How to Find Scholarly or Peer-Reviewed Research Articles on your topic

From the library home page, select the link to “Articles & Databases” from the “Resources” menu. On the A-Z Databases page, look for the drop-down menu “All Database Types,” open that menu, and select “Articles: Journals,” see snip below-

After selecting that menu option, you will then see a list of only those databases that have academic or research journal articles.

The databases will be listed in alphabetical order by the name of the database.

Browse the list, and read the descriptions, to select the database that has the best match to your topic.

For this example, I am interested in *interpersonal communication*, and specifically how people share information about themselves with others. So I’m going to choose the database, “Communication and Mass Media Complete.” You may choose a different database, but all of those listed, except the “Ethnic NewsWatch” databases, will have the same appearance and the same features as this example. Click the database name to start searching. If you are off campus or using wireless access, you may be prompted for your Student I.D. number as your password.

Type your search words into the search box and press ENTER or click the “Search” button.

Notice that the system will prompt you for typos or misspelled words, and offer suggestions in a drop down list. For my sample search, I’m just going to choose the correct spelling for “interpersonal communication” that is provided.

You can start with a broad subject and use the system tools, described on the next pages, to focus and refine your search and your topic idea.

https://redwoods.libguides.com/JournalArticles

3/26/19 (RM)
Your search results will be listed in the main panel. Look for the “Refine Results” menu to the left of that list. Select the limiter for Scholarly (Peer-Reviewed) if that is a requirement for your assignment. You could also choose Academic Journals from the “Source Types” menu, if you are required to find those types of sources.

Notice that you can also limit your results by date using the date slider bar, or by typing into the date boxes the years to get the time range you want.

Make sure that the check box for “Full text” is checked.

You can uncheck any of your selections and return to the complete list.

Below the “Source Types” menu you will see a “Subject: Thesaurus Term” menu and a “Subject” menu. Click on each of them to open both of those menus so that you can see a list of subject headings that relate to your search topic. Choose the subject heading that is the best match for your topic. Sometimes it will be the exact same words, as it is in this example. There is a subject heading for interpersonal communication, an exact match for the words I searched for. Sometimes you may not see an exact match, and will have to choose the subject heading that is closest to your topic, or check the “show more” link.

Review the both the “Subject: Thesaurus Term” and the “Subject” list to get ideas to help you further refine and focus your topic and your search. The numbers in parentheses show how many articles you will find with that subject.

Searching just for the words, “interpersonal communication” retrieved almost 8,000 articles. Limiting to Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) reduced that to just over 5,000 articles. Limiting to the exact subject by checking the words on the subject menu reduced the list to about 2,000 articles. I used the date limiter to find articles published in the last year, which gave me a list of 70 articles to browse and choose from. Lastly, I used the “Show More” under the Subject menu and chose “self-disclosure” as a good match for my specific interest.

Using the subject menus will filter out all articles that just happen to have your search words somewhere in the article. Limiting to a specific subject ensures that the articles are actually about your topic. Now I have a much shorter list of articles to review, and because of the limiters that I selected, I know that all of these articles are scholarly; have the full text; are recently published; are specifically about my topic.

Scholarly journals publish some kinds of articles that are NOT THE KIND OF ARTICLE YOU NEED, including Book Reviews, Conference Proceedings or Reports, Literature Reviews, Meta-Analysis, Essays, Commentary, Letters, Opinion, Retractions, Corrections. You can filter these out using Advanced Search options.
When you click the Advanced Search link, located under the main search box, you then have the option of entering different search words in different fields, and of choosing exactly what you want to search in each field. You can also choose the “NOT” option, which filters out the search word you type into that field, and retrieves only articles that do NOT have that word or phrase. Look at the example below.

I use the first two search boxes to enter my search words. Because of my previous searching efforts, I knew interpersonal communication and self disclosure were listed as subjects, so I selected “SU Subject Terms” from the selection box to the right. If you don’t know for sure whether or not your search words are listed in the subject menu, DO NOT choose “SU Subject Terms” but just keep the default, “Select a Field (option…)” as you see in the last three search boxes.

Notice that I have combined my two subjects, in the first two boxes, with the word AND. This will find all articles that have BOTH subjects. I clicked on the circle with the plus mark to add more boxes, I typed in search words for all of the kinds of article that I do NOT want to find, and I selected “NOT” for the search mode on all those types, because I do not want reviews, or essays, or a meta-analysis.

This search will find everything about interpersonal communication AND self-disclosure, but NOT those articles that have the words review, essay, or meta-analysis. You can think about it as being similar to algebra, here’s the equation:

(interpersonal communication + self-disclosure) – (review or essay or meta-analysis)

After comparing the results with my personal interest, I went back to the Advanced Search, added another search field, and entered the word trust. This final search retrieved only SIX articles, but each of them was perfectly suitable for my assignment.

See the next pages of this guide for help with reading and understanding research journal articles. Visit the library’s online research guide that covers the same information as this print guide:

https://redwoods.libguides.com/JournalArticles
Sections of a Research Article

Citation information is not always included. If you don’t see it, you’ll need to remember to collect it from the database system.

The Title usually describes the primary focus of the research project.

Author or authors listed below the title. Check for the “author affiliation” which is sometimes listed here, but also sometimes as a footnote.

Abstract or summary should outline the research steps and conclusions.

Keywords are supplied by the authors and help people searching.

The introductory section describes all previous research done by other scientists on that same or similar topic. It’s a short form of a literature review.

Author affiliation, here in a footnote, shows which colleges or institutions are researching this topic, and where the authors can be contacted.

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Why Would You Decide to Use an Online Dating Site? Factors That Lead to Online Dating

Tanya Kang & Lindsay H. Hoffman

The purpose of this study was to examine predictors of online dating usage. Past studies have examined the concern of trust in relation to inaccurate self-presentation and self-disclosure. Few studies have examined what factors lead to online dating usage and how trust plays a role in the probability of using an online dating site. Using 2005 data from the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2 significant predictors were found: Individuals who use the Internet for a greater amount of tasks are more likely to use online dating sites, and individuals who are trusting of others are less likely to use online dating sites. This study has implications for the ongoing research of trust in online dating, as well as examining what other factors may affect online dating usage.

Keywords: CMG; Hyperpersonal; Multitasking; Online Dating

In recent years, online dating has become an increasingly popular and a socially accepted way to meet significant others (Whitty & Carr, 2006). Even with the common concerns of trust and misrepresentation (Donn & Sherman, 2002; Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006), more individuals may seek romance by turning to online dating and may even experience greater interpersonal and romantic connections online than in their offline lives (Whitty & Carr, 2006). When crossing into the online dating world, users enter a new realm of interpersonal communication. What makes online dating significantly different from offline dating is the lack of...

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face-to-face communication, Walther (2006) described this communication context as computer-mediated communication (CMC). Many of our common ways of engaging in communication and going through the process of becoming acquainted with someone we meet in person are removed in CMC. Without physical appearance and behavioral cues, other facets of communication are emphasized, and individuals learn to interpret intended communication through text (Walther, 2006).

Some research has viewed the formation of interpersonal relationships through CMC negatively. Because this context does not have the same dynamics as face-to-face relationships, meaningful and successful relationships cannot be formed (Burgoon et al., 2002; Cammings, Butler, & Kraut, 2002). Contrarily, other studies have suggested that individuals do utilize the Internet to form significant interpersonal relationships, resulting in positive outcomes (Walther, Loh, & Granka, 2005; Walther & Parks, 2002).

In fact, the lack of physical and nonverbal cues in developing interpersonal relationships online may not be a burden; rather, it can be liberating. Whitty and Carr (2006) suggested that individuals can be more “radical” online than in person. Because they feel less inhibited, individuals may feel more comfortable using the Internet to disclose personal information about themselves (Whitty & Carr, 2006). Cyberspace, in this sense, is conducive to the development of interpersonal relationships, especially for people who may have difficulty forming relationships in person due to a lack of social skills. In general, when communicating online, people are less aware of these inhibiting factors (e.g., shyness, self-consciousness, and social anxiety) that can often be stressful for some when trying to form interpersonal relationships in person (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002; Whitty & Carr, 2006). To this end, Whitty and Carr conceptualized cyberspace as consisting of different spaces, and online dating is one of the many spaces of the Internet that people utilize for forming these interpersonal relationships.

In-text references show respect for the work of others, and give credit where it’s due.

College students are required to provide in-text references and citations to all outside sources used in their research papers.

Previous research, summarized in the literature review section, leads to questions for future research and sets the background or context for this research project and this article.

These questions are formed as a hypothesis (if only one) or hypotheses (plural, if more than one). This research project pursues six related hypotheses, only two are shown here.

Not all research articles clearly label their hypotheses. If not, look for language such as, “we tried to determine if X affected Y” or similar.
Method

A secondary analysis was conducted from survey data on Americans’ use of the Internet, collected by the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2005). The nationwide telephone poll took place from September 14 to December 8, 2005. Selected through random digit dialing, participants \((N = 3,215)\) ranged in age from 18 to 95 years old \((M = 50.73, SD = 17.79)\). Participants’ education levels ranged from 1 to 7 years beyond high school \((M = 4.46, SD = 1.65)\), and 54.3% of the sample were women.

To operationalize the variety of tasks for which a person uses the Internet, an additive scale was created. Eight items were combined to create the index. Original responses were coded as “yes/yesterday,” “yes/not yesterday,” or “no.” Responses were recoded with “yes/yesterday” and “yes/not yesterday” = 1 and “no” = 0. Each yes response received one point, producing a scale that ranged from zero to eight. The additive scale included the following questions regarding the various activities for

Results

Given the dependent variable was dichotomous, logistic regression was conducted to assess the impact of the predictor variables on the likelihood that participants would use online dating sites. The model included six independent variables: age, sex, education, trust, total number of tasks that a person uses the Internet for, and perceived reliability of the Internet. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, \(\chi^2(6, N = 1,145) = 131.38, p < .001\). The model accounted for 21.1% (Nagelkerke \(R^2\)) of the variance in online dating usage (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>5.975</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>0.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.315</td>
<td>0.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>1.394</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.238</td>
<td>0.920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of tasks performed on the Internet</td>
<td>0.530</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>85.775</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting of others</td>
<td>-4.25</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>3.723</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>0.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived reliability of the Internet</td>
<td>-0.104</td>
<td>0.182</td>
<td>0.329</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>0.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.839</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td>6.385</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All coefficients are unstandardized. Model fit: Nagelkerke \(R^2 = 0.21\).

Discussion

This study sought to examine factors that predict the likelihood of online dating usage using hyperpersonal CMC as a theoretical framework. The model tested six predictor variables: age, sex, education, trust, total number of tasks that a person performs on the Internet, and perceived reliability of the Internet. Supporting \(H1\) and \(H3\), the results revealed that trust and the total number of tasks that a person performs on the Internet were significant predictors of the likelihood of online dating usage. Specifically, a person who is trusting of others is less likely to use an online dating site, and an individual who performs a greater number of tasks on the Internet is more likely to use an online dating site. Age, sex, education, and perceived reliability of the Internet were not found to be significant predictors of online dating usage.

The findings provide an initial step in understanding what leads an individual to use an online dating site. The significant result that an individual who performs a greater number of tasks on the Internet is more likely to use an online dating site.
### References


The **References** section at the end of the article lists all of the other research articles used in this research project. People can find out who wrote each idea cited, and then locate the article by consulting the references list. Sometimes also called **Works Cited**, **References**, **Sources**, or **Bibliography**.

### Other sections, not found in this article, that you might see in other articles

Some studies involve thousands of cases or samples, with many people working at a range of activities. Sometimes there is a large corporation or non-profit institution that contributed funds or other support. This section is where all of these people can be thanked and their contributions recognized.

**Acknowledgements**

Considered a subset of Methods, and may be included under that heading. Some research projects require more detailed descriptions of the physical materials or items used. This is more typical in the physical sciences than in the social sciences.

**Materials (Methods)**

Also a subset of Methods, for projects that use a very specifically defined or selected group, whether humans or animals. Sometimes the same research is conducted across many different study samples or populations, and each research project is published separately, with different authors at different institutions.

**Population or Study Sample (Methods)**

For many research projects, *how* the data is collected is just as important to describe and verify as *what* data is collected. Data collection is often where inconsistencies or errors are found, so many scientists provide lengthy descriptions here. However, some research projects will use collection methods that are commonly known and used by other scientists in the same discipline, and then this section is not needed to explain what they already know.

**Data collection (Methods)**

Much like group assignments in college, in some research projects each participant contributes distinctly different work. In these situations, it’s helpful to the reader to provide a brief summary of who did what on the project. However, as in other group assignments, some research projects the work is pretty much the same for all contributors, and in that case this breakdown is not needed.

**Author contributions**

### Quick Tips for reading technical writing

1. Read the title, then read the abstract / summary.
2. Jump down to near the end and look for, and read, Conclusions, Results, and/or Discussion.
3. Read the entire article, but skip over any technical sections you don’t understand.
4. Take a short break.
5. Read the entire article again, this time underline or highlight key points.
6. Consult a dictionary for words you don’t know.
What is meant by “journal” in this context? I thought a journal was a diary or a memoir.

Journals actually were, at one time, the daily log or record of explorers, scientists, or scholars, where they would record their explorations, results of experiments, or regular observations of phenomena over time. These research logs were then often published, either in book form, or in serial publications or by installments, with one per month or year, which were then sent to subscribers, with the subscriptions helping to fund the research projects. Some famous logs include “A narrative of the voyage of H.M.S. Beagle : being passages from the Narrative written by Captain Robert FitzRoy, R.N., together with extracts from his logs, reports, and letters, additional material from the diary and letters of Charles Darwin, notes from Midshipman Philip King, and letters from Second Lieutenant Bartholomew Sulivan, 1831-1836.” Many scientists today still keep a research journal as a valuable and detailed record that documents their work and findings, and keeps a record of their ideas and questions for future research. The subscription journals evolved into today’s periodicals, where scientists and scholars submit their more finalized research results for publication and distribution to libraries, other scholars, and database aggregators.

What is an Academic Journal? What is a Scholarly Journal?

The terms “academic” and “scholarly” when used to describe a journal or periodical is freely used to describe reading material targeted to the college and university market, for consumption by students, professors, scientists, scholars, and other researchers. Typically this reading material is not of much interest to the general public. There are many useful and valuable publications that use these words to describe their product, and usually the academic or scholarly journal will have strict editorial guidelines that must be followed before anything is allowed to be published in that journal. The research reports must meet the requirements of the editor, or editorial board, just as your college research papers must meet the requirements of the assignment set by your professor. However, there is no criteria or definition for either of these terms; anybody can publish anything and call it “academic” or “scholarly” and there are many today that are fraudulent, or that only publish if the author pays a fee for the privilege of getting published.

What is a Peer-Reviewed Journal?

“Peer-reviewed” means that in addition to the editorial guidelines described above, all of the research reports must first pass a peer review process before publication. The submitted reports will have the author’s identifying information redacted. Copies of the reports will be sent out to a panel of experts (peers) in the subject of the report. These experts will review and critique the report, marking it up with their corrections, comments, criticisms, and suggestions for improvement. The marked up reports are then sent back to the original author, who must either make the suggested improvements, or provide a reasonable rationale or defense of their original writing. The article may then be published, or not, at the decision of the editor or editorial board. So, peer-reviewed articles generally are much more accurate and rigorous in their scholarship and science.

Writing a research paper is not just an empty exercise; it is designed to help you learn the ways of scholarly communication, so that you, too, can join in and contribute ideas that help build knowledge.