Finding Reports and Non-Financial Information on Companies

You need to research a company for your coursework. You’ve probably tried googling for your company, adding in extra words for your topic, and you’ve probably found a few useful bits and pieces online.

But... the information that you can find through general internet search engines alone is limited. It’s limited because company information is worth money, and there are lots of companies out there that exist to find, research and make money out of that information.

Google and other search engines only cover the surface of the internet – locked away behind paywalls and subscription databases is where the really good stuff is. By searching only the surface of the internet, you’re missing out on a huge amount of valuable information. The good news is that Cass Library Services provides a wide selection of these valuable subscription databases. You can also use books to research your topic, but remember that books can be very broad-based and don’t contain the most recent information. Find them using CityLibrarySearch – see below.

Here’s an overview of where you should be looking when you research your company and topic. We’re going to use the example of researching BP and their change management after the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

Choosing your search terms

Think carefully about what words to search for, and include variations and synonyms. For instance, since Deepwater Horizon, BP has been referred to in the US media by its old name, British Petroleum. There are also different names for the disaster, and the business concepts you’re interested in. Ensure you’ve search terms covered before you start by writing them all down:

- BP, British Petroleum, BP Oil
- Deepwater Horizon Disaster, Deepwater Horizon Explosion, Deepwater Oil Spill, Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill, Gulf of Mexico Disaster, BP Oil Spill, Macondo Prospect Spill...
- Change management, managing change, organizational change, planning for change...

Search Tips

Different databases work in different ways – there’s always a “Help” button, though, usually in the top right-hand corner of the screen, which will take you through the best ways to search that database.

You may need to search the same database with several different words and phrases to get at the best articles. Write down which search terms you’ve used as you’re going along to help you keep track, and add new ones in as you find them in your reading.

There’s more great advanced search tips on the City University London Upgrade site:
http://libguides.city.ac.uk/upgrade-advancedsearching
Where to look

We’ve got an extensive range of databases available online through the Library. To log into these databases, use your IT username and password when requested. The Cass Business School Subject Guides detail all of them - http://libguides.city.ac.uk/cassbusinessschool.

Here’s an overview of the best places to look for this topic:

1) CityLibrarySearch: http://www.city.ac.uk/library

Our new discovery tool is a one-stop-shop that will help you find journal and newspaper articles, books, reports and other information from across most of our databases. It’s a great place to start looking – try general keywords here:

Then use the options on the left-hand side to refine what you’re looking for:
2) **Company Information resources**

Use our subscription databases to get high-quality company information. Search for the name of the resource in CityLibrarySearch, then log in using your IT username and password.

**Business Source Complete**: this is a great general database for articles, market research and reports. It’s got a specific Company Information section - just click on ‘Company Information’ at the top of the screen to find reports about your company.

**Factiva**: also a general database for business – go straight to the Company Information section by hovering your mouse over ‘Companies/Markets’ at the top of your screen, and choose either ‘Company’ or ‘Industry’ to get general reports rather than figures.

**ProQuest Business Collection**: click on ‘Data and Reports’ to find the searchbox for the Company Information section.

There’s a full list of Company Information Resources available with more explanation of the kind of information you could look for: [http://libguides.city.ac.uk/businessstudiescompanyinformation](http://libguides.city.ac.uk/businessstudiescompanyinformation).

3) **Journal articles and Trade Magazines**

**Journals** are an academic magazine where your lecturers and their colleagues around the world publish their research for each other to read. **Articles** undergo Peer Review – other academics read it, comment on it, and can request changes to make it better before it goes into the journal. So articles in journals are well-researched, evidenced, and considered to be good quality information.

You can find journal articles in the databases above – just use the search function – and by searching CityLibrarySearch and selecting ‘Journal Article’ from the Content Type box on the left.

**Trade Magazines** can be found in the same way – just pick ‘Magazine Article’ instead. They are industry-focused publications that aren’t peer-reviewed and are often written by specialist journalists. Their information can be really useful for professionals and for students interested in particular companies, and will take a more industry-focused look at issues.
4) **Newspaper articles**

You can often find newspaper articles by searching individual newspapers’ websites. However, this takes time, and means that you miss out on subscription-only papers like the Financial Times. We’ve got two great newspaper article databases that allow you to search the content of all the papers at once:

**Nexis**: Newspaper database for the UK and internationally. It also includes trade magazines, corporate profiles, financial analyst reports, company financial reports and an extensive collection of biographical profiles and directors’ listing.

**Factiva**: Covers over 30,000 sources (mainly newspapers and journals) from 200 countries.

**FT.com**: Library Services have arranged for you to have your own subscription to FT.com, the Financial Times' website, including apps for phones and tablets, up-to-date news and information, and all the FT's articles. Put FT.com into CityLibrarySearch for the registration link and instructions.

5) **Corporate websites**

Most companies have two websites: one for the public and general customers, and a corporate one for shareholders and other companies. Often there might be more – for instance, BP has:


6) **Government websites**

If you’re looking at change that happened as a result of legal action or a disaster, there’s bound to be a government website about it. Try searching the internet for the name of incident or company, and the relevant government. For instance, “US Government Gulf of Mexico” finds [http://www.restorethegulf.gov/](http://www.restorethegulf.gov/), the official US Government page about their restoration attempts.

Government websites will have specific domain suffixes – in the US, it’s .gov, and in the UK, it’s .gov.uk. Paying attention to the suffix will help you make sure you’re looking at a proper government website.

**Referencing and citation:**

Once you’ve found all this information you’ll need to cite it properly. See our online guide here: [http://libguides.city.ac.uk/business/referencing](http://libguides.city.ac.uk/business/referencing)