

Your Name

JOUR 302: Infomania

Discussion Professor's Name

Due Date

## Research Brief 1: Searching for a Local Business and Individuals

Topic

Journalists and other communications professionals often need to find and cultivate sources associated with local businesses. In this assignment, you are expected to demonstrate that you can (1) find information about a local business and associated individuals using sophisticated search strategies, (2) describe and evaluate how you searched for and found this information, and (3) summarize the information you found.

When working through this assignment, imagine that you are completing the brief for a local reporter who will write or record a story about a local business and individuals associated with it. If you need to get in the right frame of mind, the episode [2680 Madison Road](#) of the podcast [StartUp](#) might help you get there.

### Step-by-Step Instructions for this Assignment

- Read the [Search More Effectively](#) chapter in the Be Credible textbook.
- Read the [Search and Re-Search](#) chapter in the Be Credible textbook.
- Read the [Google](#) chapter in the Be Credible textbook.
- Read the [Keep Detailed Research Notes](#) chapter in the Be Credible textbook.
  
- Identify a local business (e.g., store, restaurant, bar, apartment complex, gas station, etc.). Identify the address of this business.
- Using the strategies described in the [Search More Effectively](#) and [Search and Re-Search](#) chapters, search the web for information about this business.
- Use **at least three** different search operators described in [Search More Effectively](#).
- Make note of the names of individuals, and other pieces of information, that come up in your searches. Dig deeper by plugging those names and information into new searches.
- Stop searching when you feel like you have exhausted all leads.
  
- Using the strategies described in the [Keep Detailed Research Notes](#) chapter, take careful notes on all of the searches you perform and the results your searches generate. In your notes, include your thinking about why you conduct the searches you conduct.
- Use the information you found about the local business and associated individuals to complete Sections 1 and 2 of this document.

### Section 1: Search Strategies and Results

Use bullet points or numbers to **list all of the searches** you performed, and to **fully explain your thinking** behind each search.

As you describe each search:

- Identify the collection of sources you searched (e.g., Google), and the search term you typed into the search box.
- Briefly explain your thinking about why you used this collection and this search term. If your thinking is related to the results of a previous search, explain this connection.

- Briefly explain the results of each search, which results you pursued further, which you didn't, and why.

At the end of this section, write a **one-paragraph reflection** about all the searches you completed, and all the information you found. Evaluate the effectiveness of your search strategies and results. Support your evaluation with specific evidence from the list of searches and results. This is a critical thinking class. Show some critical thinking about what you did, why you did it, whether or not it worked, and what you learned in the process.

*Grading hints:*

- *In this assignment, your instructor is looking to see that you are using sophisticated search strategies. Show that you understand the strategies discussed in the textbook chapters identified at the beginning of these instructions.*
- *Show critical thinking as you reason through the search strategies you use and the results you get. Your goal is NOT for all your searches to hit the jackpot. Your goal is to show that you are a thoughtful and critical Google user.*

## **Section 2: Research Brief**

**Summarize** the most important and interesting information you found about your topic.

The summary should tell a story. Start with the most interesting details and save the less interesting stuff for later.

Your writing should be thorough but not excessively detailed.

**Attribute** all information to the appropriate sources in the summary. Use the phrase “according to” as much as you need to; do not worry about sounding redundant. **Embed links** to sources that are openly accessible on the Internet.

Remember that in journalism, paragraphs are short, usually no more than four sentences long. There is no limit on how many paragraphs you write.

## **How to Handle and Submit this Assignment**

- Save this document to your computer.
- At the top of this page, change “Your Name,” “Discussion Professor’s Name” and “Due Date.” The “Topic” is the name of the local business you are researching. Get rid of the yellow highlighting.
- Save the document periodically so you do not lose your work.
- As you complete the assignment, refer to the grading rubric on Blackboard to understand how the assignment will be graded.
- Delete all instruction sections of the document that are in blue (like this one). All text in the final document should be black.
- When finished, click on the appropriate assignment in Blackboard and upload this document using the “Attach File: Browse My Computer” button.
- Submit a Word file. **Don’t submit a PDF file. Don’t submit a Pages file.** If you use Pages, save your file as a Word document before uploading. If you upload a Pages document, your instructor will not be able to read or grade your assignment.

- Make sure that the assignment uploads completely. Your Internet connection and Blackboard can malfunction during the submission process. It is **your responsibility** that your assignment upload is successful.
- Go back and check that your assignment is submitted. Take a screenshot to document that your assignment was fully submitted before the deadline. Save the screenshot to your computer.

**BE CREDIBLE: do not fabricate or plagiarize. The consequences are not worth it.**