

Synthesizing Web Research

Bookmark and save Web sites with useful information. While conducting Internet research, bookmark sites as you go. At this point, do not worry about having too much information. Some useful free bookmarking sites include:

- Delicious (<http://delicious.com>*)
- Diigo (www.diigo.com*)
- Google Bookmarks (www.google.com/bookmarks*)

Narrow your research. Go back through your research and begin to narrow it down to the most relevant and important articles and Web sites. Try to collect a variety of research from primary and secondary sources, and remove resources with duplicate information.

Get organized. Print the research and articles you narrowed down, so you can write on them. Be sure to document your sources, including the Web addresses and image locations. Organize images by saving them with descriptive titles (such as, *Solar_energy_cell_diagram.jpg*) into folders with topical names (such as, *Solar Energy Images*).

Read through each article and highlight the main ideas. Highlight key ideas to focus on the targeted information needed for your topic. Consider writing three to five keywords at the top of each document to summarize the content.

Sort and group the research. Sort and group your research according to content, purpose, and data. You may find that you need to further sort a large pile of research with more refined categories.

Review and summarize the information. Go back through each group and review the research. Move any articles that no longer fit in the category. When you are finished, use sticky notes to label and summarize the information contained in each group.

Color-code written data. Further organize your project by color-coding the research according to topic and purpose. For example, background information on solar energy may be highlighted in one color, while data on solar energy cell production is highlighted in another color.

Create new charts and graphs with only the data you need. Filter out the data that will be most useful and relevant to your project, and then create your own chart or graph using this data.

Put it in your own words. After gathering and organizing your research, the next step is to put the content in your own words.

Restate and summarize. Without looking directly at the research articles, restate the key ideas you have learned. Write a summary of the research in your own words.

Synthesize data from different sources. Combine key ideas from various sources to increase your depth of knowledge and synthesize new information. Think about how all the research in one group fits together, and then write a summary in your own words.

Connect data with your own knowledge and experiences. Think about how the information you have learned connects to something you already knew. What experiences in your life are shaping the way you perceive and process this information? What personal knowledge do you bring that cannot be found on the Internet? Create sticky notes for your own experiences and prior knowledge, and then stick them to relevant articles.