

Business Research Tips is a monthly email with practical ideas for managing business information and research.

Day trippers, harvesters and miners

Are you a day tripper, harvester or a miner when searching for information?

Day trippers are looking for a snapshot or overview of a topic. Harvesters gather and store good quality, relevant material. Miners go well beyond the surface and are prepared to search for hard to find gems of information.

The approach to take depends on what information you need to find, and the importance of the information.

Day trippers

The ease of searching and finding some information from a quick Google search encourages searching for information like a day tripper. There are countless information sources on the internet that package their information to cater for day trippers – one stop sources for a brief overview, like you receive from a tour guide.

The collaboratively written encyclopaedia, [Wikipedia](#), has increasingly become the de facto source for day trippers. It's a fun and handy source of information, but not a source to rely on for business critical research.

Harvesters

Harvesters constantly gather new information from their crop of sources that they know and trust, and discard information that is dubious.

To become a good harvester, it is important to set up processes and tools for gathering and storing information. This can range from a well organised list of favourite web sites, to utilising online reference tools for storing and finding articles and web sources. (See Business Research Tips, July 2007 [Beyond Bookmarking](#) for some suggested sites).

Miners

Good researchers are miners. They look beyond the overview, to uncover information that will help to answer a query. Many information sources used by miners will not be uncovered using Google or Yahoo searches, as the information isn't in the public domain or comes from deep web or subscription based sources that are missed by search engines.

Upcoming speaking engagement, Pittsburgh, PA

In May, Heather will be presenting at the Association of Independent Information Professionals Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her presentation is on "building an independent information professional business".

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