

Digital Research for SCAdians Trapped Indoors

Seeking, Identifying, Retrieving, Verifying

Who am I?

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What is Digital Research? And how is it different from good ol' regular research?

Digital Research USUALLY

- is as valid as other forms of research
- is methodical and focused
- sometimes difficult to keep organized
- uses a different set of skills
- is frequently collaborative
- requires a greater starting knowledge

and RARELY

- lazy
- exactly the same as regular research
- can be as expansive as direct research
- might have unexpected costs

Our outline, to help keep us on track!

- What can and cannot be found online?
- The process of research: seeking, identifying, reviewing, verifying (SIRV)
- Learning how to ask the Internet questions
- How to use platforms
- How to discriminate between resources
- How to organize and cite
- Some practice



What's Out There, Anyway?

What Can Be Found:

- Scholarly Articles
- Digital scans of primary source objects at major institutions
- Finding aids
- Scholar and institution contact information
- Secondary resources
- Amateur work and outright nonsense

What Is Harder To Find:

- Complete collections
- Complete metadata
- Very good scans (preservation versus access)
- Direct links to similar material
- The opportunity to find items not extensively reviewed or handled already
- Access to items behind a paywall

SIRV: Seeking, Identifying, Reviewing, Verifying

- SEEKING: “What do I want to find in my search?”
- IDENTIFYING: “Yes, this is the thing I was looking for!”
- REVIEWING: “I thought this would be good, but it’s really just so-so.”
- VERIFYING: “This sounds perfect, but I need to confirm it with a second source.”



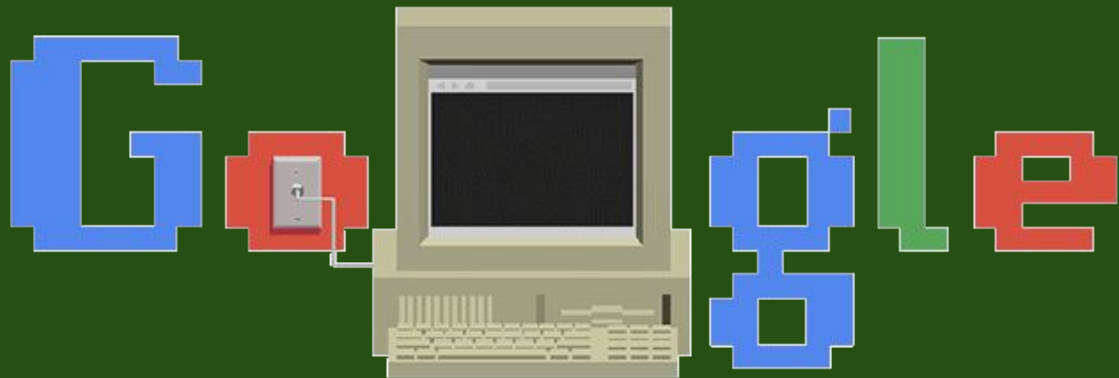
How to Talk to the Internet

Some Basics

- Computers Are Dumb
- Broadening and Narrowing
- Specificity
- Boolean operators
 - Medieval **AND** pottage
 - Pottage **NOT** French
 - Pottage **OR** porridge
 - “Medieval pottage”
 - Medi*val



Google Fu



- www.Google.com
- “The Algorithm”
 - Linking-based
 - Tailored to your search history
- Does not use Boolean
- Uses mass linked data to filter results
- Reverse image search for “where did this picture come from?”
- Beware:
 - Very purchasable ad space
 - Very “hackable” information space
 - Very little ability to refine results

Jstor

- <http://jstor.com/>
- Largest easily accessed repository for humanities topics
- Easy access with local institutions
- Lots of material not behind paywall
- Excellent filtering of results via facets
- User-friendly
- Beware:
 - Not everything available without payment
 - While these are higher quality, some crackpots publish in peer-reviewed journals.



JSTOR

WorldCat

- <https://www.worldcat.org/>
- Links catalogs of thousands of libraries / heritage institutions
- Can help you find a text digitally, in a local library, or acquire it through interlibrary loan
- Allows for strong ability to refine results through facets
- Allows personalized list-building
- Helps determine what locations might be good places to go to directly, digitally or in person.
- Beware:
 - Not every library catalog is connected
 - Not every library's catalog is up-to-date



InternetArchive

- <https://archive.org/>
- Project Gutenberg for early print materials
- Very free, very available
- Frequently text-corrected for easy copy/paste-ing
- Includes documentaries, video games, and all sort of others
- Archives things like web sites via the Wayback Machine
- Beware:
 - Very haphazard collection
 - Varying states of digitized



Individual Institution Digital Collection Sites

- For example: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection>
- Every collection is different, with different hierarchical logic
- Usually has the best metadata, scans, etc
- Leads to related items
- Very trustworthy
- Beware:
 - Harder to use
 - Not complete

**Not All Resources Are
Created Equal**

C

Is it **CURRENT**?

R

Is it **RELIABLE**?

A

Who is the
AUTHORITY?

P

What is the
PURPOSE/POV?

Some Things to Look for in Resources

- More trusted domain extensions:
 - .gov — Limited to government agencies
 - .edu — Limited to educational institutions
- Less trusted domain extensions:
 - .science — 92.7% of domains identified as bad
 - .stream — 89.9% of domains identified as bad
- Identify the revenue stream: does the site sell ads? Products? Receive political donations? Subscribers?
- What is this “expert” a doctor OF, precisely?
- How does the item cite other work?
- Do linked items continue to meaningful pages?
- For SCA research: look for ancient SCAdian research!
 - Your ancestors in the ‘90s may have already done the work for you!



The Treasure of Old SCAdia

- Look for ancient SCAdian research!
 - Your ancestors in the '90s may have already done the work for you!
 - Add the word “SCA” to your searches!

Viking Resources for the Re-enactor

Welcome to my filing cabinet! Here you will find links to several articles I have written on subjects of interest to Viking Age re-enactors. I am a member of the recently established North American subset of [Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc.](#) (I was also a member of The Free Viking Households of Norseland, an upstate New York Viking group, for five years.) Some of these articles were originally printed in publications of the various groups to which I belong(ed); others have been composed specifically for web publication. Still others are pamphlets from classes I have taught, papers I wrote for conventions or competitions, or materials my husband and I have produced together. Each document cites its original source and specific copyright information.

In the SCA I am known as Þóra Sharptooth, a tenth-century steader from the area near Jorvik in the Danelaw.

Documents Available Here

New or Updated Since Last Time:


- [Þóra's Basic Viking Hat](#), a simple pattern for a basic man's hat; posted 24 February 2004

[Introductory Materials](#) | [Clothing](#) | [Textiles](#) | [Cooking and Foodstuffs](#) | [Physical Culture](#) | [Wordgame: SCA Display and Ceremony](#) | [Documents Coming Real Soon Now](#)

Some common errors

- I'm about to make you mad. I'm sorry.
- Not sorry.

Some common errors

- Pinterest is a tool for image searching, and rarely a suitable research a 
- Should only be used for cake decorating inspo
- Not downloading or acquiring stable URLs
- Not reading widely enough / taking the first information to heart without reviewing
- Misinterpreting English and English translations
 - Naomi Wolf and “death recorded” example
- Check the date. Check the date. CHECK THE DATE.
- You have biases
 - Take some implicit bias tests to find some of your own biases that you might not otherwise know about: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

A Test of Might!

Let's look at two resources on Alchemy!

- <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/>
- <http://bibliophilly.pacscl.org/>



- Which of these resources....
 - is OLDER?
 - is more AUTHORITATIVE?
 - has a FINANCIAL STAKE?
 - is more COMPLETE?
 - has clearer CITATIONS?
 - *How do you know?*



Keeping it Together

What's less useful in keeping your research? (i.e., “what not to do” with less finger-wagging)

- Bookmarking in your browser
 - web pages can move and be updated
- Pinterest
 - Can die in a fire, thanks I hate it
- Copying pictures and pasting into a different document
 - this divides the images from the metadata, and reduces the clarity of the images
- Screen captures
 - same as above
- Print outs
 - while it'll stick around, it's messy and still runs the risk of losing metadata

Great Ways to Keep Your Research Together

- Google Drive and the Google Suite of applications
- Using in-built tools in Jstor, Worldcat, your local library's website, etc.
- Citation software and notetaking aid like Zotero or Evernote
- Spreadsheets
- Downloading PDFs from JSTOR, etc.



**Let's Do a Research
Project Together!**

Project!

Pick a topic to research, about which we shall find:

- Two primary sources
- Three peer-reviewed sources

And, for fun

- One VERY bad resource



Thank You!

Any Questions?



Thank you for your time and attention!

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