

*'Let's get on with it'*



## What is a LITERATURE REVIEW?

### Literature

All the published texts (scholarly articles, books, newspapers) on a given topic.

### Review

To examine something critically to determine its worthiness for a purpose.

thus. . .

A literature review surveys scholarly articles, books and other material relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, providing a description, summary, and critical evaluation of each work.

Literature that can be reviewed includes books, journal articles, Internet (electronic journals), newspapers, magazines, theses and dissertations, conference proceedings, reports and documentaries, government papers, and other published texts.

### What does a literature review do?

It:

- 01 conveys to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses might be.

- 02 critically analyses the literature that already exists in the area you are researching. It looks for relationships between different works and a solid foundation (or justification) for your own research.
- 03 synthesizes results into a summary of what is and what is not known. It identifies any gaps in the literature that your research can fill.
- 04 identifies areas of controversy in the literature and demonstrates the relevance of the works to your research.

### How do you conduct a literature review?

The first step towards a good literature review is a comprehensive literature search.

- 01 Use the specific problem or topic of your research as your guide.
- 02 Identify and select sources of information for your literature review, e.g., the library, the Internet, data bases, etc.
- 03 Make sure you are getting a good range of the available literature in your area of research.

The next stage is the literature review itself.

- 04 Read, interpret and evaluate selected material.
- 05 Note down opinions and supportive arguments from each selected work.
- 06 Examine these opinions and their implications for internal contradictions.
- 07 Evaluate opposing opinions of authors according to their popularity and validity.

While reviewing texts (books, etc), what should you keep in mind?

- how the books/texts contribute to your understanding of the problem under study and what their strengths and limitations are
- how the texts relate to your specific research topic or question
- the effectiveness of the research methodologies/designs used by the authors

- the relationship between the theories and the focus of your research
- how accurate and valid the measurements are

## Literature Review Structure

### Introduction

- 01** Define or identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern. This provides an appropriate context for reviewing the literature.
- 02** Point out overall trends in what has been published about the topic; or conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence, and conclusions; or gaps in research and scholarship; or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest.
- 03** Establish your reason (point of view) for reviewing the literature. Explain the criteria to be used in analyzing and comparing literature and the organization of the review (sequence). State why certain literature is or is not included (scope).

### Body

- Group your literature according to what they have in common, for instance, according to the same conclusions of authors, or the same methodological approaches, etc.
- Summarize relevant individual studies or articles, then analyse and interpret their findings and conclusions.
- Analyse and evaluate procedures, relationships, methodology and results.
- Discuss contradictions/opposing views.
- Provide your conclusions saying which pieces are best considering their argument; are most convincing of their opinions; and make the greatest contribution to the understanding and development of your area of research.

### Conclusion

- Summarize major contributions of significant studies and articles to the body of knowledge under review. Use your introduction to guide you.
- Avoid new material.



For further information see the **Reporting Verbs Study Guide**

## Language Focus

The verb tense chosen depends on your emphasis.

- When citing a specific author's findings, use the past tense: (found, showed).
- When writing about an accepted fact, use the present tense: (finds, shows).
- When citing several authors or making a general statement, use the present perfect tense: (have shown, have found).
- Create a balance between direct quotation (citation) and paraphrasing. Avoid too much direct quotations.

## References



For further information see the **Using References Study Guide**

This lists all publications either cited or referred to in your Literature Review. Use the referencing system recommended by your School.

## Sample Literature Review

### The Impact Of The Chat: A brief Literature Review

by Vicky, Chau Ka Ki

#### INTRODUCTION

Identifica-  
tion and  
definition  
of the  
topic

Overall  
trends

Reason for  
review

Internet communication is getting more and more popular among the public. Apart from using telephones or automobiles and sending mail, people can now communicate with each other through The Chat technology. The Chat, in fact, is a kind of Internet technology that supports human-to-human communication. ICQ, for instance, is one of the latest Chat. Over the past two years, with the advanced level of technology, there is an increasing trend of using ICQ for communication. With ICQ, users can chat, send messages, files and URL's or play games with other users in real time. Because of the proliferation of using The Chat like ICQ, studies have been focused mainly on its impact on our society.

BODY

Summary/ analyses of Literature with common views: good impact of The Chat

Much of the work stresses the good impact of The Chat. Hauben's (1997) writing suggests that as the impact or influence of first impressions is removed, users are free to communicate without fears, limits or apprehension through The Chat. This statement actually points out the main reason for the increasing use of The Chat. Only one advantage, however, seems inadequate to attract such a huge number of users to use The Chat, so it seems that there may be other benefits. Accordingly, Licklider (1997) claims that people can communicate online with others who have similar goals and interests, thus their lives will be enriched and communication will be more productive and more enjoyable. Although Licklider is actually the prophet of the Net, it seems that The Chat really has this benefit.

Summary/ analyses of opposing views: negative impact

Reason

Some studies, however, have taken a different approach by looking not so much at the advantages of The Chat, but focusing more on its related problems. Randall (1997), for instance, mentions that problems have actually been in existence. First of all, there is no doubt that The Chat users will not use their real identities for communication. They will rather create new cyberspace identities which are very different from their real ones. Because of this, Randall argues that such behavior makes it difficult for people to switch back and forth between these two identities. To him, those who have developed multiple cyberspace identities for Internet communication are the most sophisticated rhetoricians on the Internet. In fact, Randall questions whether it is credible to create a new identity when communicating through The Chat.

In Randall's viewpoint, on the other hand, the purpose for which people use The Chat is socializing. But he emphasizes that such kind of socializing is different from that in the real world, as the former only involves the exchange of words with other users but the latter means to interact with others face-to-face. While the trend of

Reason

using The Chat is increasing, Randall suggests that children and youths will be discouraged from the normal social contact but will adopt cyberspace contact instead. However, although the chances of this phenomenon happening is quite high, it seems neither right nor wrong according to Randall.

Reason

While educators and students are expecting online education to take place, Randall has already shown concern about the consequences of using such a mode of education. In his point of view, the traditional teacher dominance of the classroom will be reduced, whether this type of education is workable or not, because of the poor financial situation of the government. It seems that unemployment will be a consequence in the near future.

Interpretation of findings

CONCLUSION

Summary and statement of most convincing arguments

To sum up, The Chat has a good impact on the society but problems exist at the same time. However, these problems are not serious. Therefore, even if these problems continue to exist, The Chat technology will still become central to our lives.

## References

- Randall. N (1997). Chapter 19: Future Communities: Socializing and Educating in the Internet's Future, *The soul of the Internet: net gods, netizens and the wiring of the world* (pp. 333-344). London: Computer Press.
- Randall. N (1997). Epilogue: The Soul of the Internet, *The soul of internet: net gods, netizens and the wiring of the world* (pp. 345-358). London: Computer Press.
- Hauben. M (1997). Chapter 1: The Net and Netizens: The Effect the Net Has on People's Lives, *Netizens* (3-34). Los Alamitos: Computer Society Press.
- Hauben. M (1997). Chapter2: The Evolution of Usenet: The Poor Man's ARPANET, *Netizens* (35-47). Los Alamitos: Computer Society Press.
- Hauben. M (1997). Chapter 6: Cybernetics, Time-sharing, Human-Computer Symbiosis and Online Communities: Creating a Supercommunity of Online Communities, *Netizens* (76-95). Los Alamitos: Computer Society Press.

# Literature Review Checklist

## 01 Introduction

*Does your introduction:*

- clearly define your topic?
- show you have a clear understanding of the major, relevant research to date?
- identify gaps in the existing literature to form your own research question?
- show you are building on existing work?
- identify the most prominent models and theories relevant to your work?

## 02 Main Body/Content

*Have you:*

- used mostly primary sources directly relevant to your research question?
- identified different viewpoints and approaches made to your topic area?
- discussed, analysed, interpreted and evaluated findings?
- structured your literature review around themes (and not source by source)?
- stated clear conclusions about previous research and the pros and cons of these in relation to your research question?
- used literature from reputable journals and web sources?
- explored any relevant methodologies within the literature which might apply to your work?

## 03 Conclusion

*Did you:*

- offer a summary of the main findings?
- identify areas for future research?

## 03 Language Check

*Please check that you have:*

- used impersonal and neutral language.
- written in a clear concise style.
- checked spelling, punctuation, grammar and paragraphs.
- acknowledged all sources of information through referencing.