Business and Management literature

# Introduction

Conducting a comprehensive search and review of the literature available to you is a hugely important part of the research process, whether you are conducting a full systematic review or a smaller more focused project such as a dissertation or assignment.

There is a huge amount of literature available in the field of Business and Management encompassing academic, trade and popular publications. You will find all of the following (and more) within the various articles which are available to you:

* Exploration of key theories, ideas and themes
* Investigations of major issues and current areas of debate within a particular topic
* Explanations of how current approaches can help to increase our understanding of issues in a particular field and suggest areas for further research

One of the major challenges you will face is the sheer volume of information that is available to you as Business and Management is a rapidly growing area of research.

As a quick example of this consider the graph below taken from the ProQuest ABI Inform database.



Figure 1: ABI Inform: Available articles published on “leadership” by decade.

The bars represent results by decade that are relevant to a simple keyword search for ‘leadership’. As we can see, the number of articles produced by decade dramatically increases, with the current decade already being ahead of the vast majority of previous decades despite being less than 12 months old!

Given the large number of articles available when searching for relevant articles and papers it is very important that you employ a clear and consistent search strategy which gives due consideration to the use of appropriate keywords, phrases and alternative concepts — there is [further guidance](https://medium.com/specialist-library-support/your-research-strategy-business-and-management-cfbd3c385587) available on this..

In this post we will concentrate on the various different methods you can employ when searching for relevant literature. ‘Literature’ itself can be a confusing term when applied to the field of Business and Management research. [Market research](https://medium.com/specialist-library-support/market-research-databases-an-introduction-90568f6aeb3a), [company information](https://medium.com/specialist-library-support/researching-company-information-e7c6460e8524), [trade and industry news](https://medium.com/specialist-library-support/trade-and-industry-news-an-introduction-5d5de5d82635) all qualify as literature which can be incorporated into your work (these sources are explored extensively in the links above). This post will focus on the following sources and the various ways you can locate them.

* Books
* Journal articles (practitioner and academic)
* Conference Proceedings
* Unpublished papers
* Theses / Dissertations
* Documents from the Internet

At this stage we are focused merely on the ‘“’evidence gathering’ stage of our research. You should try to be as exhaustive as you can in the initial stages as you want to make sure that you locate as many potentially useful sources of information as possible.

Evaluation of the materials, deciding which ones are most suitable for inclusion, and the best way to incorporate these into your work require a different set of skills. You will find extensive coverage of these skills within our My Learning Essentials skills training programme.

# Books

There are two fairly common denominators when it comes to books that focus around the Business and Management subject area — they tend to be fairly expensive, and they will often receive frequent updates (to the extent that 14th and 15th editions of popular textbooks are common).

For these reasons it’s a good idea to make use of the Library collections which won’t cost you anything while you’re studying with us. As befits our status as one of the United Kingdom’s largest academic libraries we provide you with access to an extensive collection of print and electronic books.

At last count we had over 2.16 million printed books, and over 777,000 e-texts available, so there is a fairly good chance that we will be able to provide you with something relevant to read and consult.

There are a number of options available when searching for books, which are detailed below:

## Library search

This allows you to search across the many resources of the University of Manchester Library and provides a good general starting point. If you are explicitly searching for books then a useful tip is to use the ‘Advanced search’ feature — by making the appropriate selection from the ‘Material Type’ option this will allow you to limit your results to the book collections. You can apply other useful limits at this stage such as a date range.

The [Library website](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/help-and-support/using-library-search/what/) contains extensive guides to using Library search effectively. The [Search Tips option](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/help-and-support/using-library-search/tips/) in particular is a useful option as this provides guidance on some of the more advanced features, such as the ability to exclude words or phrases from your search terms.

There are a number of differences between how you will access and ultimately read our [e-book collections](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/ebooks/) and our [printed books](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/books/)— again there is guidance on this available on our website.

## Google Books

An increasing number of books (or sections of them at least) are available to view freely online. The [Google Books](https://books.google.com/) platform is a popular method for searching for content that can be accessed online and free of charge.

Links may often be provided to purchase the content via Amazon or similar. It is worth noting here that books which are available for you as an individual to purchase online may not always be available for the Library to purchase electronically. Licensing agreements are very different for libraries (which need to provide access to many people) as opposed to the individual purchase model.

This means a book that’s available to buy electronically through a site such as Amazon may not always be available for us to buy to add to the Library’s digital holdings. The reasons for this are primarily commercial, but there are other options such as our [Order a book](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/students/books-and-resources/order-a-book/) scheme which you should investigate if you identify a book that you need which is not currently available through the Library.

## Business and Management Subject guide

Our [Business and Management subject guide](http://subjects.library.manchester.ac.uk/business/books/) provides links to a number of our e-book databases such as [EBSCO Host](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=44MAN_INST%3AMU_NUI&tab=local&docid=alma992975983926101631&context=L&lang=en) and [Oxford Scholarship Online](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=44MAN_INST%3AMU_NUI&tab=local&docid=alma992975990922101631&context=L&lang=en). These will also show up in Library search, but a database will offer more advanced searching options and limits that can be a good option if you are attempting to identify a number of titles relevant to a specific field of study (see the **Journals — Databases** section later in this post for further information on how to search databases effectively).

## Other options

Identifying a good and useful book is not an exact science. The tools listed above will all help but you should not limit yourself to these exclusively — here are some other useful strategies you can employ:

* **Talk to people:**Your fellow students, academic staff, librarians and booksellers should all be able to recommend some useful books or authors. With academic staff you can usually look at their profile page on the [University website](https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/researchers/search.html?affiliationStatus=current) to identify any publications they have authored.
* **Media listings:**The media will regularly publish lists of ‘best’ or influential texts that you may have missed yourself. Popular publications such as the [Financial Times](https://www.ft.com/content/fd7a4c44-7e73-11ea-8fdb-7ec06edeef84) (subscription required) or [Fortune](https://fortune.com/2019/12/01/best-business-books-2019/) can be a good place to start.
* **Reading lists online:** The library has an[online reading list service](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/reading-lists/) which allows you to browse through the recommended reading for all course units taught across the university. This can be another method for identifying important titles in your chosen field.
* **Browsing the Library shelves:**An old fashioned but highly recommended technique is to get to know the different sections of the book stock well within the Library. Once you have identified a book that is useful, the Library’s book classification scheme will ensure that titles which cover similar topics will be located close by on the Library shelves. There is guidance on how to [use the classification scheme and locate books](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/students/books-and-resources/borrowing/borrowing-books/locating-books-on-the-shelf/)available on our website.

# Journal articles

The Library has access to content from over 38,000 subscription journals. These are packaged in a number of different ways, and the ways you search for them will differ depending on what exactly you are looking for and the complexity of your search strategy.

Below we outline some popular ways of searching that should enable you to locate the articles you need.

## Specific journal or article

Sometimes only a specific article (or articles from a specific publication) will do! If you have the full reference or Journal title then you can use the [Search journal articles](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/journal-articles/) feature on the Library website. You can use the drop down arrow to change between a journal title search or article search.

Using [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/) is also a very effective way of locating specific articles, though you should make sure you have the[Library Access Browser extension](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/ebooks/how-to/off-campus/library-access/)tool installed in order to access the content seamlessly from off campus.

It’s also possible to easily search across specific publications for specific topics or keywords— So you could easily search the ‘Journal of Marketing’ for any articles which have been published on ‘brand management’. Full details on how to do this are provided in our post on [finding specific publications](https://medium.com/specialist-library-support/trade-and-industry-news-finding-specific-publications-c0c7b8211d1f)

## Practitioner or academic?

A key consideration when debating which literature sources to consult is to decide whether you are interested in research which is published in academic or practitioner focused journals or both. There are a number of key differences, though both types of publication have significant potential to add value to your research.

You are likely familiar with academic journals already and we have [numerous resources](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/journal-articles/) focused around what is available and how to access them. [Top lists of metrics of Business and Management publications are plentiful](https://researchhub.org/top-10-business-and-management-journals-based-on-google-scholar-2019-metrics/), but publications such as the ‘Journal of Finance’ or ‘The Journal of Marketing’ tend to dominate at the top of the academic lists and are the most prestigious to publish in. An article published in one of these publications will likely have gone through a painstaking level of research, peer review processes and multiple revisions. They can take some effort to fully understand however, and it’s very important that you employ an [effective reading strategy](https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/learning-objects/mle/being-critical/story_html5.html)when engaging with this content.

Practitioner journals differ slightly in that they are aimed at a professional niche (such as Human Resource Management) as well as an academic audience. They should not be confused with [trade publications](https://medium.com/specialist-library-support/trade-and-industry-news-an-introduction-5d5de5d82635) (such as Bloomberg Business Week) which are aimed at popular markets.

The main characteristic of practitioner publications is that the focus will be around practical applications of how research and innovation can benefit specific areas of business. So you might find details of how successful (or not!) applications of a new technology or performance measurement system were in real life situations. The articles will also usually be selected by the publication editor(s) and will not go through the same process of peer review as an academic journal.

Consequently these publications tend to published more regularly and deal with more practical implications rather than focused around a rigorous research methodology. Some famous examples of practitioner journals include the Harvard Business Review and Sloan Management Review.

If you are specifically interested in practitioner journals then certain databases such as [Emerald Insight](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma9923794674401631) may provide you with a more logical starting point when you begin searching — see the databases section of this post for more information on this.

## Search option one — Library search

We discussed the merits of using Library search in the previous section on books, but there are a number of useful options contained within Library search if you are focusing your search around journal articles.

After you have entered your initial search term(s) — in this case ‘leadership’ — You can use the filters on the left hand side to include (or exclude) certain results and make your list of results more focused. In the case below we have applied the following filters:

* Date (2010 -2020)
* Peer-reviewed journals (This will limit results to academic journals)
* Subject (We have selected ‘Business’ as many other subject areas such as Nursing were included in the initial list)
* Journals (You can even limit results to specific journals — those which feature most heavily will display at the top of the filter list. In this case we have selected two which feature highly on top lists of peer reviewed publications.)

Another option to look out for before you access an article is the gold ‘Open access’ logo. Open Access publications are freely available for use to all and will not require any login if you are accessing them off-campus.

Library search also contains many useful features for saving searches and exporting to bibliographic software such as EndNote. A number of useful tips and videos are available on the [Library website](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/help-and-support/using-library-search/tips/).

## Search option two — Google Scholar

[Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/) is a hugely popular method of searching across scholarly literature. The familiar Google search interface is used to search across a range of academic literature including journals, books, conference proceedings and unpublished papers. Google does not report the size of the coverage or fully report on the methods it uses to collect the metadata it uses, however it is widely acknowledged to be the most [comprehensive search engine of academic material.](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11192-018-2958-5#Sec15)

If you are using Google Scholar it is highly recommended that you install a version of our [Library Access browser extension](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/ebooks/how-to/off-campus/library-access/). This will ensure that when you follow the link to an article that interests you, a pop up notification will appear if the Library subscribes to that particular journal. This will allow you to enter your University credentials and access the full text of the article from the database.

You should also select the “FindIT@Manchester” option from the settings in Google Scholar. This will ensure that when your results are listed you can quickly tell whether the Library has a subscription to the particular journal the article you are interested in was published in. There is information on how to set this up available from the [Library website](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/students/distance-online-blended/accessing-resources/google-scholar-advice/).

Google Scholar doesn’t offer the same amount of options for creating search strategies or limiting results as a Database or Library search, but it does contain a number of useful features.

You can limit your results by date, export results to reference management software and generate citations in a variety of styles using the cite button.

There is also an [Advanced search](https://semo.libguides.com/google-scholar/advanced-searching) feature which you may wish to explore.

## Search option three — Databases

Databases offer you the greatest method of control over your searching. You can combine searches, make effective use of any alternative terms you have identified and apply a large number of useful limits to your searches. The following search from [Business Source Premier](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975890020301631) shows a number of these concepts in operation:



* We have used the search boxes to combine relevant concepts in all three fields
* You can then use [Boolean logic](https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/learning-objects/mle/search-operators/story_html5.html) to combine the concepts. In this case we have used AND to combine the concepts related to ‘Leadership’ and ‘Change Management’ and the NOT operator to remove results related to the United States
* We can also choose where we want the database to apply these search terms. In this case we will search article abstracts for the first two concepts, but keep the final field blank as this will remove any articles which mention ‘United States.’

Creating a search as above should result in a more targeted list of results. You should receive a lower number of articles to review but they should be more relevant to your research.

It may take some experimenting with different concepts to get the best results and there are many other options available to refine your searches further.

Limits can easily be applied after the initial search as well.

### Choosing a database

The University of Manchester Library subscribes to a number of excellent products, and the likelihood is that you will want to explore a number of these in order to conduct a full and thorough exploration of your topic.

A list of the most relevant databases is available from our [Business and Management subject guide](http://subjects.library.manchester.ac.uk/business/journals), however some notable products are listed below:

* [**EBSCO: Business Source Premier**](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975890020301631)An excellent all round choice which provides access to leading peer-reviewed, practitioner and trade journals. Coverage is provided across all major disciplines of Business and Management such as Marketing, Management and Finane. Notable titles available exclusively on this database include Harvard Business Review, California Management Review and Administrative Science Quarterly.
* [**Emerald Insight**](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma9923794674401631)A database of content published by the [Emerald Group Publishing](https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/), this database is particularly strong for practitioner focused research in the areas of Marketing and Human Resource Management.
* [**ProQuest: ABI Inform**](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975750206701631)Another excellent source of aggregated content from all areas of business and Management literature. Over 3,000 sources are available in total. Standout titles include Sloan Management Review and The Economist
* **Multi-Disciplinary databases**
You will also find lots of relevant articles within major platforms such as [Science Direct](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975752823501631), [Web of Science](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975775680101631) and [Wiley Online Library](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975775700001631). It can be helpful to use the Subject filters within these databases and make selections relevant to your research.

# Conference proceedings

[Papers presented at academic and professional conferences](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conference_proceeding) can be a valuable source of up-to-date information on the latest research findings and developments in a particular field or industry. [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/) is a good source for locating conference proceedings.

You can also use the [Web of Science](https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975775680101631) database to locate relevant proceedings. Once you have logged into the database you can limit results to the **Conference Proceedings Citation Index — Social Science & Humanities collection** to quickly identify these publications.

# Unpublished papers

Many scholarly articles begin as unpublished or ‘working papers’ which can often be a valuable source of up-to-date information in a particular field. Many working papers will later be super-ceded by a fully published version but they can still be worth consulting as part of your research. Google Scholar contains many unpublished manuscripts, however it can often be easier to go directly to Institution websites for access to these publications.

The latest Research outputs from Alliance Manchester Business School are listed on the [school website](https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/facultiesandschools/alliance-manchester-business-school%28b7ec585d-9a22-4d60-b65c-1280711bd728%29/publications.html?page=0)

# Theses / dissertations

Undergraduate and Masters level dissertations written at The University of Manchester are not currently available online. However databases such as [ProQuest: Dissertations and Theses Global](https://manchester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975906021001631) do include full text content from theses submitted at other institutions.

PhD theses submitted at the University of Manchester are available via our [eScholar](https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/search/) service.

A comprehensive guide to locating theses and dissertations is available from the [Library website](http://subjects.library.manchester.ac.uk/c.php?g=539861&p=3696347).

# Documents from the Internet

Finally it should be recognised that the Internet can also be a valuable source of information when conducting your research. Caution should always be exercised when using Internet sources as it can often be difficult to verify the accuracy (and even the author!) of these sources.

Using search engines such as Google as an effective research tool can be tricky due to the sheer volume of results returned, and the ranking criteria used by the search engines themselves.

Identifying reputable websites can be a good way to make your searching more effective however. Once you have done this you can employ the search command ‘**site:’** to retrieve some useful results.

Below we have used the search string ‘**reopening site:mckinsey.com’ (do not leave a space after the site:)**to identify some article on considerations firms will need to take when reopening which have been published on the management consultancy firm McKinsey & Company’s website.

# Summary

Consulting a wide range of the above resources is the best approach if you want to ensure that your project or assignment makes the best possible use of all the literature that is available to you. This will help to ensure that your work is informed by current thinking and research, and will help you to score a higher mark in your assignments. If you experience any difficulties accessing the literature you need then you should use the [Ask an Expert](https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/specialist-library-support/ask-an-expert/) feature on the Library website.