Online information literacy credit course for PhD students

Vilve Seiler,
University of Tartu Library, Estonia
University of Tartu

Founded in 1632

- 9 faculties and 4 colleges
- 70 bachelor’s, 80 master’s and 35 doctoral study programs
- 18,000 students (over 670 international students)
  More than 1 400 doctoral students

University of Tartu Library

- Founded in 1802
- Collections of 3.5 million physical items
- Access to 22,000 e-journals and 27,000 e-books
- 51,000 registered users
- 2.6 million virtual visits

http://www.utlib.ee/en/
Information literacy online courses

- “Basics of Information Literacy” for bachelor’s and master’s students
- “Information literacy or why Google is not enough” for gymnasium students
- “Introduction to information research” for PhD students
- Courses integrated info different subjects
Information literacy as a key competence in PhD programmes

- Information literacy as a transferable skill
- Information literacy as a university-wide elective subject
Defining the needs

- An e-mail inquiry
- Experience of subject librarians
- Experience of other libraries
- Situation at the university
Online course
Introduction to Information Research

• Elective course for all doctoral curricula
• 3 ECTS credit points, 9 weeks
• Since 2008, ca 80 graduates every year
• Target group: PhD students of all faculties
• Subject librarians as instructors
• Individual tutoring and feedback
Tere tulemast kursusele
Welcome to the course

NB! Kõigepealt valige kursuse keel, klõpsake Rühmad. Siis avanevad nädalate all juhendid ja materjalid.
NB! First choose the language of the course, click Groups. Then you will see the course instructions and materials.

Rühmad/Groups: click here to choose the language of the course
Syllabus
Teated, küsimused ja vastused /Announcements, questions and answers

This e-course will offer you knowledge and skills for professional information search and reference management. You will master general principles of information search and practice searches in different databases and search environments on the Internet.

For the beginning, read the course syllabus. On the homepage of the course, you will find learning materials, tasks and guidelines for each week. Some minor changes can be made in the course materials up to the beginning of the respective week.

We wish you good results with the course.
Teaching method

• Student-centred active learning
• Individual assignments – information search exercises on the topic of doctoral theses
• Analysis of fellow students’ exercises
• Individual feedback from subject librarians
• Discussion forums as a contribution to the learning community
Course assignments

1. Searching in EBSCO and/or CSA Illumina databases.
2. Exporting search results into Refworks and EndNote Web, choosing a reference manager for next assignments.
3. Searching in other subject databases and e-book databases, exporting the references.
4. Analysing of a fellow student’s 3rd exercise.
5. Searching in Thomson Reuters WOS and in Scopus, comparing the databases, exporting references.
6. Searching in research repositories and scholarly search engines, exporting references.
7. Analysing of a fellow student’s 6th exercise.
8. Reflecting on the learning process, presenting a bibliography in the chosen reference style.
Content analysis of students’ reflections

- Data derived from course reflections provided by graduates
- Qualitative content analysis as a method for data analysis and interpretation
- Qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti
Themes that emerged from the content analysis of the reflections

- Teaching method and assignments
- Course organisation and learning process
- Usefulness of new knowledge
- Previous knowledge of the learners
- Changes in attitudes and approaches
- Suggestions for further improvement of the course
Teaching method – students’ opinions

- I already had spent time in searching for literature in my field, but the **systematic approach** of this course, and getting familiar with new databases and reference management systems will surely make my further searches more effective.

- Without this course I would never have started to search in so many **different databases** and I would never have learned that there are databases where I can find materials from the year 1774 and others that contain articles published this year.

- Within this course I performed searches in various databases, using different search words and different methods. Such approach is very important in order to understand the logic of databases and the possibilities they offer.
Assignments – students’ opinions

Assignments

- Due to the exercises, I had to get thoroughly familiar with the advanced searches of different databases and, together with this, also to specify the actual content of my searches.

- I liked this course very much, especially the structure of exercises. Solving these problems gave me new knowledge, as well as skills and confidence.

Analysis of the works of fellow students

- An interesting nuance of the course was the opportunity to evaluate and analyse the works of fellow doctoral students. I believe that it was beneficial for both the analysers and those whose works were under examination.
The course and learning process – students’ opinions

The course

*The course has been built professionally. It gives basic knowledge to uninitiated and surely offers much to old hands as well.*

Useful learning materials

*Learning materials are compact and well explained.*

Getting feedback

*Patient tutoring, useful criticism, competent, motivating.*

Author: Kärt Miil
New knowledge and its advantages: practical search tips

Search tips

➢ More general **search tips are probably more important** than introductions to individual databases

More confidence

➢ Thanks to the course I can **more confidently and purposefully search** for articles and research publications and I do not limit myself to surfing among thousands of Google results any more.

Encouragement

➢ This course created the so-called **Wow!-effect** – things can be done this way and I want to try it out. I mean, I learned about limiting my searches and combining search words, exporting different records, etc.

Author: Kärt Miil
New knowledge and its advantages: reference managers

- For me, the **best surprises** were *RefWorks* and *EndNote Web* – I had never heard about such possibilities.

- I took much trouble with this assignment, downloading *Write-N-Cite III* and mastering it. I needed help in adjusting my computer, but **working with it later was truly enjoyable**.

- I was finally able to make sense of article and reference management. So far, I had felt that it was very difficult to get a good idea about ongoing processes in the world of science.

Author: Kärt Miil
New knowledge and its advantages: added value

Overcoming of a ‘writer’s block’

- I had just hit a wall when writing my article – I did not know where to look for source materials – and quite unexpectedly, this course gave me everything that I needed.
- During information search I was able to recapture my already disappearing motivation.

Joy in the search process

- I enjoy working with databases and I am pleased to see that I can find the articles that I need with little trouble and little amount of time. Earlier, I was more frustrated than motivated by article search. :D
Thank you!