

Managing an Extended Research Process

You have conducted a basic research process as outlined, and found that you have:

- too many academic information resources from the University libraries?
- not enough academic information resources from the University libraries?
- searched for identified, relevant sources and found that one or more are not owned by the Suffolk University libraries?

Too many academic information resources from the University libraries?

- narrow the topic by focusing on an aspect of the topic
- use the Boolean search operators "AND" or "NOT" to further limit your search results

Not enough academic information resources from the University libraries?

- is your topic too narrow?
 - if the topic is very current (less than a year), there may not be enough information published
 - if the topic is very old, the sources may be rare and accessible in only a few places on the planet
 - if the topic is esoteric, the information may only be found in primary sources which could be inaccessible
- have you been referring to the appropriate background resources?
 - make sure you are using the most appropriate indexes, encyclopedias, handbooks, databases, etc.
 - For example, business indexes and business databases are not the most appropriate sources when searching for information on American history.
- have you been using the appropriate keywords when searching the online catalog?
 - have you conducted a subject search in the online catalog to explore related subject headings as suggestions to broaden your topic?
 - have you used the Boolean search operator "OR" to expand/increase your search results?
 - have you reviewed bibliographies and footnotes from background sources to identify other relevant sources, and then searched in the online catalog to determine if the Suffolk University libraries own them?

Searched for identified, relevant sources and found that one or more are not owned by the Suffolk University libraries?

- unfortunately, the Sawyer Library does not own all of the resources wanted by its community. The good news is that Boston is an information-rich city with millions of volumes in libraries within walking distance of MBTA subway stations.
- Suffolk University belongs to the Fenway Library Consortium (FLC) which enables students to borrow books from other FLC members.

- all FLC members have an online catalog (such as ARCHER) -- check the online catalogs to determine the availability and location of a FLC member that owns the source(s) you are seeking.
- the Boston Public Library is a major research library, and the source(s) you are seeking may be there. To borrow books from the BPL, you must be able to prove you are a resident of Massachusetts.
- most academic libraries in Boston will allow students from other universities to visit, read books and journals, and make photocopies; in most cases you will not be able to borrow from libraries other than members of the Fenway Library Consortium and the Boston Public Library.