for K–12 Library Collections*⁷
- “The study reported in this article sought to begin bridging this gap by answering the following research question: What are the differences and similarities in user searching behavior between the two large-scale digital libraries geared toward two different user groups?” *Understanding the Information Needs of Large-Scale Digital Library Users Comparative Analysis of User Searching*⁸

Conclusion

- Look for research ideas in a wide variety of places. Get into a research “mindset.”
- Define and refine your research question to make a clear and focused argument.

Cited works

1. Ramirez, Marisa., et al. "Do Open Access Electronic Theses and Dissertations Diminish Publishing Opportunities in the Sciences?" *College & Research Libraries* 75 (2014): 808-21. doi:10.5860/crl.75.6.808
2. Chen, Hsin-liang and Yin Zhang. "Functionality Analysis of an Open Source Repository System: Current Practices and Implications." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 40.6 (2014): 558-64. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2014.09.012.
3. Light, Richard J., et al. *By Design: Planning Research on Higher Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.
4. Hardesty, Skye and Tammy Sugarman. "Academic Librarians, Professional Literature, and New Technologies: A Survey." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33.2 (2007): 196-205. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2006.12.006
5. Mael, Elaine. "When One Plus One Remains One." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 58.4 (2014): 265-78. doi:10.5860/lrts.58n4.265
6. Koufogiannakis, Denise. "Determinants of Evidence Use in Academic Librarian Decision Making." *College & Research Libraries* 76 (2015): 100-14. doi:10.5860/crl.76.1.100
7. Mardis, Marcia A. "Ready for STEM?" *Library Resources & Technical Services* 58.4 (2014): 250-64. doi:10.5860/lrts.58n4.250
8. Zavalina, Oksana and Elena V. Vassilieva. "Understanding the Information Needs of Large-Scale Digital Library Users." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 58.2 (2014): 84-99. doi: 10.5860/lrts.58n2.84

Web Resources

- ALCTS list of suggested publication topics: <http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/info/topics>
- LRTS instructions to authors: <http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/lrts/authinst>
- ACRL “Research Agenda for Instruction and Information Literacy”
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/sections/is/iswebsite/projpubs/researchagendalibrary>
- ALCTS e-Forum Archives: <http://www.ala.org/alcts/confevents/past/e-forum>

Thank you!

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