Information Timeline and Scholarly Communication Cycle

In this video you will learn how to:

- recognize the stages of the information timeline,
- distinguish the stages of the scholarly communication cycle, and
- select appropriate research sources based on these models.

When thinking about sources for your academic projects, it's important to consider a) the information timeline, that is when and how information becomes available, and b) how this information is used in the scholarly communication cycle, that is when and how academics share their research.

Information Timeline

Different kinds of information become available at different times in the information timeline. When and how information is published is important because it determines what resources are appropriate and accessible for your research.

Let's examine the stages of the information timeline.

Social media, television, and radio can present information on topics or events instantaneously, but are limited to presenting immediate and brief details about who, when, where, and what. These communication systems keep us informed, in real time, about the most current topics and events. However, the details about why and how, placing topics and events in larger contexts, require more time for evaluation.

Newspapers and other news sources can present information within days of a new topic appearing or an event taking place. These sources respond to events after the fact and invest the time to collect additional details, including statistics and quotes. Newspapers present more in-depth information and context in comparison to social media.

Magazines and popular press present longer stories about current events. At this stage of the information timeline, publications include additional perspectives and deeper analysis.

Academic, peer-reviewed journals present information months after a topic has appeared or an event has taken place. The research and peer-review processes take months, and therefore you will not find academic journal articles on a topic or event that happened yesterday. Unlike other publication types, articles from academic journals include references and bibliographies that point readers to the research sources.

Books, including reference works, present in-depth coverage of a topic but take years to publish. Reference works offer summaries and overviews of topics and events but they are not

appropriate sources for up to the minute information, since their publication takes a long time in the information timeline.

When beginning your research, start at the bottom of the information timeline for overview materials that will provide context for the sources in the earlier stages of the timeline.

Information acquires complexity as it moves through this timeline. Academics typically share their research and contribute to scholarly conversations through peer-reviewed journals and books. It is in these last two stages of the information timeline where scholarly communication typically takes place.

Scholarly Communication Cycle

Scholarly communication refers to when and how academics share their research.
The Association of College & Research Libraries defines scholarly communication as "the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use" (http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/principlesstrategies).

The scholarly communication cycle has many participants, including faculty, students, and the library.

Let's examine the scholarly communication cycle in more detail.

ACRL's Scholarly Communication diagram http://acrl.libguides.com/scholcomm/toolkit/. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

The cycle begins with **Research, Data Collection & Analysis**. This is where researchers collect data, look at other scholarly publications, and analyse the information.

Next is the **Authoring** step where researchers turn their research into findings, usually presented in the form of an article, a conference presentation or a book. Authoring can take some time--often months or years--and it requires input from other researchers and academics who give their feedback through the peer-review process.

Peer review is a process of pre-approval or review of a publication by one's professional peers. These are existing experts in a given field who evaluate potential publications and assess the quality of the writing and research and may suggest changes to the original work before it is deemed fit for publication or presentation.

After researching, authoring, and peer review comes the **Publication** phase. Most academics publish peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters. These may be in print or electronic formats.

The **Discovery and Dissemination** phase of the scholarly communication cycle is where the information is accessed by you and other scholars. Scholarly journals and articles are often not accessible via search tools such as Google, since they are subscription-based. Many academic publications are part of the "deep web", which means they are unavailable using search engines like Google but are available via UNB Libraries.

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