

## STEPS TO SURVEY A LIBRARY COLLECTION

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A first step in topic formation is to survey the resources available to you. This worksheet can help you determine if your proposed topic is either too broad, too narrow, or if the amount of information available to you through available resources is insufficient.

Using the online catalog and 2 online periodical databases, answer the questions below.

- Use the **Question Analysis Worksheet** to help you devise search terms.
- Ask for assistance at the Reference Desk to complete the **Online Search Worksheet** and to choose the best databases for your topic.

**TOPIC:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. **How many titles are listed about the topic in the online catalog?**
2. **Is the topic broken down into subheadings in the catalog? List any subheadings here.**
3. **How many articles are listed about the topic in database 1? (write the name of the database). In database 2? (write the name of the database).**
4. **Is the topic broken down into subheadings in the databases? List any subheadings that you find, and write down the name of the database in which they are found.**
5. **Is the topic part of a broader subject heading in the databases? List any broader subject headings, and write the name of the database in which they are found.**

*Adapted from:*

Kuhlthau, Carol Collier *Teaching the Library Research Process*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Metuchen, NJ, Scarecrow Press. 1994.