

# CS100 Tutorial 4: Three Things to Avoid When Researching Your Annotated Bibliography

Hello everyone.

In this final video, I wanted to offer you a few tips on things that you should avoid as you're starting a research assignment.

These are things that I see students do every year that lead to problems and I wanted to point them out to you before you do them.

The first thing is the tendency that people have to type questions into some of our research databases rather than keywords or subject terms.

At the top you can see I've got a search here which is essentially a question, and again we're returning to our original topic Polaroid instant camera, in relation with time and space.

I've put this in the form of a question.

Now, if we select all our limiters we'll select peer-reviewed articles from coming from scholarly journals and sort by relevance and click search you can see that we're not returning any results.

The reason is because most of these research databases are not that sophisticated they interpret your words literally not like Google, for example, which is a little bit more sophisticated.

So, what should you do to avoid this problem instead of typing in questions start to think in terms of concepts or keywords or subject headings.

In this search we've separated the concept Polaroid which is the actual proper name of the camera and down below we're saying search either for the phrase instant camera or the phrase instant photograph with the star at the end.

We've already talked about wildcards in phrase searching in the previous video.

That should at least return some results instead of no results, which is what we found previously.

The second thing that people do is that they'll confuse book reviews for full research articles and they'll end up using book reviews in their annotated bibliography assignment or in a research essay.

You may recall that previously we limited our results to just articles but sometimes book reviews show up, even in a search where we limit just to articles.

That's because there's no system that's perfect.

Sometimes mistakes happen and book reviews do sometimes end up showing up.

But you can still tell, generally either in the search results, or in the final article when you look at it.

If we look at the title here this indicates that it's a book review.

We've also limited these results to peer-reviewed and scholarly journals, so, this is something to note; that many scholarly journals have book reviews.

Down below as well, this doesn't necessarily look like a book review, but it is a review of this particular book: "The Camera Does the Rest: How Polaroid Changed Photography."

The other thing that you can know even without looking at the full text is that book reviews are very short.

They're usually only one maybe 2 pages long.

So, in the bibliographic information here, we can see this article; these are the pages.

This is how long the article is.

It's only two pages long.

So, that's not going to be a full research article.

And then, even down below we'll see that this particular article is itself a book review.

It's only one page long.

So, there are a few clues that the article that you're accessing is in fact a book review rather than a full research article.

So be careful about that.

The last thing that I'd caution you about is relying too heavily on Google or Google scholar when it comes to getting your results.

I know that this is probably the first place you go.

I would caution you until you get more familiar with scholarly literature and knowing what it looks like, and where the best places to go for scholarly literature are, beware of the results that you get from even something like Google Scholar.

First of all not all the material in Google Scholar is actually scholarly.

And, that is again material that has gone through the peer-reviewed process.

Many of the records in Google Scholar point to things that have not been through peer-review.

So, you might have heard of white papers, discussion papers ... there are class syllabi in Google Scholar which definitely have not been through the peer-reviewed process.

And until you're more seasoned researchers, you wouldn't necessarily know that just by looking at these results.

Secondly, many of the results that we get, even in this search, we can see along the left-hand side, they're books.

They're not necessarily research articles.

It's also difficult to know if these books are scholarly or not.

We'd have to actually go into them.

If we click on one of these books we need to actually take a look.

Now, I know from experience this is coming from a scholarly press, Routledge.

We could probably page through it, and using our checklist of whether something is an academic or scholarly source we could probably determine yes, this is a scholarly source.

One of the problems, however, with using books from Google scholar is what we're seeing here: Google, Google Scholar, Google books only give you a certain amount of pages unless you actually go and buy it.

Many books don't even give you that option in Google books.

The issue is, if you don't have the full book at hand or if you don't have the full chapter at hand, it's difficult to know exactly what the argument is the author is making.

And also, it means that you won't be able to read the full chapter or read the whole book and to know if your argument about what the author is saying is actually accurate.

Be very careful of using those kind of results.

The other thing about Google Scholar that I find a little bit difficult to use is, it's hard to refine your results like we can in our research databases.

So, you can put in and do a very general, very broad search.

But if you wanted to add additional terms to really narrow down, because these are still a fair number of results that you have to page through, and you're definitely not going to look at all seven thousand results.

So, I usually point people to the research databases because they give you that option.

They give you the capability of narrowing down right at the outset rather than doing this very broad sometimes overwhelming search.

To recap:

Avoid typing in questions when you're searching.

Use concepts or keywords instead.

Watch for book reviews in your results.

Be careful when using results from Google.

It's probably best to avoid it outright and use one of our research databases instead.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.