Economics 3P10: Research Methods in Economics

The Literature Hunt

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Economics Librarian

James A. Gibson Library
Brock University
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The Literature Hunt

1. Literature Reviews
2. Searching the Economics Literature
3. Citing Your Sources
4. Getting Help / Questions?
Part 1: Literature Reviews

aka “Surveying the Literature” (Ch. 3 & 6, Greenlaw text)
What is a Literature Review?

- The literature review refers to both the finished **product** and the **process** involved in creating the review.
  (Ridley 2012, 2-3)
A literature review is a summary of what is currently known about some issue or field on the basis of research evidence, and/or of what lines of argument there are in relation to that issue or field. (Hammersley 2005, 577)
The Effects of Wind Turbines on Property Values in Ontario: Does Public Perception Match Empirical Evidence?

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The increasing development of wind energy in North America has generated concerns from nearby residents regarding potential impacts of wind turbines on property values. Such concerns arose in Melancthon Township (in southern Ontario) following the construction of a large wind farm. Existing literature has not reached a consensus regarding the nature of these impacts. This paper applies a hedonic approach to detailed data on 5,414 rural residential sales and 1,590 farmland sales to estimate the impacts of Melancthon’s wind turbines on surrounding property values. These impacts are accounted for through both proximity to turbines and turbine visibility—two factors that may contribute to a disamenity effect. The results of the hedonic models, which are robust to a number of alternate model specifications including a repeat sales analysis, suggest that these wind turbines have not significantly impacted nearby property values. Thus, these results do not corroborate the concerns raised by residents regarding potential negative impacts of turbines on property values.
Previous research on turbines and property values suggests that the primary complaints associated with turbines concern the perceived negative visual effects of turbines on the landscape as well as noise created by the turbines. Most recent studies have focused their analyses on assessing the visual disamenity, which has become the more prominent concern. While earlier literature also examined the issue of noise, the reduced emphasis on the noise disamenity appears to reflect improvements in turbine technology (Moran and Sherrington 2007). As noted by Hoen et al (2009), the impact of proximity to turbines may extend beyond the visual disamenity effect to include nuisance effects such as shadow flicker and health concerns. Each of these effects, whether real or perceived, may also impact property values.


Literature Review as Process

Identifying theories, terminology, concepts, policy, and methodology

Developing categories and themes for the reading

Specifying title and section headings for the literature review

Exploring ideas around the topic

Locating previous research in the area

Formulating research questions

Reading

Searching

Writing

Writing and revisiting drafts of your review

Developing your argument: Identifying source texts to support each step in your argument

Note taking, summaries, informal writing

Justifying research problem or issue to be investigated

FIGURE 6.1 The literature review process

(Ridley 2012, 99)
Conducting Research Literature Reviews

1. Select a research question
2. Select databases & other sources to search
3. Choose search terms
4. Apply practical screening criteria
5. Apply methodological screening criteria
6. Do the review
7. Synthesize the results

(Fink 2005, 4)
Synthesizing Your Sources

- What is synthesis?
  - “To combine independent elements and form a cohesive whole”.

- As you write your literature review, you need to integrate your sources in order to:
  - Identify patterns across the literature
  - Discuss strengths and weaknesses
  - Compare and contrast methods and approaches
  - Evaluate and interpret what is known and what is missing

Source: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/assignments/literaturereview/synthesizing
Create a Literature Review / Synthesis Matrix

- This will help you keep track of the theories, hypotheses and findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Review Matrix Template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author/ Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/assignments/literaturereview/organization
Part 2: Searching the Economics Literature
Step 1: Select a Database

- Library Home Page -> Research > Databases -> By Subject -> Economics
  - Econlit
- Note: depending on your topic, other Subjects may be relevant
  - Try SuperSearch for interdisciplinary topics
- Consult the Economics Research Guide for more suggestions
Step 2: Construct a Search Strategy

- Describe your topic in keywords - think about synonyms
- Is there a relevant Subject Descriptor or JEL Classification Code?
- Is there a Geographic Descriptor (country, region, or economic grouping)?
James A. Gibson Library
Economics Search Strategy Worksheet

1. State your topic in one or two sentences

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Identify the main concepts (keywords) from your topic statement

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
3. Brainstorm for synonyms for each concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.g.: Youth, Adolescent</td>
<td>E.g.: Work, Employment</td>
<td>E.g.: Temporary, Part-time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Connect keywords together using Boolean (logical) operators

   AND finds both terms    OR finds either term

e.g. (youth OR adolescent) AND (work OR employment) AND (temporary OR part-time)

5. Look for JEL Classification Terms and Codes using the JEL Classification
   Codes Guide online: http://www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php

   Term: ___________________________  Code: ___________________________

   Term: ___________________________  Code: ___________________________

L Lowry (2012)
Search Tips

1. **Use the Advanced Search screen**
   - Enter search terms (keywords) and select search fields from the drop down list.
   - Select a Field (optional) searches everywhere except the full text.

2. **Choose your search mode**
   - Boolean/Phrase is recommended

3. **Limit your results (optional)**
   - By publication type
   - By published date range

4. **Click Search**
Step 3: Run your search

☐ Review the results for relevancy

■ Too many hits? Limit your search by:
  ☐ adding additional search terms
  ☐ limiting by language, document type or publication date

■ Too few hits? Broaden your search by:
  ☐ looking for synonyms or spelling variants
  ☐ searching within full text articles (instead of subject headings & abstracts) if possible
Step 4: Locate the sources

- If the database includes only citations and abstracts...Use the **Get it!** (SFX) link to find the full text

- Or, for journals, use the **A-Z List of Journals** listed under Research on the Library Home Page
Pick a Search Demo!

OR

SuperSearch

Search for books, articles, and more!

Advanced Search
What is SuperSearch?
Part 3: Citing Your Sources using the AEA / Chicago Author-Date Style

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Journal article

Article in a print journal
In the text, list the specific page numbers consulted, if any. In the reference list entry, list the page range for the whole article.

(Weinstein 2009, 440)

Reference List Entry

Parenthetical (in-text) citation

For detailed instructions, see Chapter 15 of the Chicago Manual of Style Online (login if off-campus)
Part 4: Getting Help in the Library

General research help is available at the Ask Us Desk in the Learning Commons

- In **Person** – just drop in! Quick Questions Only
- By **Telephone** at: 905-688-5550 ext. 4583
- By **Chat** on the Library web site
Do You Have Any Questions?

☐ Please Contact Linda Lowry:
   - Email: llowry@brocku.ca
   - Telephone: (905) 688-5550 ext. 4650
   - Office location: Schmon Tower 1133

☐ Office hours are by appointment.

☐ Please use the booking software at: https://lindalowry.youcanbook.me/
References

