Library resources and information retrieval for (off campus) students

Media and information literacy (MIL) is considered a crucial competence in today's society. Citizens need the critical abilities and communicative skills to effectively access, analyze, and evaluate information. Being media and information literate means that you can search information effectively, that you can evaluate what you find and that you are able to use/reuse the material correctly (for example by quoting and referring). 1

Short overview of resources
You have access to a lot of resources in your study area via your university library. This includes books, e-books, magazines, journals, databases and much more. You can access all of our electronic resources (databases, e-books, magazines, encyklopedias etc.) from home by logging in with your KAuID: https://www.kau.se/en/library/search/search-information/databases-articles/using-e-resources-outside-campus

In order to borrow, reserve and order books and articles you must be registered at the library. Here you can read more about borrowing books as an off campus student: https://www.kau.se/en/library/borrow/campus-students/distance-services/obtaining-library-materials

The university library has gathered information about, and links to, important resources in a subject guide. You can access it here: http://libguides.kau.se/informatics

A complete presentation of the resources available at KaUB can be found on the library's website: https://www.kau.se/en/library. There you can also find text manuals and movies on how to use library resources at a distance.

Books, reports, essays, dissertations, reference books and dictionaries
If you are looking for books you can search for them in your local library catalog or in Karlstad University Library Catalogue: www.kau.se/library (click on the "Library Catalogue" tab above the search box).

Another useful resource is Libris (http://libris.kb.se), a national catalogue for Sweden's libraries.

In Libris you can add "Karlstad University Library" under "My Library". Then you can see if the book you are searching for exists at KaUB and you can also order interlibrary loans if the library does not have the book.

1 Read more about Media and information Literacy (MIL), for example on the UNESCO webpage: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/media-development/media-literacy/mil-as-composite-concept/ [180204]
Theses, reports and some essays are also included in Libris. SwePub is Sweden's national research database, which records all Swedish research in the form of conference proceedings, dissertations, etc. You can also search for dissertations and essays in the digital scientific archive DiVA. http://swepub.kb.se/
http://www.diva-portal.org/

You will find a variety of encyclopedias and reference books on the library start page. Click on the button “Encyclopedias” under the search box: https://www.kau.se/en/library

Student essays can be found here: http://www.essays.se/ as well as in DiVA.

E-books The library has different providers of e-books. The terms and limitations may vary, read more on library e-books: https://www.kau.se/en/library/search/search-information/search-books/e-books

Journals and scholarly articles
One important characteristic of an academic or scholarly article is that it has to pass an academic quality assessment before it can be published in an academic journal. Before an article is accepted for publication, it has to be reviewed by researchers working in the same field (referees). This control process is called peer review and is designed to guarantee the academic standard of an article. https://www.kau.se/en/library/search/help-searching/guides-manuals/what-academic-or-scholarly-article

Journals on KaUB can be found by clicking the “Periodicals” button on the library web page. The university library purchases journals directly from publishers or through different providers. To see if an article is academic/scholarly, check the magazine's website how authors' manuscripts are being reviewed before publication, ie if the journal's articles are peer reviewed.

IoP (Institute of Physics), AIP (American Institute of Physics), ACS (American Chemical Society), IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) are examples of professional organizations that publish and sell journals. Elsevier, Sage and Springer are examples of publishers selling journals.

Databases and search engines
You will find academic material on your subject by performing a search in a database. There are interdisciplinary and subject specific databases. You can use different search engines to search for scientific material (for example Onesearch or Google scholar).

As a student at KAU you have access to a lot of databases and you find them all via the library web page. By using Onesearch (the library search engine) you can search through several databases at the same time. https://www.kau.se/en/library/search/search-information/other-resources/onesearch

IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) is a professional organization in computer science that publishes journals. The library buys the IEEE Xplore database.

Scopus is an interdisciplinary bibliographic database that covers many subjects. Scopus is produced by Elsevier and is linked to the full text of Elsevier's journals in ScienceDirect.
SAGE Research Methods Videos Online is a resource for those who want to explore films about different research methods.

For more examples on databases that may be of interest to you can be found in your subject guide: http://libguides.kau.se/informatics.

Using the Google Scholar search engine, you can search for scientific information on the Internet. http://scholar.google.se/

In Google Scholar, you will have access to some advanced search options, such as restricting the search to a certain time period or language. Under "Settings" and "Library Links" you can add Karlstad University Library, then you will receive a link to the full text directly in your hit list, if available through the library.

**Performing an information search**

When you begin your search, you can start by describing your problem area/question in common language. Formulate your query in a few words. Choose the most significant words/concepts and use them as keywords in your searches. Finding good keywords can be difficult. A good advice is to use dictionaries and encyclopedias to find synonyms. You can also get tips on useful keywords if you look at the subject terms of interesting books or articles that you have already found in the database.

By combining your keywords you can build up a more or less advanced information search, depending on which search engine or database you are using.

Different types of materials can be found in different types of databases, but mostly you will get a mix of material when you have made your search, for example in Onesearch or Google scholar. What kind of material are you interested in?

It could also be useful to note the results of your searches (or save the database search history) so that you remember which source/database you have used, which keywords and fields you searched for, what restrictions you used, how many results you received, and how many search results that were relevant.

Subject specific databases contain term lists (Thesaurus) which can be useful to use to find the right words to use in your information search. NOTE that you need to translate your keywords into English to find the material that may be relevant to your search. You will probably have to repeat your search repeatedly until you find the right words to use, as well as relevant combinations of words that are right for your particular question.

Most of the material in the databases is not available freely on the Internet. You get access to them in full text as a student at the university through the library’s subscriptions using your login with KauID. If the library subscribes to the journal, the article is often available digitally in full text (or printed). If the journal is not available at KaUB, you can order the article via the library’s website. You can read more about interlibrary loans here: https://www.kau.se/en/library/borrow/ordering/interlibrary-loans/interlibrary-loans-borrowing-material-other-libraries
Boolean operators
Using Boolean operators can be a great way to control your search. Combining words with the Boolean operator AND will render you a search amount that contains both keywords. The Boolean operator OR provides a broad search (the search result must contain either or both of the words). Use the Boolean operator NOT with caution as it gives you hits containing one but not the other word, thus also potentially interesting matches that contain both words.

Phrase Search
Use quotation marks to search for concepts consisting of two or more words: “business intelligence”, “Internet of things” etc.

Truncating
You can use a symbol (in most databases an asterix *) to find words with varying endings. For example, if you truncate as follows: comp* your search will render you results with comp – and any ending of the word, for example computer, computers, computerize, computing etc. Some search engines (like Google scholar) truncates automatically. Read the help instructions for each search engine/database.

Masking
Use the question mark (?) to find spelling variations. Each question mark corresponds to one sign. Read the help instructions for each search engine/database.

Reference management software
You can write references manually or with help from a reference management software. There are many reference management softwares to choose from, the University Library supports one called Zotero: https://www.kau.se/en/library/writing-referencing/referencing-and-citing/reference-management-software/other-referencing

There are many reference output styles. The most important thing when you refer is that you choose a style and that you write all references the same way. If you do not know which reference style to use you should always ask your supervisor.

Please contact me or one of my colleagues if you have any questions!

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