

Marketing Research

HIGHLIGHTED RESOURCES

MINTEL REPORTS

Provides full text reports on consumer attitudes, lifestyles, and trends. Tracks product innovation in relation to select companies. Lists advertising agencies.

BUSINESS SOURCE PREMIER

Helps you find published articles on business and management topics from trade news, scholarly research and case studies. Full text content includes company profiles and industry reports.

PSYCHINFO

Helps you find published articles on topics related to human psychology including behavior and cognition, training and development, family and consumer sciences.

COMMUNICATION AND MASS MEDIA COMPLETE

Helps you find published articles on topics related to issues in communication, mass media and related fields. Contains some full text.

FILM & TELEVISION LITERATURE INDEX

Helps you find published articles on topics related to film and television including reviews, scholarly and critical essays, and popular interest. Contains some full text.

The highlighted resources in the grey box to the left describes some secondary sources for marketing research that are available through NCSU Libraries. The reverse side of this guide provides an overview of different levels of marketing information, examples of secondary sources that cover those levels, and what you can expect to find in each.

Strategy before Search

Even a simple strategy can help you avoid common pitfalls in the research process.

A common pitfall I see in business research is that people start searching without any particular strategy beyond typing some words into a search box online. If the only 'strategy' to your searching is to "google like crazy", it is very easy to get dizzy linking from one source to another. Or you may find something useful online but not get access to the full text because the price tag is too high and you fail to consider the full range of options available to you, including the library. Also, when people don't bother to think about strategy, they tend to forget about keeping track of where they have looked and how. This lack of strategy leads to frustration and anger or hopelessness. So take a moment to come up with a strategy, even a very simple one before you go online. And if you don't have one, you can try using mine, which you can adapt and modify through out your searching process.

Start by thinking about the different "levels of information" you will need. More than likely you will start your exploration or search with some kind of specific product (usually of particular brand, make or model) – let's take for example, the Palm Pre. But marketing research includes more than product information. It means thinking more broadly in terms of product type or category (in this case, "cell phones", "mobile devices" or "smart phones", etc.), the companies that create these types of products (Palm, Inc, Apple, RIM, etc.) and the broader industry in which those companies operate (might include parts manufacturers or the telecommunications carriers or service providers like Sprint-Nextel, Verizon, AT&T, etc.). What becomes obvious is that any particular product exists within a broader context of production, and the information at each of those levels will be somewhat different, though there will be some overlap. In addition to the production side of the equation, there is the consumption side. This side refers to information on consumers that the product must appeal to. Consumer information can be found in research studies on how people think and behave like the psychology literature. Individual consumers might also be grouped into larger segments that share similar characteristics such as life stage, geo-demographics, socio-economic backgrounds, etc. And in turn, those segments exist in the context of the larger population.

Thinking about these levels of information is useful because different resources cover them in slightly different ways. Many business resources offer some combination of these levels but usually they tend to be really good for only one or two of them. Another trick to help keep your sanity is to keep track of new and useful terminology and sources you come across - any good researcher knows that one piece of useful information often leads to more. And if you get stumped go ask someone. In business research the 'right answer' is often something that can only be established in hindsight. Try instead to focus on being thorough and covering as much relevant ground in an efficient way - and that means consulting people who know about information and research, like a business librarian.

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Spectrum of Secondary Info Sources

	The kind of information you need:	Examples of secondary sources to match your need:	What you can expect to find:
Broad ↑	Industry	Economic Census, IBISWorld , Business Source Premier, S&P's NetAdvantage	Reports that offer narrative overviews of various industries and key statistics. These are usually organized by industry code systems like NAICS, SIC, or broad categories (e.g. 33422 - Communication Equipment Manufacturing in the US).
	Company	Business Source Premier , Lexis Nexis Academic (Company Dossier), Reference USA (U.S. Companies – includes local branches)	Narrative profiles of specific companies (e.g. Palm, Inc., or Sprint-Nextel), and usually includes a business description, listing of major products or services, competitors, financials, etc. The profiles often link out to relevant news articles and vice-versa.
	Product category	Business Source Premier , Mintel	Reports and articles relating to categories of products that might discuss leading brands or trends (e.g. "smart phones" or "mobile devices").
Specific ↓	Product or Service: (brand, trademark, model, etc.)	News articles in Business Source Premier , Lexis Nexis Academic , Google News	Product reviews in trade magazines and industry news sources. Though brief in content, they often lead to other sources and provide possible keywords for expanding your search.
	Consumer	Mintel , PsychInfo , PsychArticles , Business Source Premier , Film&Television Index, Communications and Mass Media Index	Reports and research articles on related topics like consumer behavior (e.g. attitudes and motivations for purchasing particular products) and marketing strategies (e.g. strategies for marketing mobile devices to the youth market).
	Segments	SimplyMap , Mintel , ESRI's Tapestry Segmentation, Claritas' Prizm: My Best Segments	Descriptions of consumer segments in terms of life-stage, lifestyle, income levels and geographic location. Some sources provide access to demographic, business and consumer data and the tools to map them or create custom reports.
Broad ↓	Population	Population Census (American Fact Finder), Bureau of Labor Statistics	Demographic and economic statistics and data for different levels of geographies (e.g. zip code, county, city, state, etc.)

* Sources in **bold** indicate preferred starting places