



fumsi Report

Folio on Offline Research Tips

Selected articles from the FUMSI database,
plus editor's commentary and additional resources

'You can't find everything online. I remember saying it to students (over and over) in the University library. I frequently say it to my clients, but I sometimes have a hard time remembering it myself. As a researcher, it's easy to hop online any time of the day or night. Even if you're unfamiliar with a subject, you can look around for a while, try several different approaches to your search, and - if you don't find what you need - make some revisions and try again.'

April 2010



[SAMPLE]

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Editor's Introduction



In this Folio

By Marcy Phelps,
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You can't find everything online. I remember saying it to students (over and over) in the University library. I frequently say it to my clients, but I sometimes have a hard time remembering it myself. As a researcher, it's easy to hop online any time of the day or night. Even if you're unfamiliar with a subject, you can look around for a while, try several different approaches to your search, and - if you don't find what you need - make some revisions and try again.

The online world has taken over our social networking, television viewing, and the way we gather information. Like meeting new people and watching our favourite shows, there's more to finding information than scanning the Internet. The only problem is that, unlike online searching, telephone interviews, focus groups or other offline research methods don't often give us a chance to 'try again'.

For this FUMSI Folio, I've put together some of the best FUMSI articles with offline research tips. Starting with phone research, Ellen Naylor's recent article, 'Social Networks in Research: Friend or Foe?', provides some excellent tips for one of the most scary types of research technique - the cold call. I've always envied Ellen's ability to elicit information from people and have admired her telephone research skills. Risa Sacks, another exceptional researcher, contributes some excellent guidelines on knowing when the time is right to pick up the phone in 'Search Beyond the Web: When to Pick Up the Phone'.

Conference and trade shows provide an information-rich environment for learning about markets, competitors and buyers. It's often difficult to manage the flow of information from these

About the Editor

Marcy Phelps is the founder and president of Phelps Research, a provider of business and market research services for info pros, entrepreneurs and marketing professionals. She started the company in 2000 after obtaining a master's degree in library and information services from the University of Denver. Marcy is President of the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP).

Marcy blogs at www.MarcyPhelps.com, and she publishes ResearchNOTES, a monthly e-mail bulletin with tips and sites for Internet research (<http://www.digbig.com/4yeps>).

She is the author of the forthcoming book, "Research on Main Street: Using the Web to Find Local Business and Market Research".

venues, but Heidi Blanton has lots of tips in 'Conference Information: Managing Before, During and After'. Vernon Prior also covers conferences, seminars, trade shows and other offline sources for 'soft' information in 'DIY Detection: Softly, Softly, Catchee Monkee'.

Whether you're doing primary or secondary research, you'll be more effective if you start with good questions. That's why librarians and other info pros have always used another offline research technique - the client or reference interview. In her article, 'Key to Research Success: Asking the Right Questions', Jane John provides several tips for working with clients on their initial questions. Bob Duckett offers his take on this from the perspective of a reference librarian in 'Reference Desk: Tips on Using Your Wits'.

Whether you're making phone calls, gathering trade show intelligence, or simply preparing your search strategy, I'm sure this Folio's offline research tips will be useful, since - as we all know - you can't find everything online.

Marcy Phelps
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