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The Oxford Guide To Library Research

THE OXFORD GUIDE TO
**LIBRARY
RESEARCH**
FOURTH EDITION
THOMAS MANN
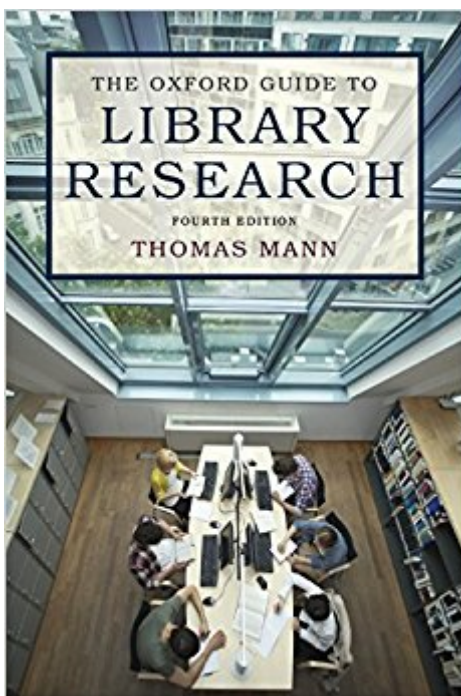
Synopsis

The information world has undergone drastic changes since the publication of the 3rd edition of The Oxford Guide to Library Research in 2005, and Thomas Mann, a veteran reference librarian at the Library of Congress, has extensively revised his text to reflect those changes. This book will answer two basic questions: First, what is the extent of the significant research resources you will you miss if you confine your research entirely, or even primarily, to sources available on the open Internet? Second, if you are trying to get a reasonably good overview of the literature on a particular topic, rather than just "something quickly" on it, what are the several alternative methods of subject searching--which are not available on the Web--that are usually much more efficient for that purpose than typing keywords into a blank search box, with the results displayed by relevance-ranking computer algorithms?This book shows researchers how to do comprehensive research on any topic. It explains the variety of search mechanisms available, so that the researcher can have the reasonable confidence that s/he has not overlooked something important. This includes not just lists of resources, but discussions of the ways to search within them: how to find the best search terms, how to combine the terms, and how to make the databases (and other sources) show relevant material even when you don't know how to specify the best search terms in advance. The book's overall structuring by nine methods of searching that are applicable in any subject area, rather than by subjects or by types of literature, is unique among guides to research. Also unique is the range and variety of concrete examples of what to do--and of what not to do. The book is not "about" the Internet: it is about the best alternatives to the Internet--the sources that are not on the open Web to begin with, that can be found only through research libraries and that are more than ever necessary for any kind of substantive scholarly research. More than any other research guide available, this book directly addresses and provides solutions to the serious problems outlined in recent studies documenting the profound lack of research skills possessed by today's "digital natives."

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Customer Reviews

"A masterful summary of the main techniques and resources for conducting 'serious' research at postgraduate level and above."--Reference Reviews

Thomas Mann has been a general reference librarian in the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress for more than thirty years.

If you want a single definitive book on this important topic, this is the one. The information-finding skills you'll learn are still highly relevant even in the age of the "Google-me-everything" search strategy, which even today still leaves well over half of human knowledge undiscovered.

A solid and thorough overview of college level research practices. Good to read straight through or by subject

i like it. it met my expectation

great!

Great read!

I am currently pursuing a masterÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢s degree in library and information science. The introduction to The Oxford Guide to Library Research was assigned as a supplemental reading for one of my courses. I liked what author Charles Mann had to say and decided to read the entire book, both for my own benefit as a student and for the benefit of my future library patrons. It should be clarified up front that the libraries being discussed here are research libraries. Usually this means an academic library at a college or university, but also includes private institutions and governmental libraries such as the Library of Congress, where Mann works. I purchased the 2015 ebook edition.

Not only was it far less expensive than the required textbook for my course, it also proved to be vastly more beneficial.MannÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s approach to this research guide is unique. Instead of categorizing his research lessons by topic area or type of information resource, he has organized the chapters by search method. For example, he covers searching by Library of Congress subject headings, by database descriptors, by keywords, by citations, and by browsing bookshelves. Mann covers many online resources, but few of them are free and open to the general public. Most are only available to users who log in through their libraryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s website. In addition to whatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s on the web, thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s plenty of research material thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not available online at all, and Mann recommends print resources when applicable, such as reliable print bibliographies or archival materials. Mann tells you what resources are the best, where to find them, and how to find what youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re looking for within them. He even reminds us of one source of information we often forget: actually talking to knowledgeable people.At first I wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t crazy about MannÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s presentation. At the front of the book there are lengthy lists and descriptions of academic databases. I think I would be better off just exploring the list on my universityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s website. The farther I got into the book, however, the more impressed I was by MannÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s recommendations. I learned a lot from his chapter on crafting search queries, which goes way beyond the typical Boolean operators AND, OR, and NOT. He opened my eyes to a wealth of available information resources of which I was previously unaware and canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t wait to dig into.This book is packed with useful information, but the writing can wear on you with its redundancy. Mann argues that brick-and-mortar libraries have an immensely greater breadth and depth of information to offer researchers than whatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s available on the internet. He also asserts that the search methods he describes yield much more targeted results than simply entering a keyword into the search box on Google. I wholeheartedly agree with Mann on both these points, but I didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t need them hammered home four or five times each chapter. Another unfortunate mark against this book is that it is riddled with typographical errors. Apparently Oxford is using spell check for its proofreading, because countless instances of subject-verb disagreements and missing or duplicated two- and three-letter words went unnoticed. These errors donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t hamper the readerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s understanding, but they do annoy.Despite my complaints, this book really has a lot to offer. It will prove extremely valuable for incoming undergraduate students who are clueless about what academic libraries have to offer. It will also greatly benefit doctoral and professional researchers looking to track down every last source on a given subject. I wish this book

had been a required text for my reference services class in library school. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a must-read for any academic librarian or any student serious about research.

This is a very detailed and comprehensive guide to doing research in any field, appropriate for scholars as well as individuals who are looking to explore a subject of personal interest in depth. I think it is best used as a reference book that you can go back to again and again as you pursue your research rather than a book that you read through other than to gain a cursory overview. The information provided is very dense and specific. The book is well worth owning. (A slight disappointment, but not serious: I was surprised to find a number of misspellings and word omissions in a book from such a prestigious publisher as Oxford University Press.)

This very well might be the only research book you'll ever need. At least try it first before you read any others...I wish I did. It gave me a bit of an adventurous feeling, discovering how to find what you are looking for from every possible angle, picking up more golden nuggets that the other mentioned strategies may have missed.

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