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**Online Research Methods:**  
**A Steps Guide for the Everyday Student**

Book Pitch and Detailed Table of Contents by

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### **THE PITCH**

If the purpose of an education is to be able to express thoughts and feelings in writing then students must learn in high school or college the newer, faster and better means of memorializing those thoughts on paper by exploiting all of the latest online research methods.

I have been teaching at the college and university and graduate levels for a decade and clearly 80% of my students are completely unprepared to write an effective research paper.

The idea for this 220 page book was born out of the methods I use in class to teach my students how to do research online in order to create a magnificent new piece of scholarly thought for the world to consume beyond the classroom. Every student can be a scholar. Each student has the right to offer the truth of their thoughts and discoveries for consumption by a critical audience.

I expressly chose “Everyday Student” instead of “Incredible Scholar” for the title of this book to help construct a lively and fun and accessible attitude from book cover onward so all students shall be able to enjoy and use the ideas involved when it comes to researching and writing a paper.

This book is aimed at the high school junior and senior student and the freshman and sophomore college student, but the thought and meaning is accessible for all students of any age as long as they have access to an active internet connection.

*Online Research Methods: A Steps Guide for the Everyday Student* is not just a compendium of website links and search engines because it will interactively show the student how to find accurate and worthwhile information online fast and how to quickly employ that newfound knowledge to its highest effect in an argumentative term or research paper.

The precise and effective integration of scholarly sources into student presentations and papers is paramount to creating new scholarship and all students, even the everyday student, has the right to make history by adding their thoughts and arguments to the greater understanding of the world. I will help my reader-student accomplish that task.

### **THE HOOK**

This book is unique because it directly addresses how to think about a paper, how to organize raw information and then how to prove an argument through online research methods.

This book is a “Steps Guide” and that means a student can take each chapter (step) in sequence and by the end of the final chapter (step) an entirely formed paper will be complete. In the Detailed Table of Contents I swapped out the word “Chapter” for “Step” to make it clear how the process of the book will unfold in real time for the student reader.

I believe taking the student through the process of a methodical online research and writing journey is important and I will research a topic right along with them.

Helen Keller would be my choice for a research topic for the book. She is known but not well-known. Helen's life and work are solidly grounded in education and the hard lessons of living a human life in the prejudice of antiquity. She dealt with her Deafness and Blindness in an inspirational and magnificent ways. Despite her great intellectual gifts she was accused of plagiarism three times in her life.

Helen Keller is a relevant genius now. She is a superstar today. The argument of her legacy for the world can be found online in the methods of her life's work and those lessons of perseverance and continuity of purpose are ripe for revelation.

For example, here's how I would start the process of chaining together thoughts and ideas for my own research paper on Helen Keller. What do I want to argue about her life and deeds? Do I want to research her inspiration of others or is her internal fight more interesting? Where does Helen Keller fit in the scheme of American thought on the disabled?

I will outright confess to my readers I have the same troubles and questions they have when I start winnowing down an idea into a nugget of a discovered truth found in the research surrounding a paper.

I will show where I get stuck: *There are hundreds of articles on Helen Keller and I need to make fast decisions – because my paper deadline is approaching – based on author, article length, publication date, publisher reputation and factual provenance to determine if those articles are right for my paper or not...*

Next I will demonstrate the ways and means of getting around those pesky obstacles: *Cross-searching for relevancy gives some relief to the process, multiple cited entries cuts down on the noise and the fog of repetitive entries, touchstone articles give me more historical leeway in an argument, newer articles always trump the outdated...*

Then I will reveal the details of where I tend to find the most success in the end: *The Helen Keller Institute and School for the Blind is an excellent resource for lots of original, but intellectually prejudicial, material; her writing and her autobiography reveal hard pieces of truth that can be expanded beyond her life for deeper universal insight into the human condition; her life performed on the dramatic stage vs. her real world life as an adult scholar do not always line up with the reality of her history; Helen's political influence and her long-term reverberation in society as an admired martyr and the economics of educating the disabled are paramount to understanding what drove her to activism from beyond the safety of her rich, landed, family home; Helen Keller was the Americans With Disabilities Act before there was such an act; her life was the living embodiment of the ADA without the force of the federal government behind it and here's why that's important...*

Those brief examples demonstrate a sliver of my research and writing process that reflects the scholarly spirit and teaching tone of the book. I will extrapolate and intimately detail the process of thought I described so my questions can easily become my student's questions for their research topic.

My process is no different than my students' process and every reader of my book is my student. The direct, hands-on handing down of knowledge is what makes the Golden Circle of Education shine. I teach you, you teach others; my teachers become your teachers; your students become my students and the circle is repeatedly made whole.

This is a process book for using online research methods in real time and for that reason alone *Online Research Methods: A Steps Guide for the Everyday Student* is unique in the marketplace and has little direct competition.

Students cannot claim their greatness unless they know where to find the nuggets of knowledge to lead them to their destiny. I will take my students by the hand to work with them through the process of understanding how proving the originality of their wonderings leads to the ownership of ideas.

### **THE COMPETITION**

Most of the current books concerning web research are giant 600 page books like *The Extreme Searcher's Internet Handbook: A Guide for the Serious Searcher* by Gary Price (Cyberage Books/Information Today, Inc., 2004) and *Find It Online, Fourth Edition: The Complete Guide to Online Research* by Alan M. Schlein (Facts On Demand, 2004).

Those sorts of books by mainstream publishers are filled with page after page of aging and dying website addresses and search engines printed dead on the page. Those books are not interactive and are not "clickable" in that the student can easily find the information online without typing a long website URL address.

Other more direct competitors include, but are not limited to, the following titles:

### **WEB SEARCH GARAGE**

By Tara Calishain

Prentice Hall (2004), 264 pages

This book is an interesting take on using search engines and directories to find all kinds of information online. This book is not aimed at students. This book takes a wide angle of yaw on the idea of search and searching for information but it isn't ratcheted down for the everyday student to use the information found and then implementing the ideas in a formal paper.

#### RULES OF THUMB

By Diana Roberts Wienbroer

McGraw-Hill (2000), 224 pages

This spiral-bound book is interesting for its information portals but the information is horribly outdated. The book's tone is static and unengaging in spirit and it only demonstrates how to find information online and not how to take what is found and how to using it as the foundation for an argumentative term or research paper.

#### INTERNET AND ONLINE RESEACH FOR TEACHERS (3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION)

By Eugene F. Provenzo

Allyn & Bacon (2004), 168 pages

This pamphlet-feeling tome provides teachers an evaluative tour of closed and proprietary research databases. The dry timbre of this book suggests it is more for the database research librarian and not for a mainstream instructor. If this book were aimed at the everyday student instead of the teacher it might have a closer appeal to the core of my book.

#### REAL-TIME RESEACH (Tentative Title, the ISBN is 0131737112)

By Tara Calishain

Prentice Hall (Unpublished – 2006?), page count unknown

Ms. Calishain is currently finishing this book and describes it thusly on her ResearchBuzz.com website: “*Real-Time Research* covers using the Internet to monitor information through RSS feeds, e-mail alerts, page monitors, and other tools. Building effective queries to monitor your topics of interest, tools for monitoring specialty information, organizing your information, and redistributing it are also covered.” Her book is a small component of my book but she does not use that “real-time” information in any substantive way to form the core for an everyday student who needs to write a paper using online research methods.

The secret to finding success with a book like *Online Research Methods: A Steps Guide for the Everyday Student* is keeping it fresh after purchase in an online arena that is exploding daily with new facts to find.

You reveal that secret by using solidly proven research methods and reliable information that, if changed or modified, can easily be made accessible after the sale of the book.

I plan to create a website for the book that will provide a permanent online platform for my readers and house updated links and ongoing secret research revelations that will help make the book evergreen in an ever-changing online world.

## **THE MARKET**

Students will always need to research and write papers and every year there are students who are painfully and knowingly unprepared in research methods to meet the minimum requirements of researching and writing a simple paper with citations and a bibliography.

I will become tutor, mentor and friend to the everyday student because by following each chapter as a link in the chain of a successful paper, my students can forge an excellent end result for the price of the book.

Instructors, counselors, parents and administrative educators can aim both the troubled student and the eager student at this book for easy mastery of effective online research methods that will constructively lead to the successful completion of a paper.

There are no other textbooks or trade books currently available that directly connect how the successful gathering of scholarly information online can innately lead to creating an effective paper.

*Online Research Methods: A Steps Guide for the Everyday Student* can have an even greater added value in the marketplace with a CD that includes sample software covered in Part III of the Detailed Table of Contents for this book. If a CD is too expensive to include with the book, all the programs mentioned in Part III have 30 day free trials available for download from each company's website.

## **THE AUTHOR**

David W. Boles, M.F.A. is co-author of *Hand Jive: American Sign Language for Real Life* to be published by Barnes and Noble New York in the Fall of 2006. More information is available online at <http://BolesBooks.com>

David is also the polymathic author of "Windows 95 Communication and Online Secrets" for IDG Books Worldwide and his periodicals work include c|net's "Builder.com," "Windows Magazine" and "Boot." He served as the East Coast Editor for "Eyepiece" – the Official Publication of the Guild of British Cinematographers.

David is a member of the graduate school of Public Health faculty at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and he has taught World and Dramatic Literature at New Jersey Institute of Technology and Theatre and Forensic Speech at Rutgers University-Newark.

Other teaching credits include New York University, Fordham University, Columbia University, the College of New Rochelle and Saint Peter's College. He has many years of teaching Freshman composition, Critical Writing, and Advanced Research Skills. David has also taught American Sign Language at New NYU.

David also recently served a Visiting Professorship with the University of California, Davis Program in Sports Medicine.

His scholarly research paper, *Creating Aristotelian Irrevocable Change in Tourists Touching Down at Newark Liberty International Airport* was accepted by the Sheffield Hallam University School of Sport and Leisure Management's conference concerning *Tourism & Performance: Scripts, Stages and Stories* in the United Kingdom in 2005.

David's B.A. in English is from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and his M.F.A. is from Columbia University in the City of New York where he earned a terminal degree in Playwriting.

He was a Shubert Organization/Presidential Scholar during his entire tenure at Columbia. His work as an award-winning Playwright has been seen on national tour in 16 states and 27 cities.

A complete C.V./Resume and list of Teaching Credits are available on request. You may find more narrative biographic details online here: <http://BolesBooks.com/boles.html> or here: <http://boles.com>

## THE DETAILED TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Are You an Everyday Student?</b>	<b>6 pages</b>
<b>Part I: Gathering Content</b>	<b>2 pages</b>
<b>Step 1: Evaluating Ideas</b>	<b>10 pages</b>
Not all ideas are created equal when it comes to arguing them in a paper. How do you find the right idea to lead you to the best paper?	
Is this idea worthy of a paper?	
What Works	
What Doesn't Work	
Knowing The Difference	
Can I find enough information to support my argument?	
When To Stop and Start Over	
Knowing When You Have Enough	
Checking As You Go Along	
What are my research obstacles?	
Previous Papers	
Linking Research	
Tagging Old Thoughts	
Prejudice Against Newspapers, Articles, Blogs & Newsgroups	
Scholarly Thinking	
Evaluating the Risks	
Making the Web Matter	
<b>Step 2: Scholarly Searches</b>	<b>12 pages</b>
This lively tour of the power and perils of online search engines will show you how to best use these powerful databases to quickly find the means to your end.	
Google	
Teoma	
Wikis	
Britanica.com	
Bartleby.com	
Poetry.com	
The National Library of Medicine	
PubMed.com	
EbSco Host	
Newspapers	
Journals	
Quarterlies	



### **Step 3: Information Portals**

**14 pages**

These online research sites are not search engines. These destinations are storage containers for proprietary information you can access through their servers.

#### Questia

- Setting Up Your Bookshelf
- Bookmarking Books and Articles
- 60,000 Books
- 1,000,000 Articles

#### HighBeam

- Articles
- Newspapers
- Journals

#### Amazon.com

- Getting Inside the Book
- How to Use "Search Inside the Book"
- How To Quote a Book You Don't Buy
- The Magic of Screenshots

#### NYPL.org (New York Public Library Online)

- e-Books
- Online Searches of Their Stacks
- How To Be There Without Being There

#### Local Library

- Online Access
- Reserving Your Future
- Asking A Librarian
- Ordering Reprints

#### Librarians

- A Human Research Tool
- Making the Connection
- Getting Both Your Books and Desires Met

### **Step 4: Instant Information**

**10 pages**

Having information scoured from online sources and zapped to you in Real-Time is a magical process that is pedestrian to set up. How do you cast for information and then have the answers automatically reeled back in to you?

Blogs

RSS Feeds

Alerts

Mailing Lists

Newsgroups

**Step 5: Interviewing the Source**

**10 pages**

Online Research Methods can also lead you to real people with live answers to your inquiries. Here's how to find the right expert and how to ask for help the right way.

- The Example of Annette Lareau
  - Unequal Childhood* Author
  - Methods
  - Interviewing Styles
- Local Experts
  - Teachers
  - Police
  - Government Officials
- Local Universities
  - Administrators
  - Professors
  - Student Experts
  - Organizations on Campus
- Newspaper Email
  - Authors
  - Publishers
  - Feedback systems
- Call, Don't Write
  - Tips on How to Make Contact
  - Live Chat
  - Dead Writing
  - I Searching...

**Part II: Analyzing Content**

**2 pages**

**Step 6: What Do You Think?**

**10 pages**

You've done all your research. You have a pile of raw information. Now what do you do with what you have?

Sorting and Sifting

What To Keep

What To Toss

The Maybe Pile

Relevancy

Old Stuff?

Is Newer Always Better?

Going Out to Dig More

How Do You Feel?

Gut Check Time

Nauseous?

Excited?

The Dead Gut

Will Others Feel the Same Way?

Learning How to Pitch

Delivering the Pitch on Paper

Judging Effective Ideas

**Step 7: Sorting Through the Raw Bits**

**10 pages**

Now you know what you generally think of your research discoveries. Now you need to begin to see what you have in terms of a paper.

Taking Stock

Making Lists

Deciding What Works

How Re-Work What isn't Working

Reference Point Ratios

Piling Up the Points

Never Go for a Tie

Weaving It All Together

Identifying Holes

Logic Leaps

Ideas As Black Holes

The First Rule of Holes

Going Back to Cover the Holes

The Glory of Gluing

The Benefits of Backfilling

The Treachery of Tacking

**Step 8: Verification Triangulation**

**12 pages**

A single source is not enough in scholarly writing. This chapter will provide a simple way to have your research methods automatically support your research and your emerging idea for a paper.

- One Source Is Not Enough
  - One Idea One Thought
  - No Idea Is an Island
  - Lots of Thoughts Make an Argument
- Finding Other Confirmation
  - Inferring Support
  - Direct Support
  - Analytic Support with Statistics
- Confirming the Confirmation
  - Who Else Thinks Like You Do?
  - Refereeing Sources That Disagree
  - You Are The Judge And Jury
- The Theory of Verification Triangulation
  - One Side of the Argument
  - The Center of the Argument
  - Standing The Argument On Its Own
- The Circle of Argument Support
  - An Argument Has Curves
  - One Side, No Angles
  - Rounding Off the Rough Edges

**Step 9: Getting Feedback**

**10 pages**

Now it's time to take your piles support and decide if what you have is enough to sustain a full paper or if your research is pulling you in a new direction.

- A Time for Reckoning
  - Hurt Feelings
  - Getting Through the Process
  - Your Own Worst Critic
- Provenance
  - Examples
  - What It Means To You
  - Using It In Your Paper
- Blogs
  - Asking the World
  - Verifying Comment Feedback
  - Leaping Beyond the Blog
- Newsgroups
  - The Chaff
  - The Noise
  - The Effective Response

Website Owners

- Finding Them on Site
- Looking Them Up
- Making Contact

Professors from Afar

- Who Are The Experts?
- Locating Them
- Honing in On Their Mind To Sharpen Yours

Friends Up Close

- A Friend In Need
- A Friend With a Deed
- Asking the Right Questions

**Step 10: Argue With Your Argument**

**10 pages**

Once you have a settled on an idea your research can support you now need to form a logical argument that you can support in your paper. Here are the vital questions you must be able to answer before taking the next step in the process.

Have I Exhausted All My Resources?

- Review
- Reflect
- Reuse

Is My Idea Interesting?

- Ordinary
- Originality
- Breaking New Ground

Is My Idea Too Narrow?

- Not Enough to Fill a Paper
- Stretching
- Thin Isn't In

Am I Trying To Do Too Much?

- Massive Paragraphs
- Too Many Ideas in One Sentence
- Droning On

Can I Support My Idea In An Argument?

- Build It And They Will Come
- Being Strict With Structure
- You Are a Craftsman

How Can I Structure My Argument With Verifiable Facts?

- Sustaining Other People's Ideas
- Ideas That Give New Life
- Fact Finding Is Employment For Your Ideas

**Part III: Managing Content**

**2 pages**

*(NOTE: This Part deals with software management of research results and information. The idea in this Part is to seed the row with enough temptation to install the software from the CD or to download the free trials found online. If this sort of Part isn't in within your realm of wishing, this Part can be deleted and the other Parts and Chapters can be incrementally increased in their page counts.)*

**Step 11: Copy and Paste**

**6 pages**

Word processing programs can become great resources for managing information.

- Cutting and Pasting
- Folders Management
- Descriptive Naming

**Step 12: Excel Spreadsheet**

**6 pages**

Spreadsheets can be a fast and cheap way to look up information in the future.

- How a Spreadsheet Can Help You
- Understanding Columns and Rows
- Entering Data
- Manipulating Data

**Step 13: Interfolio**

**6 pages**

Backing up your research and information away from your computer is vital to the safety and integrity of your online research.

- Logging On to Interfolio
- Backing Up Information Online
- Retrieving Lost Data
- Storing Several Drafts

**Step 14: Onfolio**

**6 pages**

Information management comes in many flavors and styles. Onfolio is on one of the simplest and most powerful programs to use.

- A Quick Onfolio Tour
- RSS Feeds
- Saving Web Information Offline
- Downloading Entire Website Pages In One Click

**Step 15: EndNote**

**6 pages**

Create your own library with EndNote and then “Cite While You Write.”

- Adding Records to EndNote
- Searching Online University Databases
- Cite While You Write
- Bibliography Management

**Step 16: RefViz**

**6 pages**

You have all this electronic reference material, but how does it related to each other?

- RefViz Visually Demonstrates Relationships
- Entering Data for Analysis
- Dots and Specks and Lines and Plots
- Look for the Outliers and Honor the Clusters

**Step 17: Furl It**

**6 pages**

Surfing the web can bring you instant information from scholarly websites. Learn how to quickly save those sites for later retrieval.

- Installing Furl It
- Saving a Site
- Writing Good Site Tags
- Recalling Stored Furl It Information Later

**Step 18: Reference Manager**

**6 pages**

You can copy your reference material online and even write your paper online.

- Setting Up a RefMan Account
- Entering Your Research Materials
- Writing Your Paper Online
- Creating a Permanent Personal Library
- Saving Your Work Forever

## **Part V: Converting Your Content**

### **Step 19: Building an Argument with Research Foundations**

**14 pages**

Now we start to structure your paper.

Sustaining An Argumentative Thesis

Being Bold

Accuracy Matters

Proof and Pudding

Structuring The Proof

Three Examples

Theme of the Three Caskets

You Are A Scholar

Reflexive vs. Reflective

Writing Live Papers

Papers That Mirror

Active Creation

Taking a Stand

What Do You Believe?

Defending Your Life

Creating Hard Decisions

Battling the Idea

### **Step 20: Plagiarism**

**14 pages**

Plagiarism can plague even the best student. Learn how to spot your own plagiarizing and how to stop it from happening again.

What is Plagiarism?

Examples

Online Checks

Search Engines Help

Recognizing It.

Checking Sources

Setting Your Mind Apart From Another's

Making It Always Work For You

Fixing It.

Revision

Calling All Authors

You're Smarter If You Inspire

You Did The Work, Credit the Minds

Scholarship is Not Football

Standing On The Shoulders of Giants

Standing Your Ground



A Machine That Eats You Alive

- Honor Codes
- Misconduct
- Punishment
- Expulsion

**Step 21: How to Cite a Source**

**12 pages**

Citing a source in a paper can be a tricky and scary experience. This chapter will remove the fear and trembling from properly citing sources.

You Intellect Shows When You Quote Others

- Memorizing
- Future Use
- A Good Quote Never Hurts

Mindsharing

- Two Are Better Than One
- Inspiring Higher Ideas
- Splitting the Gordian Knot

Quoting Sources

- When To Quote
- Why You Must Quote
- Daring Temptation

Documenting Sources

- Citations
- Bibliographies
- Footnotes Or Not Notes?

**Step 22: Framing Others' Thoughts**

**12 pages**

Your paper is finished. Or is it? Learn how to create a shine the on the final polishing.

Writing is Re-Writing

- Ramping Up
- Using Wiggle Words
- Strength Lives On Strength

Read Your Paper Aloud

- Use Punctuation to Guide You
- Read In the Mirror
- Mark It Up

Read Your Paper Backwards

- Back to Front
- Catching More Typos
- A Fresh Understanding of Structure

Getting The Most Eyes On Your Prize

- Family Eyes
- Peers Peering
- Professional Pairing

- What To Ask For From Your Readers
  - Getting Good Feedback
  - Dealing With Everything Crumbling to Ash
  - Using Everything to Improve
  - Recovering From Spent Expectations
- Critiques Without Solutions
  - Setting Up the Foul Lines
  - Being Clear
  - Subtlety Kills With Boredom
- Getting What You Want and Need
  - Restate Your Thesis
  - Scoring The Results
  - Preparing For The Miserable Unexpected
- Presenting Your Paper
  - Formatting
  - Margins
  - Readability
  - Handing In Your Mind!

**Appendices**