The purpose of this study is to analyze the information seeking behavior of SUNY Oneonta undergraduate students. In particular, the goal of this research is to discover the specific resources (for example, books, scholarly/academic journal articles, newspaper articles, magazine articles, web sites, etc.) that students in three academic departments, History, political science and sociology, use for their research papers.

The study analyzes a total of 3,014 citations gathered from 378 bibliographies. These bibliographies were collected from students in 25 classes (12 History classes, 6 sociology classes and 5 political science classes) between the spring semester of 2006 and the spring semester of 2008. The study identifies the most cited scholarly/academic journal titles for each of the academic disciplines in the study. Additionally, the study calculates the percentage of student citations to specific URL domains and the incidence of cross-disciplinary journal usage. The analysis of the bibliographies suggests that even in the age of the Internet, students recognize that traditional library sources (books and scholarly/academic journals) are to be used for their academic research; however, the proportion of citations to traditional sources varies by academic discipline. History papers contain the most citations to traditional library resources and political science papers contain the least. Additionally, the percentage of citations to web sources varies by academic field: political science papers contain the most citations to web sources and history papers contain the least. The proportion of URL domains cited also varies across academic discipline: web sites with the domain .edu are most frequently cited in history papers, web sites with the domain .org are most commonly cited in political science papers, and web sites with the domain .gov are most often cited in sociology papers. The results of the analysis of the URL domains may be an indication that students have some understanding of which web domains are appropriate for them to use for academic research.

In comparison to web resources and traditional library sources, the citation of other sources, such as newspaper and magazine articles, is relatively small. Finally, students in each of the three academic disciplines rely on scholarly/academic journal titles classified across a broad spectrum of subject areas.

**Research Questions**
- What is the percentage of student citations to books, scholarly/academic journal articles, newspaper articles, magazine articles, other periodicals, and web sites in history, political science and sociology papers?
- What is the average number of citations per paper?
- What is the average number of citations per paper by format?
- What are the most cited scholarly/academic journal titles for each subject?
- What is the percentage of student citations to specific URL domains?
- What is the incidence of cross-disciplinary journal usage?

**Methodology**

Asked 3 professors (who assigned research papers) and their students in the departments of history, political science and sociology for permission to obtain a copy of students' bibliographies.

- Collected a copy of student bibliographies from 7 professors' classes:
  - 5 100-level classes and 7 200-level classes
  - 5 political science classes (collected in Spring and Fall of 2006).
  - 3 200-level classes and 2 300-level classes
  - 6 sociology classes (collected in Spring and Fall of 2006).
  - 2 200-level classes and 4 300-level classes

A total of 378 essays were collected and the citations were counted:
- 248 history essays yielded 1,874 citations
- 79 political science essays yielded 689 citations
- 52 sociology essays yielded 451 citations

The citations in each of the bibliographies were coded into the following categories: books, scholarly/academic journal articles, magazine articles, newspaper articles, other periodicals, web sites, and other sources.

Incomplete or inaccurate citations were verified using the Ulrichsweb online catalog, WorldCat, Central Search, LexisNexis, Ebscohost databases such as Academic Search Complete, SJCIndex and the Internet.

Resources that could not be verified were classified in the category "unidentified sources".

Periodical types were coded using document type information in Ulrichsweb.com.

Web sites were counted and coded by domain (e.g., .edu, .com, etc.).

The average number of citations per paper was calculated for each subject.

The average number of citations per paper by format was calculated for each subject.

Each scholarly/academic journal title cited was counted.

Each scholarly/academic journal title cited was counted by subject(s) using Ulrichsweb.com.

**Conclusion**

Students recognize that books and scholarly/academic journals are to be used for academic research.

Students appear to have some understanding of which web domains are appropriate for them to use.

Academic disciplines differ in their use of information resource formats.

Students rely on journals across a broad spectrum of subject areas.

Faculty appear to be setting guidelines regarding acceptable information sources but the prescriptiveness of the guidelines may range. This may impact student choices of information sources.

**References**


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