

Core 179 (Spring 2011): Researching a Current World Conflict

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Library website: [www.lib.uidaho.edu](http://www.lib.uidaho.edu)

### Recommended library sources and searching tips

To get background on your conflicts, try searching for books and encyclopedia sources.

- **Books:** Search UI Library Catalog. Search rather broadly at first.
- **Reference sources:** Try the reference pulldown of the “Find Articles – databases by subject” section (example: Oxford Reference Online and Blackwell Reference online). OR try the reference books on the first floor. Looking in a subject encyclopedia (use the index) may be useful. Some reference type books are shelved with the regular books. Search the catalog: encyclopedias your subject

### Finding Articles (all these databases are found under the “Find Articles” link on the library website)

1. **LexisNexis:** To find sources from outside of the U.S.,
  - Under “Search the news” click on “all news”
  - Click on “newspapers and wires” on the left
  - Check box (“select source”) for “Non-US newspapers and wires”
  - Change the pulldown about where to search for terms to “headline and lead”
  - Adjust dates searched
  - Fill in boxes with search terms.
2. **Columbia International Affairs Online:** A collection (mostly full text) of academic reports, case studies, government reports, NGO papers, articles. Also includes an excellent interactive atlas that links to information on the countries and their current outlook. Mostly written by U.S. or westerners, but very good at analyzing international affairs.
3. **Opposing Viewpoints:** Includes essays as well as magazine articles, reference sources, websites, transcripts and media. One caution: ONLY FOUR COMPUTERS CAN ACCESS IT AT ONE TIME.
4. **CQ Researcher:** Provides weekly reports on contemporary political, social and bioethical topics. Excellent for overviews.
5. **EbscoSearch:** can search a variety of magazines, journals and newspapers
6. **Polling the Nations:** a database of poll questions and results, clunky searching, use simple searches

### Selected relevant web sources

1. CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
2. US Dept of State Background Notes (extensive information on countries including history, government, economy, people and society, current situation, and travel recommendations) <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>
  - a. Other US Department of State country/area information: <http://www.state.gov/misc/list/index.htm>
  - b. US Dept. of State webpage (links to more information) <http://www.state.gov/>
3. UN News Centre: current information, press releases, updates <http://www.un.org/news/>
  - a. UN News Centre News Focus: areas/conflicts in the news with a variety of sources, current <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/>

4. Al Jazeera (Arabic news source, English version) <http://english.aljazeera.net/>
5. Project Censored: Focuses on underreported news, media bias <http://www.projectcensored.org/>  
They also have a nice page of links to independent news sources, some of which are non-US sources  
<http://www.projectcensored.org/censorship/news-sources/>
6. Altnet: Alternative news sources, generally liberal, opinion pieces <http://www.altnet.org/>

### Other tips

1. **Evaluating what you find**, the **CRAAP** test (especially for websites). You need to consider the quality and usefulness of every source and move on to others if one doesn't pass muster.
  - a. **Currency**: date created, okay for your topic?
  - b. **Relevance**: topic covered, level of treatment, length, audience,
  - c. **Authority**: Who created it, why should you believe them? What are their credentials? What magazine/journal/publication/book is this in and does that indicate anything about the quality? What organization is behind it? Domain (for websites)?
  - d. **Accuracy**: Sources cited? Evidence presented? Backed up by other sources? Well written (grammar, language, spelling)? Appearance: professional?
  - e. **Purpose**: Why is this information available? What reason is the article/book/ website published? Look deeply for underlying purposes.
2. **Wikipedia**: don't use as a source, but sometimes as a starting place and as a way to find a few sources to start with. Always check history and discussion tabs carefully to get a sense of quality, issues and editing (including vandalism).
3. **Get/save** any sources that might be useful (check out books, email articles or website addresses) right away. You don't want to have to look for them again. You can always get rid of them later.
4. **Persist!** Don't give up! **Ask for HELP!** But don't waste your time by not asking for help.