

# TYPES OF RESOURCES



## WHAT THEY ARE

Library resources are available in a wide range of digital and physical formats. They may include journal articles, databases, data sets, newspapers, videos, and more. The Library has a number of tools you can use to discover, find and access these resources.

This guide describes types of resources and how to identify them. You will learn to:

- differentiate between primary, secondary, and tertiary resources, and
- determine if a resource is an authoritative academic resource.



## WHAT TO CONSIDER

### RESOURCE TYPES

#### ACADEMIC BOOKS (print, electronic - eBooks)

Academic books are a good resource to consult if you wish to explore a topic in depth. They present complex ideas, as well as arguments and insights supported by original research, analysis and evidence. Authors of academic books are usually university professors or specialists in a given discipline and/or topic. Publishers of academic books include commercial publishers, academic presses and specialised governmental and international bodies.

- Monographs are academic books that present a lengthy body of research usually by one or two authors.
- Edited books have one or more editors who curate and collate chapters written by several authors.

In the EUI Library, academic books and eBooks are searchable in the [Library catalogue](#). Please consult the appropriate guide for more information.



## TIPS

Library searching is a discovery process! Do not be afraid to experiment, explore, and [Ask Your Liaison Librarian](#) for help if you need it. If your search returns few or no results, try using synonyms.

The [Research Tracker template](#) is an excellent resource to use to keep track of your searches, permalinks and results.



## WHAT TO CONSIDER

### RESOURCE TYPES

#### JOURNAL ARTICLES (print, electronic - eJournals)

A scholarly journal, which is sometimes called a “periodical” or “serial”, is a specialized publication containing articles that consist of detailed research studies, analysis of new information, new ideas in a discipline, and/or theoretical discussions. Journal articles do not take as long to produce as books, and generally contain more up-to-date information.

Journals are available in print and electronic formats:

- They are published on a regular schedule (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.), and numbered accordingly. Some journals have Special Issues organized around particular themes or theoretical foci. Each volume and/or issue contains articles by different authors.
- Scholarly articles in academic journals are usually peer reviewed, meaning they are reviewed by subject area experts before publication to ensure their quality and reliability.
  - To learn if a journal uses peer review, [search Ulrichsweb using journal title and or ISSN](#). The second icon on the left of the toolbar indicates a journal is peer-reviewed.

In the EUI Library:

- Individual articles may be found using the Library search discovery tool or through individual Databases.
- Journals may be searched using the [Library catalogue search discovery tool](#) or the [Journal Search option](#).

Please consult the appropriate guide for more information.

#### GREY LITERATURE (print, electronic)

Grey literature is information produced outside of academic publishing and distribution channels, and can include: reports, policy papers, working papers, newsletters, government documents, speeches, white papers, and so on.

These publications are often produced by governments, non-governmental agencies, think tanks and industry partners to store information and report on activities. Because grey literature is published without the delays and restrictions of academic publishing, it may be more current than literature in scholarly journals. However, it is not usually peer reviewed and must be critically examined.

Grey literature is often found on the internet by performing a simple search or by accessing governmental and organisational websites.

# WHAT TO CONSIDER



## RESOURCE TYPES

### REFERENCE WORKS

Reference works are useful when you require an overview of a particular topic or subject area to begin your research.

The EUI Library Reference Collection contains a selection of general and subject encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, subject and national bibliographies, yearbooks, a wide range of language dictionaries, biographical sources and citation and editorial style resources available online and in print.

### NEWSPAPERS & OTHER NEWS RESOURCES

News resources provide timely information on current events. Historic news resources offer first-hand accounts of events as they occurred.

The EUI Library has access to news resources through news aggregators online, individual digital subscriptions, as well as print copies of certain newspapers, and microfilm of archival and historic newspapers. Find the full list and modes of access on the EUI Library homepage, under Collections.

### DATA SETS (electronic)

Data sets provide statistics and other quantitative information related to populations, countries, industries, and economies. Data is useful when you want to have a numeric picture of a particular topic.

The EUI Library supports best practices for data discovery, data access, data management planning, data use, data protection, data preservation and data sharing. The EUI Library Data Portal provides access to licensed macro-economic, micro-socioeconomic and Europe-related databases. 72 data resource guides provide information on coverage, variables and user networks. The Data Portal also provides information about the Library's restricted micro data server.

EUI members can also submit their research datasets for inclusion in the EUI Research Data collection in the Cadmus repository.

### READING LISTS (electronic)

The Library works with your professor to provide Full text links to the eJournal and eBook readings listed in your course syllabus. All your electronic course readings are made available in the Reading Lists in Brightspace.

## WHAT TO CONSIDER



### RESOURCE TYPES

#### RESERVE READING LISTS

The Library works with your professor to provide access to print journal articles and books from the readings listed in your course syllabus. All your print course readings are made available via the Library Reserves system and may be collected from the porters in Buontalenti. These materials are available for short-term loan only.

#### OPEN ACCESS (OA) MATERIALS

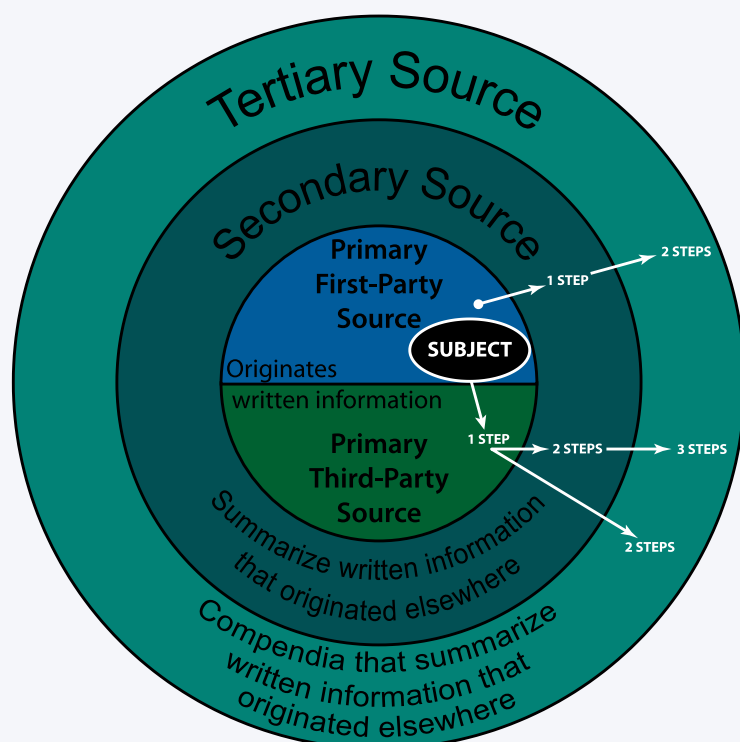
The EUI Library offers access to several directory databases for finding Open Access research materials:

- The Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) offers access to peer-reviewed Open Access eBooks released by various academic publishers.
- The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) is a directory of freely-available scientific and scholarly eJournals.
- Ulrichsweb allows you to discover OA journals in 2 ways:
  - by selecting Advanced Search > Key Features > Open Access, or
  - after initiating a search, Limit Your Results > Open Access

External to the EUI Library collections, CreativeCommons.org provides free tools to license and share your work as OA, and also allows you to search for non-scholarly OA work on the Internet.



### PRIMARY, SECONDARY, TERTIARY MATERIALS\*\*



## WHAT TO CONSIDER



### PRIMARY, SECONDARY, TERTIARY MATERIALS

PRIMARY MATERIALS are non-peer reviewed, first-hand accounts of events as they occur. In the physical and social sciences, primary sources include original research studies and data sets in a raw, uninterpreted state. In the arts, works of art, original music compositions, and unique works of creative writing are considered primary sources. Newspaper articles, diary entries, speeches, and letters that represent the time in which they were written are primary materials, as well.

SECONDARY MATERIALS provide commentary, analysis, and discussion of a primary event, idea, or work. These materials are written by experts who critique, analyse, and/or summarise previously created work by other authors or researchers. Examples include a book detailing historical events or persons, literary and artistic critique, encyclopaedias, and review articles, including literature reviews, annotated bibliographies, systematic reviews, and more. It is important to note that sections of primary works may contain secondary materials (e.g., an original research article which contains a literature review section).

TERTIARY MATERIALS gather information from primary and secondary sources to provide a broad overview of a topic. Tertiary materials compile data and facts from other published sources, do not provide opinion or commentary on the sources (neutral), and are not considered original works. Examples of tertiary materials include bibliographies, abstracts, textbooks, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and handbooks, among other materials. Wikipedia is an example of a tertiary source from the internet.

### IDENTIFIERS

The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is a 10 or 13 digit number book and ebook identifier assigned by publishers and intended to be unique (eg. 9781352012187). A unique ISBN is assigned to each edition.

The International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is an eight-digit serial number used to uniquely identify a serial publication, such as a journal and a magazine.

A Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is a unique number assigned to an ebook which links directly to it (e.g. 10.1093/he/9780198855750.001.0001)

## OTHER RESOURCES

- Bernard, D., Bobish, G., Hecker, J., Holden, I., Hosier, A., Jacobson, T., Loney, T., & Bullis, D. (2014). Evaluate: Assessing your research process & findings. In The information literacy user's guide: An open, online textbook.
- Economics Working Papers, EUI Library
- EUI Data Portal
- EUI Library Research Data Guide
- European Union Information, EUI Library
- Grey Literature Guides, GreyNet International
- Plan S & cOAlition S, Making full & immediate OA a reality
- Types of Information, LibrarySkills@UCL
- Where Can I Find Grey Literature? LibrarySkills@UCL

## DEFINITIONS\*

**Non-scholarly:** non-academic material, written by individuals who may not be subject experts. They include popular publications designed to reach a broad audience of individuals who are not academics, for example, novels, magazine editorials, personal essays, and so on.

**Open Access (OA):** refers to material that is available for everyone to use, free and without paywalls regardless of regional restrictions and institutional affiliation.

**Predatory:** refers to a publishing model that charges authors a fee to publish and does not ensure accuracy, peer review, or academic rigor. Predatory publishing, predatory journals, and predatory open access are controversial and contested concepts in academia.

**Primary:** primary sources are non-peer reviewed, first-hand accounts of events as they occur. Examples include archival documents, photographs, interviews, diaries, as well as websites and social media.

**Scholarly:** academic material, such as books, conference proceedings, and academic journal articles, written by individuals who are subject experts. Scholarly publications:

- undergo a peer review process;
- follow a structure that includes an abstract and a reference list or bibliography;
- are visually bland, containing few to no illustrations; and
- are published by academic publishers, such as an institutional or university press, or an academic organization affiliated with an institution or a discipline.

**Secondary:** Secondary materials provide commentary, analysis, and discussion of a primary event, idea, or work.

**Tertiary:** Tertiary materials gather information from primary and secondary sources to provide a broad overview of a topic.



## NEXT STEPS

Citation & References or Writing a Literature Review

\* Definitions adapted from: Cambridge University Press. (2022). Cambridge dictionary. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/> \*\* Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sources\\_of\\_information\\_diagram.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sources_of_information_diagram.svg)