Dato' Sri Najib – IIUM Can Be A Global Platform to Unite All Muslims

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Internet Research: Finding a Gem in the Sea of Blah

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Nowadays if you search something on the Internet, you will definitely get something. Whether that something is worth anything, you will be the judge of it. True, Internet is fast, convenience, having multitude of information and also free. People are turning to the Internet to search for information they want. However, Internet results are usually more commercial than academic. Internet research requires you to evaluate the results that you get to ensure of their reliability, authenticity and usefulness to your research. To save your research time, make sure you visit the right sites. Discuss below are some of the useful sites to get good academic materials for your research:

1. Open Access

Open Access refers to the "unrestricted access and unrestricted reuse of scholarly articles on the Internet." Over the years, we are seeing more and more academic materials being published freely over the Internet. In the past, the materials are collected and arranged according to repositories, organizations or subjects, and often time under a certain journal title. Lately, you can search for individual open access articles through their own "search engines". One of them is CORE (http://core.kmi.open.ac.uk/search) which to date has more than 15 million open access articles.

2. Subject-based/Disciplinary/Data Repositories

IREP as available through the IIUM Library homepage is institutionally based as it stores the academic writing of IIUM lecturers. On the internet there existed a lot of data and subject-based repositories which are not bound by any institutions. They are usually maintained and funded by organizations to enable academia to self-deposit their own writing to be viewed freely by the public. Since they are not institutionally bound, access and reference to these repositories are more opened and highly accessible. A lot of these repositories are found in the science and technology subject like the PubMed Central (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/).

3. Share of Information

The Internet now has many platforms which enable researchers and academia to share academic papers. People nowadays are more open to the concept of sharing information. The more people know about our writing, the citation to it will definitely increase. The data provided in these sites however might not be in full text but those interested can contact the author to personally obtain the full text. Among famous platforms are Social Science Research Network (SSRN) at http://www.ssrn.com and Academia.edu at http://www.academia.edu.


Digital Library is a concept where resources are stored and provided in digital format for multiple access and easy reference. So, instead of paper and audio visual which are confined by the physical walls of the library, the materials are provided online. Just like IIUM Library which has its own Digital Library collection, the Internet also provides a lot of structured archival and access environment for scholarly material. The Internet Archive (http://archive.org/index.php), for example, is a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Like a paper library, it provides free access to researchers, historians, scholars, the print disabled, and the general public.

5. Print Materials Available Online: Online Bookshop

Researchers can now gain access to books via the Internet Providers and retailers like Google Book (http://books.google.com.my) and Amazon.com (http://www.amazon.com/) have made arrangements with large numbers of individual publishers to make the full text of their books searchable on these sites. Of course, due to copyright issue, users can’t view or print the entire books. However, it is good enough as users can read a large portion of the books and if needed search for the physical book in the library or request for purchase, personally or by the library.

6. Alert Services

Researchers at their advanced level of research would probably be able to identify a few publishers who specialize in their areas of interest. They will keep themselves posted with any new writing materials published by these publishers. Due to this, more and more publishers are coming up with alert services to inform their clients with new updates in their field of interest. Among these services are Wiley Email Alerts: http://www.wiley.com/bw/email? and Cambridge Alerts http://www.cambridge.org/alerts/

The IIUM Library collects resourceful sites as discussed above in its homepage (http://libiium.edu.my/). You can view them under the banner Open Access Resources. Often times, the Library’s Facebook, Twitter and Blog will highlight valuable information and websites found on the Internet. Why we do this? It is simply to ensure that the library users refer to the best academic resources in producing the best academic writing. Happy surfing and happy researching!