



## **Davidson College Library Orientation Case Studies 2015**

### **Case Study A: The Student**

Halfway into her second semester at college, the Student happens upon a blog post about race relations in America. She has been thinking a lot about this issue; the post resonates with her and also reminds her of readings and discussions she's had in her sociology class this semester. She realizes that she can use that class's final project, an interactive website, as an opportunity to further explore the topic of race relations. She even has an idea of what she wants to exhibit on her website.

The Student remembers using a library database last semester for research on sustainability. Since that database contained lots of useful sources, she is confident it also will be the best place for her to research race relations. She opens the database, searches for "Race relations in America," and limits her results to "peer-reviewed." Based on the titles, the search results seem fairly relevant and she feels that the first five sources in the list will fit the argument she is trying to make. The Student believes she is ready to read the articles and incorporate the sources into her digital research project.

### **Case Study B: The YouTube Vlogger**

The Vlogger is always on the lookout for something to talk about in his popular weekly video blog. While looking for inspiration, he is intrigued by a new post on one of his favorite blogs. He immediately scrolls down to the comments section to see what other people think of it.

The Vlogger notices an interesting hashtag in the comments, so he opens Twitter and searches for the hashtag. He comes across a tweet by a well-known social commentator that contains a concept he doesn't know much about, so he decides to look it up in Google. One article looks like it will give an especially in-depth analysis of the concept, but he discovers that he will have to pay to access the article; nothing else in his list of search results seems especially helpful. Disappointed, the Vlogger decides to investigate where else the social commentator has written about the topic. Although he does not find exactly what he is looking for, the Vlogger thinks he has found enough information to create an interesting video for his YouTube channel.

### **Case Study C: The Intern**

During the first week of her communications internship for a political interest group, the Intern's supervisor shows her a blog post about race relations in America. The supervisor points out that a lot of people have been reading and talking about this post. She asks the Intern to fact-check the blog post and to create content for the organization's Twitter and Facebook accounts to build off the interest generated by it.

The Intern begins by searching for useful information on Google, but she is overwhelmed by the results. Unsure how to proceed, she decides to ask other staff members for advice about where to look for information. A colleague points the Intern to a set of sources that are internal to the organization. After reading through them, she comes up with questions to ask her other co-workers. These colleagues share their professional expertise and personal experience with her. The Intern feels she now has enough information to satisfy her supervisor's request and begins tweeting and making posts on the organization's social media sites.

All three people in the case studies have opportunities, face challenges, and make assumptions when doing research.

1. Pick *two* of the case studies and, in a single paragraph, answer the following questions about them:

- What assumptions do these people make about the types of information they need to pursue their research question?
- What opportunities do they miss due to lack of awareness about what information they could use or lack of access to information they want to use?