Understand the differences between academic and workplace research

- In *academic research*, your goal is to find information that will help you answer a scholarly question.

- In *workplace research*, your goal is to find information to help you answer a practical question, usually one that involves the organization for which you work.
The research process consists of 12 steps:

- Analyze your audience.
- Analyze your purpose.
- Analyze your subject.
- Visualize the deliverable.
- Work out a schedule and a budget.
- Determine what information will need to be part of that deliverable.
The research process consists of 13 steps (cont.):

- Determine what information you still need to acquire.
- Create questions you need to answer in your deliverable.
- Conduct secondary research.
- Conduct primary research.
- Evaluate your information.
- Do more research.
Choose appropriate research methods

- What types of research media might you use?
- What types of research tools might you use?
- What types of primary research might you conduct?
Follow three guidelines for researching a topic:

- Be persistent.
- Record your data carefully.
- Triangulate your research methods.
There are six types of information media:

- print
- online databases
- Web sites
- online discussion groups
- Web 2.0 resources
- personal publications
Understand these three kinds of Web 2.0 resources:

• tagged content
• social-bookmarking sites
• RSS feeds
There are five basic research tools:

- online catalogs
- reference works
- periodical indexes
- newspaper indexes
- abstract services
Look for information that is:

- accurate
- unbiased
- comprehensive
- appropriately technical
- current
- clear
In evaluating print and online sources, examine these five factors:

- authorship
- publishing body
- knowledge of the literature
- accuracy and verifiability of the information
- timeliness
There are seven techniques of primary research:

- observations and demos
- inspections
- experiments
- field research
- interviews
- inquiry letters or e-mails
- questionnaires
Conducting an experiment consists of four phases:

- establishing a hypothesis
- testing the hypothesis
- analyzing the data
- reporting the data
Field research is vulnerable to two common problems:

- the effect of the experiment on the behavior you are studying
- bias in the recording and analysis of the data
Consider three factors in choosing a person to interview:

- What questions do you want to answer?
- Who could provide the information you need?
- Is the person willing to be interviewed?
Prepare for the interview

• Do your homework.
• Prepare good questions.
• Check your equipment.
Begin the interview

• Arrive on time.
• Thank the respondent.
• State the subject and purpose of the interview.
• Ask permission to tape the interview.
Conduct the interview

- Take notes.
- Start with prepared questions.
- Be prepared to ask follow-up questions.
- Be prepared to get the interview back on track.
Conclude the interview

- Thank the respondent.
- Ask for a follow-up interview.
- Ask for permission to quote the respondent.
After the interview, do two tasks:

- Write down the important information while the interview is fresh in your mind.
- Send a brief thank-you note.
Using questionnaires effectively calls for four steps:

• Asking effective questions.
• Testing the questionnaire.
• Administering the questionnaire.
• Presenting questionnaire data in your document.
Questionnaires are vulnerable to three problems:

• Some of the questions will misfire.
• You won’t obtain as many responses as you want.
• You cannot be sure the respondents are representative.
Understand the six common types of questions:

- multiple choice
- Likert scale
- semantic differentials
- ranking
- short answer
- short essay