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# Communication Research

strategies and sources

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## Strategies and Sources

Seventh Edition

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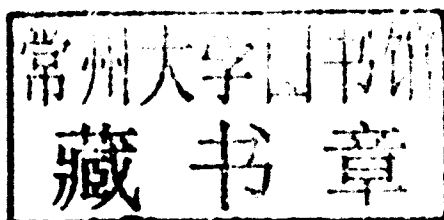
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Strategies and Sources  
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# Preface

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*Communication Research: Strategies and Sources* is designed to acquaint students with communication research and the vast array of information sources available in communication. The book describes the strategies involved in selecting, refining, and researching communication topics. It is a guide to the literature, explaining the content and utility of significant and representative research sources. It is also a communication research manual, and provides an opportunity for students to use and become familiar with communication research materials. Throughout the book, we stress the overall strategy of searching the literature for information on a particular topic.

This book provides a comprehensive overview of the necessary steps to begin communication research, and describes online and published sources that are available in or accessible through most medium-sized college and university libraries. The works that are described are used when conducting documentary, archival, or library research.

This type of research is necessary before attempting any other research methodology. Communication is a diverse discipline in which researchers are interested in many subjects. Thus, we explain the structure of the communication field and the types of research undertaken by students of communication. We focus on the basics of documentary and library research. These basics include developing and refining research questions, writing and organizing, beginning investigation of a topic, and acquiring the tools that make the research process efficient. We also describe each type of communication research source that is available for accomplishing a research goal.

This text is beneficial for students to become acquainted with the variety of available communication research resources and procedures. We introduce students to common research strategies and to sources in interpersonal, group, organizational, public, and mass communication. Because the book is designed as a supplemental text, there is a fair amount of flexibility in its use—ranging from one or two students working independently to students working on a module within a theory course or to an entire class focused on communication research. Any communication course that requires students to use the literature of the field is an appropriate vehicle for instruction in researching topics.

For example, the text is a helpful introduction to research procedures and the communication literature in fundamentals classes as well as in communication theory and research classes. It is appropriate for introductory-level classes in which it is desirable to acquaint students with the literature and research procedures of the field. In addition, instructors may select from among the many cited sources that are pertinent to their specific courses, such as Freedom of Speech, Media Law, Organizational Communication, Investigative Reporting, Interpersonal Communication, and Media Research. This book is also a useful manual to aid in research-paper writing for those working on independent studies. It is most helpful for preparing the literature reviews required in many courses and for thesis and dissertation proposals.

Students unfamiliar with a library will need general orientation instruction. The library staff will be able to clarify such matters as using the library catalog, locating periodicals and electronic media, and understanding any special location symbols used in the library.

Exercises are found at the end of each chapter. Some exercises require students to use several annotated sources. Generally, these questions hypothetically place students in a specific course and present a need to acquire information for a specific project. For example, “In your group communication class you are preparing to lead a discussion on the effects of cartoon violence on children....” These assignments lead students to important communication research sources and provide perspective on how the sources are useful in a variety of courses and situations. Questions reiterate points made in the text of the chapter and show how the sources can be used to build a comprehensive bibliography on a chosen communication topic. The book’s website (see below) allows students to answer questions and e-mail answers directly to their instructors. Chapters in other sections of the book include exercises for classroom discussion.

Users of previous editions will notice major changes in the chapters devoted to searching the Internet and electronic databases. We have added artwork that depicts computer screens of some major search engines. We also have updated sources, adding new ones and eliminating older materials, and have updated several exercise questions. At the end of Chapters 1–8 we include boxed examples of student projects and explain how students have used chapter information for these projects. We have also attempted to identify more international sources and organizations, most of which are just a click away.

We have always been uncomfortable updating this text because we know that by the time it is published, important new sources or new editions will have appeared. To counter any datedness, we have developed a website for the text that contains links to sources listed in this edition, new sources and Internet sites, updated published materials, and additional information for students. This site can be accessed at <http://academic.cengage.com/communication/rubin/7e>.

Linda Piele, our steadfast colleague from library science, has decided to retire and pursue other interests. We value her expertise and contributions over the past 20+ years, yet understand her need to move into a different phase of life. Thank you, Linda, for your continued dedication to this book.

We welcome Paul Haridakis—our friend, past student, and colleague—to the project. Paul has not only taught with (and been taught by) the text, but his legal background and interest in Internet searching will benefit future developments. He also brings a fresh perspective to a subject that has changed considerably since our first edition in 1985. Once again, we thank the many students, teachers, and scholars who have helped us refine our ideas throughout our seven editions.

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# **To the Student**

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We believe that students actively seek to master the available tools when learning about the field of communication. The library and the Internet contain many of these communication research tools. Our aim is to introduce these tools to you and to explain how to use them to increase your knowledge of communication. How much effort you give to this learning process will determine how much you personally gain from the process.

## **Overview**

The book is divided into three main parts. In Part 1, we explain why and how communication research is undertaken. After surveying the field of communication in Chapter 1, we look at the research process, selecting and narrowing research topics and questions, searching the literature, and using computers to search databases and access information on computer networks.

In Part 2, we explore available types of communication research sources and reference materials. In Chapter 5 we consider general communication research sources such as subject handbooks, textbooks, encyclopedias, and annual reviews. These materials are helpful in defining subjects or topics you may wish to investigate. We examine access tools such as bibliographies, guides to the literature, indexes, and abstracts in Chapter 6. These tools are needed to locate sources and materials. In Chapters 7 and 8 we discuss more specific communication research sources, namely communication periodicals (scholarly journals and professional magazines) and information compilations (collections, statistical compendia, government publications, yearbooks, directories, dictionaries, and manuals). These periodicals and compilations are important for finding primary and factual data and for developing research projects.

In Part 3 we explain how to design and conduct research investigations and how to complete literature reviews and other projects. The first two chapters contain information about the research process and methods of conducting research. The next two chapters focus on writing projects and style. Appendix A continues the discussion of style with a guide to APA style, and Appendix B presents a glossary of terms and definitions.

Because we try to highlight a representative sample of references in each chapter, not all works important to the study of communication can be discussed at length. Numerous sources, however, are listed at the end of each chapter and are indexed at the end of the book. The sources we have selected do not constitute an exhaustive list. We chose them because they represent the many diverse areas of communication research, they are written in or translated into the English language, and they are available at many college and university libraries. We also identify specific sources of particular utility to communication researchers, such as archival and legal references available via specialized libraries.



As with any book, materials become dated, and new or revised sources become available between the time a book is written and is available for use. Visit our website <http://academic.cengage.com/communication/rubin/7e> for new and updated sources. You will undoubtedly uncover other important bibliographic tools in your literature searches. As you do, add them in the chapters and to the source index for quick future reference. Also, on the website you'll find the Internet/web sources that are listed in each chapter, so access is a click away. Bookmark the website given above for easy searching of web-based materials.

We mentioned earlier that a major goal is to introduce and explain bibliographic tools available for investigating communication topics. In so doing, we hope we accomplish a secondary goal of reducing the anxiety many students feel when researching a communication topic for the first time or when confronted with so much information they don't know where to start. We anticipate this book will be a useful starting point and reference guide and that it will assist you in learning about communication.

## Helpful Hints

Students who have used earlier versions of this book have offered helpful hints. These tips make a lot of sense.

First, get to know the physical layout of the library you will be using. Find the reference section, the reserve desk, the library catalogs, and the computer stations. Discover how books and periodicals are arranged in your library. This information is usually available in printed form when you enter the library. Ask about the availability of CD-ROM databases, online databases, and accessibility of the Internet. Consult a reference librarian or staff member at an information desk if you have a question, any question. Or sign up for a library tour!

Second, become comfortable with searching the Internet. You'll be visiting many different types of databases, so knowing how to maneuver through them using your preferred browser is important. Learn how to open multiple windows, use the Back and Refresh options, and how to print both pages and frames. This will enable you to traverse the Internet efficiently.

Third, complete the exercises at the end of the chapters. Be sure to read each chapter thoroughly before trying to answer the questions. In fact, we have constructed exercises so that reading the chapter first is an enormous aid to completing the questions. Students who were looking for shortcuts to the questions in the past became frustrated. Actually, your effort will be reduced by reading the chapters before attempting to answer questions. There are no trick questions in the exercises. Each reference source you are asked to use is explained in the chapter. Read the annotations carefully. The sources that are annotated or described in detail sometimes provide clues for answering the questions. When you locate reference sources that are new to you, examine them carefully. Explore the table of contents, examine the preface and introduction, and look for an index. In so doing, the sources themselves will provide you with a more efficient method of use. If you find yourself spending more than 15 minutes on any one question, your approach to the problem may not be the best. Ask a reference librarian for advice. Also, ask for help when

you cannot find a source you need. It might be shelved in a different location in the library.

Fourth, if you are working on a research paper, literature review, or research prospectus as you read this book, keep in mind the sources you examine as you develop a research topic or question. You might find it advantageous to return to the materials discussed in earlier chapters for a more thorough examination. For instance, the exercises in Part 2 sometimes ask you to look at only one volume of a multivolume work. Once you have solidified your own research topic, you might want to go back to other volumes to see whether they can lead you to additional references. Because you already will be familiar with how these sources are used, it will require little effort to check them for pertinent information. In a similar vein, if you have a clear-cut topic in mind as you progress through the chapters, do not hesitate to examine each source thoroughly as you use the guide. This will save you time in the future. You can easily compile a thorough bibliography as you proceed through the chapters of this book.

Fifth, update the references in this book whenever possible. Students in the past have found they misplace additional or updated references if they do not add them when they are first located. Update and add your new references at the end of each chapter and in the index. You may also want to augment the annotations and citations with your own notes on using the materials. In this way, the book will become an even more useful and comprehensive collection of communication research materials.



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# part one

## Communication Research Strategies

**G**ood strategy entails careful planning. Accordingly, communication research requires a comprehensive plan of action. Part 1 focuses on conventional search procedures for investigating communication topics.

In Chapter 1, we discuss the types of communication research projects students typically undertake and describe the general structure of the communication discipline. In Chapter 2, we outline search procedures and provide an orientation to library research. In Chapter 3, we explain strategies for searching computerized databases. In Chapter 4, we explain how to use the Internet for communication research and present special strategies for searching the World Wide Web.

Part 1 of the book, then, is an orientation to the process of communication research. We include end-of-chapter exercises to help you formulate a strategy—a plan of action—for completing research projects. If you are using this text in a college course, you will find it worthwhile to ask your instructor for feedback about how well you understand research strategies, based on your answers to the exercises.





# chapter 1

## Studying Communication

**W**hy study communication? Those who do so will tell you that their work is driven by a need to know more about human interaction and the process of communication. Communication professionals develop skills for acquiring and using information throughout their professional lives. As students of communication, you need to be prepared to investigate and engage in academic and professional growth activities.

This book gives you many of the skills and resources you need for finding information to accomplish your academic and professional goals. It also introduces you to the research process, which is most helpful when the information you need isn't easy to find. Come along with us as we explore the maze of resources available to you as you conduct your research!

**Research** is often defined as systematic inquiry into a subject. The key-word in this definition, *systematic*, points to the need to examine topics methodically rather than to plunge haphazardly into sources. Two of our major goals in this book are to acquaint you with this step-by-step procedure of inquiry and to provide guidance for following these generally accepted principles and practices of research.

In this chapter, we explain how communication students and professionals become involved in the research process. First, we explore the profession and how the discipline is organized. This will give you an idea of the interdisciplinary nature of communication and a sense of what interests communication researchers. Then, we look at the types of projects that require systematic inquiry in the communication discipline.

### THE COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINE

Communication has been defined in a variety of ways. Here, we define *communication* as a process by which people arrive at shared meanings through the interchange of messages. When people create and manage meanings and share

their understanding of social reality, communication takes place. Political scientists, educators, business executives, linguists, poets, philosophers, scientists, historians, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists, to name some professionals, are concerned at least tangentially with communication in their specific areas of inquiry. Communication scholars, by contrast, focus on facets of the communication process. They are in fact concerned with how understanding is (or isn't) achieved and how messages influence important personal, societal, and global outcomes. Even though they use different tools for studying communication, their common interests, united focus, and complementary areas of expertise have formed a **discipline**.

Communication researchers examine the processes by which meanings are created and managed—in other words, how people structure and interpret messages and use symbols such as language in interpersonal, group, organizational, public, intercultural, and mediated contexts. Thus the breadth of communication inquiry is universal and inclusive, and the contexts in which the communication process is examined are diverse yet interrelated. It is little wonder that no other discipline of knowledge is quite as universal as communication.

Communication is a time-honored yet modern discipline. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) devoted much thought to examining the constituent elements of *rhetoric*, or the available means of persuasion. From 1600 through the early 1900s, speech theorists focused on effective delivery of the spoken word. Early students of mass communication were intrigued by the effects of media-delivered messages. Contemporary communication researchers expanded their interests to include interpersonal, group, and organizational communication contexts and the processes that occur during communication. In examining the flow of information and the interchange of messages between individuals in a variety of contexts, researchers today probe the uses and effects of modern communication technologies in a world where people and societies are linked by instantaneous transmissions via computers and satellites.

Communication has a rich history, so rich that we cannot do justice to it here. For more information on the history of the communication discipline, consult the sources listed below.

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