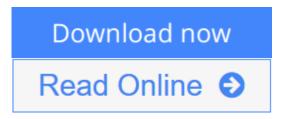


Digital Paper: A Manual for Research and **Writing with Library and Internet Materials** (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and **Publishing**)

By Andrew Abbott



Digital Paper: A Manual for Research and Writing with Library and Internet Materials (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing) By Andrew Abbott

Today's researchers have access to more information than ever before. Yet the new material is both overwhelming in quantity and variable in quality. How can scholars survive these twin problems and produce groundbreaking research using the physical and electronic resources available in the modern university research library? In Digital Paper, Andrew Abbott provides some much-needed answers to that question.

Abbott tells what every senior researcher knows: that research is not a mechanical, linear process, but a thoughtful and adventurous journey through a nonlinear world. He breaks library research down into seven basic and simultaneous tasks: design, search, scanning/browsing, reading, analyzing, filing, and writing. He moves the reader through the phases of research, from confusion to organization, from vague idea to polished result. He teaches how to evaluate data and prior research; how to follow a trail to elusive treasures; how to organize a project; when to start over; when to ask for help. He shows how an understanding of scholarly values, a commitment to hard work, and the flexibility to change direction combine to enable the researcher to turn a daunting mass of found material into an effective paper or thesis.

More than a mere how-to manual, Abbott's guidebook helps teach good habits for acquiring knowledge, the foundation of knowledge worth knowing. Those looking for ten easy steps to a perfect paper may want to look elsewhere. But serious scholars, who want their work to stand the test of time, will appreciate Abbott's unique, forthright approach and relish every page of *Digital Paper*.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The work of a master researcher who recalls in illuminating detail how he and his students over the last thirty years went about solving a large number of empirical and theoretical research problems. He systematizes these memories into usable advice and lays out a multistage plan for successful scholarship that meets very rigorous demands. Without a hint of trendiness, this manual will reliably guide novice scholars into a new world of materials for study and will help their mentors keep up as well. An indispensable guide for serious humanistic study in the future."

(Alan Sica, editor, Contemporary Sociology)

"With illuminating examples from social science and humanities research, and with self-deprecating humor, Abbott develops an economic model describing tradeoffs between searching and reading. . . . Essential." (*Choice*)

"There is justified concern today about information overload, poor writing skills, and the decline of library research in the digital age. We are fortunate that Andrew Abbott comes to the rescue with a manual for writing a research paper using the tools of the modern library. Avoiding hype and cutting to the essential qualities of good research design, he shows the reader how to harness new technology while upholding the highest standards of research. The result is a joy to read and will be a boon for students. Even veterans of the trade will find much to like."

(Robert J. Sampson, professor of the social sciences at Harvard University and author of Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect)

"I can honestly say that every student, professor, and intellectual needs to read [*Digital Paper*]. It's a superb 'how to' guide about writing a long research paper or thesis. But it's more than that. It's an entire theory of how scholars pursue scholarship. It's a memoir of Abbott's own research. It's a pessimistic and slightly misanthropic ode to a quiet world of well-ordered card catalogs destroyed by the garish vulgarity of online databases. It's an epigrammatic summary of a career's worth of knowledge. It is—yes, I really mean this—life-affirming."

(Alex Golub, Savage Minds)

About the Author

Andrew Abbott is the Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago. He edits the *American Journal of Sociology* and his books include *The System of Professions*, *Department and Discipline*, *Chaos of Disciplines*, and *Time Matters*, all published by the University of Chicago Press.

Users Review

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