Quick and Dirty LIRN Steps

March 2, 2010

How to use LIRN.net to find reliable resources

Please direct questions pertaining to LIRN to heidi@expression.edu or call 510.594.6955. That’s Heidi’s, the librarian, direct line. Heidi is also available to assist with the research process 9-5, Monday through Friday, in person.

WHAT? LIRN.net (Library and Information Resource Network) is a storehouse of databases full of publications and reliable articles.

WHERE? www.lirn.net

WHEN? Whenever. LIRN.net can be accessed from any computer with Internet access. You do not have to be on campus to use LIRN.

WHO? You! As a student at Ex’pression, we require students to not just “Google” it. Wikipedia is not an acceptable resource for anything academic. Wikipedia can be edited by anyone and is, therefore, not reliable.

WHY? This is an important question. The Internet is full of falsehoods, rumors, hoaxes, misinformation, and information that appears reliable. In 2010, we live in a time wherein anyone can buy a domain, create a website, and claim to be the utmost scholar on ANYTHING. However, in the academic world, reliable information really only comes from professionals, academics, scholars, published authors, and those who genuinely are experts in their respective fields.

HOW? It’s easy. Follow the steps detailed below and you should be able to find relevant information. If not, come to the library and the librarian will do her best to assist you.

**The below steps are easier to follow if you follow along. This way you can see the process used by the librarian to find information in an efficient manner.**

1. Go to www.lirn.net.

2. Go to MEMBER DATABASE ACCESS.
3. Enter the code **15155**.

4. Go to **INFOTRAC** (the second option down). You do not HAVE to go to Infotrac, but it is recommended as the most efficient and practical search method in LIRN.
5. The next page that opens up is a list of databases. The top is the **PowerSearch**. The **PowerSearch** attempts to do a search of all of the **Infotrac** databases. However, it is not always the best route to take, even though it is the easiest. There are numerous databases within **Infotrac** and some of them are better searched first hand, rather than having **PowerSearch** do the searching for you.

6. **THIS STEP IS MEGA IMPORTANT!!!!!!** Continuing on with the **PowerSearch**, select **Documents with full text**. If you do not select **Documents with full text**, it is possible that you will only get an excerpt of an article versus the entire article.

7. As a sample search, I looked for **3d animation**, using the keyword search.

8. This returns a list with a six tabs on top.
   a. These tabs include:
      - Magazines
      - Academic Journals
      - Books
      - News
      - Multimedia
      - More Results
9. If you select the tab that says “Magazines” (1,516 hits – this number will change with each day) you will see the articles, arranged with the most recent on top.

10. To look at an article, click on the title. As an example, click on the first article that you see on the list.

11. Once that article loads, you will see the text of the article along with a box of “tools” on the right side of the page. This box includes:
   - View PDF Pages (not on all pages)
   - Email
   - Citation Tools
   - Share
   - Dictionary
   - Print Preview
   - Download
   - Bookmark
   - Download MP3
12. If you scroll down to the bottom of the page, you will see a terrific aspect of LIRN. This is that LIRN creates the citation for you. The citation is from the quotes before the name of the article all the way to the end of the URL. 

A sample citation looks like this:

Source Citation


Document URL
http://find.galegroup.com.prx-01.lirn.net/gps/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T003&prodId=IPS&docId=A183490137&source=gale&srcprod=ITOF&userGroupName=lirn_main&version=1.0

14. Hit your back button once to return to our original list of returns. You will see on the left hand side that there is a way to search within this list. For example, adding the word education to the search box (where it says Refine Results) will narrow your search down to just the articles that include 3d animation and education. This helps to increase your research efficiency.

Other incredibly valuable things to know about LIRN:

- The various other searches, aside from the PowerSearch, are all useful in their own unique ways. For example, scroll down far enough on the Infotrac page and you will see a database called Opposing Viewpoints. This one is particularly useful in Analytical Writing. Another database is called Fine Arts and Music Collection. This one is useful in History of Music Production.

- Some of the databases pertain to business or health or the economy. Even though some of these might not relate directly to curriculum-based research, it is a good place to find reliable information. Since you are all going to be in competitive fields, it would behoove you to be as up to date on relevant issues as possible. Knowing just a little more about a company/field/medium with which you are interviewing will only benefit you.

- Each database is unique and has its own characteristics. The only way to get really familiar with LIRN and its contents is to try it. It’s easy! I promise! Try it out BEFORE a paper is due or you need to do research. It will only help.
Search tips:
If you don’t know what exactly you are looking for, search using what I like to think of as a “wide net”. If you cast a wide net, you will get back lots of returns. This might be more information than you were looking for. Your best bet, then, is to make your search narrower.

Examples:
1. You are looking for something having to do with the band Nirvana.
   -If you search just using the word nirvana, you will get mixed responses, some having to do with the band, some having to do with the religious state.
   -To get specific, you might want to add a word like music or Cobain or grunge.

2. You are looking for something pertaining to the technology of the movie “Avatar” in LIRN.
   -If you search just using the word avatar, you are going to find all kinds of things, many totally unrelated to the movie.
   -If you search using the words avatar movie, you are going to find items related to the movie but not necessarily the technology. Narrow your search and get specific!
   -Try searching with avatar movie technology or avatar movie 3D and you will likely find what you are looking for.

Pro tip:
If you are looking for something in LIRN and are unable to come up with anything, try to come up with synonyms, or other ways to phrase what you are looking for.

Example:
1. You are researching an aspect of the film industry.
   -Instead of searching for film or movies, try motion pictures or cinema or MPAA or Motion Picture Association of America.

2. You are looking for an article related to homosexuals having the legal rights to get married.
   -Instead of searching for homosexuals having the legal rights to get married, try Prop 8 or gay marriage or same-sex marriage.

Search tips:
Sometimes being a good researcher is like being a detective. If you are researching something and can’t find what you are looking for, try to find “clues” to solve your “case”.

Example:
You are looking for information pertaining to female sound engineers and their history in the music business.
- Search for the keyword, *female sound engineer*. If you scroll down just a bit, you will see an article about Elizabeth Cohen who was just elected president of AES (Audio Engineering Society).
- Then, look up *Elizabeth Cohen* and see what you find. You might need to be specific, such as *Elizabeth Cohen engineer*. Chances are that you will find other articles to which she is included. You might even find something she has written!

---

**Search tips:**
I personally really like to search using the **Browse Subjects** tool. I find that the subdivisions into which the Subjects are divided can sometimes be very helpful when starting to do research. This can be accessed by going into the **PowerSearch** and then selecting **Browse Subjects** on the yellow bar underneath where it says **PowerSearch**.

**Example:**
I tried searching for *digital recording*. The database returned two items to me:
1. *Digital Recording Corp.* – seven articles found.
2. *Digital Sound Recording.* -1,467 articles found. Below the subject heading *digital sound recording*, there is a wee plus sign that has **View Subdivisions** next to it. Click on that plus sign. Over 100 subdivisions are returned, ranging from *Equipment and Supplies* to *Social Aspects* to *Usage* and much more.

---