

# **Methods of Writing Research Papers**

A Lecture by: Prof. Ziyad Ahmed Dahaam

University of Tikrit

College of Arts

Department of Translation

3<sup>rd</sup> Stage

## **Lecture Six**

### **Finding Web-Based Resources**

Digital sources are now a major source of research information. The Internet makes available millions of computer files relating to any subject—articles, illustrations, sound and video clips, and raw data.

This topic provides direction for online searches:

- a) Searching for viable academic information on the Web
- b) Accessing online sources
- c) Evaluating and filtering the complex web of Internet sites

Although the Internet cannot replace the references found in the library or field research, it offers the best and worst information, and requires careful evaluation. When reading an Internet article, always take time to judge its authority and veracity. Most Internet sites meet basic academic standards, yet you should keep in mind that the best scholarly articles are found through the library's databases. With all online sources, you must filter personal opinion pieces that contain unsubstantiated information. Many commercial sites disguise their sales pitch with informative articles. In other cases you will encounter advocacy pages that have a predetermined bias that dismisses objective analysis of an issue in favour of the group's position on the topic—the environment, gun control laws, immigration, and so forth. This chapter will help you identify these sites. You must also be wary of the pitfalls of plagiarism. Plagiarism involves downloading

online material into your paper without citation and documentation, thereby making it appear to be your own work. Additionally, you can buy a canned research paper and submit it as your own. This is also plagiarism and can result in your failing the course or even being placed on academic probation.

Online versions of articles offer advantages, but they also present problems. On the plus side, you can view them almost instantly on the computer monitor. You can save or print an abstract or article without the hassle of photocopying, and you can even download material to your flash drive and, where appropriate, insert it into your paper. However, keep these issues in mind:

- a. The text may differ from the original printed version and may even be a digest. Therefore, cite the Internet source to avoid giving the appearance of citing from the printed version. There are often major differences between the print version of an article in USA Today and the one found on their companion website. Cite the correct one in your Works Cited.
- b. Online abstracts may not accurately represent the full article. In fact, some abstracts are not written by the author at all but by an editorial staff. Therefore, resist the desire to quote from the abstract and, instead, write a paraphrase of it—or, better, find the full text and cite from it.
- c. You may need to subscribe (at a modest cost) to some sites. A company has the right to make demands before giving you access. However, your school library can often provide you with access to the sites most suitable for your research.