

Research: How to, Citations, Fact checking, and Questions

IEA
Irish Economic Association



Research – Where to begin

- Begin (and end) with trusted text books, books and websites.
- A long list of trusted websites is provided
- An excellent place to start no matter what the subject being researched is CoreEcon: <https://www.core-econ.org/>
- Follow up with the articles/videos/etc. cited in the margins of CoreEcon and then follow citations therein.
- Write down questions as they arise.
- If searching online, search carefully. What is presented as a well-established fact may not be – need to check if not from a trusted source.

Some trusted websites – Economics

- IMF: <https://www.imf.org/external/research/index.aspx>
- World Bank: <https://www.worldbank.org>
- Central Bank of Ireland: <https://www.centralbank.ie>
- European Central Bank: <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/home/html/index.en.html>
- Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System: <https://www.federalreserve.gov> (from the website can link to all the Federal Reserve Bank websites for their publications and data)
- Central Statistics Office: <https://www.cso.ie/en/index.html> provides data and data visualizations
- ESRI: <https://www.esri.ie> provides links to press releases, working papers, etc.
- American Economic Association: <https://www.aeaweb.org> Includes a section for students and teachers with various resources and links. Also has research highlights, links to articles, etc.

Some trusted websites – Climate and Environment

- Environmental Defense Fund: <https://edf.org> Guided by science and economics, EDF tackles urgent threats with evidenced based practical solutions
- IPCC: <https://www.ipcc.ch> IPCC reports and links
- World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/phe/en/> Public health and the environment, includes climate change
- International Energy Agency: there are a host of reports and statistics here on clean energy and policy. The annual World Energy Outlook gives a global overview of the situation on energy and climate change. The Executive summary is available for free. www.iea.org/
<https://webstore.iea.org/download/summary/190?fileName=English-WEO-2018-ES.pdf>

Research – What to be wary of

- Prior beliefs: what we assume to be true may actually be false. It is important to carefully challenge one's own prior beliefs.
- Editorial bias: Newspapers and other news outlets have an editorial bias. This bias may be restricted to the Editorial Page or it may permeate the publication. It is important to distinguish between editorials and opinion pieces and news articles. Editorials and opinion pieces are not necessarily based on hard facts. News articles should be. But beware, they often are not.
- Ideological bias: This provides a lens through which the world is viewed. Consider PETA and Ducks Unlimited.

Research – Names can deceive and PR is PR

- What is in a name? Consider the European Research Group. What is it and what is its political stance?
- Is there a difference between publications by Indecon and the ESRI? Why might there be? Why does this matter?
- The official website of an organization can be considered as only one source of information on that organization. Such websites have a PR function, thus negative information is downplayed or absent.

Research – How to search

- Use private search facility so that one search doesn't affect the next search
- Think before searching – very broad searches can generate diffuse results. It all depends on what the search engine picks up as key.
- Be careful of sites that come up first because they have paid to do so (these are marked as Ads in Google searches), or at the top of the list. List toppers can be there because of carefully designed websites rather than being a good answer to your search.

Citing Research

- <https://www.mendeley.com/guides/harvard-citation-guide>
- There is no best way, but the Harvard method is straightforward.
- ALL sources should be cited and cited correctly. A reader should always be able to find all sources used
- The basic format to cite a website using the Harvard method is:
- Author surname(s), initial(s). (Year of publishing) Title of page/site [Online]. Available at: URL (Accessed: day month year)
- The access date is critical. Websites can disappear and/or be updated.
- Data sources must be cited including date accessed as data is often revised. If own data is used it must be included in full and the collection methodology provided. A reader should be able to duplicate the data analysis.

Plagiarism

- Copying text from a website is plagiarism just as is copying text from a printed book or article. It is theft.
- If a direct quote is used, it should be put in quotation marks and the complete citation including page number or date and time of citing a webpage must be included.
- Even where a quotation is not used, information sources must be cited.

Fact Checking

- The internet is a source of both fact and fiction and fiction dressed up as fact. What looks legit may not be.
- Telling fact from fiction: <https://webliteracy.pressbooks.com>
- This book provides everyone with the means to evaluate the veracity of a source.
- Even if the facts are correct the presentation thereof may be suspect. What is left out can be as important as what is left in.
- These fact checking websites can help
- <https://factcheckni.org>
- <https://www.thejournal.ie/factcheck/news/>
- [*Guardian Reality Check*](#) (UK)
- [*BBC Reality Check*](#) (UK)
- [*Channel 4 Fact Check*](#) (UK)
- [*Full Fact*](#) (UK)

Questions

- In keeping with the theme of climate change and environmental economics, a set of research questions has been supplied.
- These are suggestions only, a place to start rather than to end.