"**10 Golden Rules for the Savvy Researcher and Information User**"

from "Master ADVANCED Digital Tools for Research" available on any AMAZON marketplace

GOLDEN RULES		WHY
	Before searching for information, I specify my research needs & goals	*Stating the research needs as clearly as possible helps all parts of the research process: from defining the strategy to information gathering, processing, and reporting. Experience shows that it pays off in the long run. Resist Googling and ChatGPTing right away.*
	I translate my research needs into key topics, questions & keywords	*Going from research needs to key topics and questions, then keywords, you can search for and process what you collect with a clear sense of direction. Less haphazard information collection, less frustration and wasted time, you know where you are going and are confident.*
	To get started, I focus on finding sources (people) rather than information.	*Thinking in terms of sources (i.e., who has the information I need) forces you to be actionable and think large. You also get a sense of how others have handled your topic and have names of sources you can possibly contact. You limit your search efforts to relevant aspects.*
	Organization is key; I act upstream to make it smooth downstream.	*In planning your research efforts early, you feel confident. It may not be easy to do at the early stage, because you may know little about your research topic. Nevertheless, do all you can to set early a reasonable plan of action with some deadlines. Not only does this help you to get started, but also to focus and keep track of what you do and still have to do.*
	I go for smart searching … always.	*Poor and biased data and information cannot lead to sound decisions. It is the researchers' responsibility to collect and use high-quality data and information. Smart searching is the way to go.*
	I don't let the machine tell me the information I should use.	*Quality research cannot be conducted with biased results. Researchers should strive for results that are as neutral and verified as possible. Controlling the information you search and consume should be your catchphrase.*

	At all times, I am critical and skeptical.	*Because the internet is filled with junk, because it stays a major resource for researchers, because of tracking and personalization of our online experience, because much is biased and manipulated, because search engines rely on different information sets and algorithms that rarely retrieve consistent results over users, time and place, because they are not transparent, because artificial intelligence techniques are becoming very powerful to create information, especially images that are so real…, for all these reasons, researchers need to educate themselves to find and promptly identify reliable information… until the same artificial intelligence develops the tools to detect manipulated data and information.*
	I don't stop at the first results. I diversify.	*Diversifying your resources (tools, sources, information) limits you from falling victim to biases, incoherencies, anomalies, and one-sided views. When confronted with a variety of results, the suspect or/and incoherent ones become more obvious. Diversifying information helps you to escape information disorders, to go beyond the zero-click results[i] and to avoid the "filter bubble"[ii]. While it usually means longer research time, it is the soundest way to ensure quality results with fact-checking.*
	I am an informed researcher.	*Because so much is of poor quality, because the field moves fast and not always in a transparent way, I need to stay tuned about the tools the market offers, and their respective pros and cons. Said differently, I can justify why I use one rather than another in most situations. This is the only way to consume high-quality data and information.*
	My researcher's suitcase is set.	*In this way, I can concentrate on finding the best information.*

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[i] *"Zero click searches are queries in search engines such as Google, Bing, or Yandex that do not send you to a third-party website from an organic search result. Around 50 percent of searches currently end without a click on an organic search result"* according to conductor.com, previously searchmetrics.com (2020). Last updated Dec 2020. Available at: Zero Click Searches - find the definition in the SEO Glossary | Searchmetrics [Viewed 22 December 2024]

[ii] We owe the term "filter bubble" to the internet activist, Eli Pariser (2011). The Oxford Dictionary of Social Media defines it as "*A phenomenon whereby the ideological perspectives of internet users are reinforced as a result of the selective algorithmic tailoring of search engine results to individual users (as reflected in recorded data such as search history, click data, and location)*". Available at: Filter bubble - Oxford Reference [Viewed 25 March 2025]