

Computer as Research Tool

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1. Becoming aware of the tools available to researchers on a computer and their benefits at the beginning of the research process can save an enormous amount of time and energy, as a large amount of time is spent handling text, data, and information.
2. This session will introduce you to a number of tools that support the research process.

A Researcher can benefit with activities such as:

- ▶ writing,
- ▶ literature searching,
- ▶ information management,
- ▶ idea management and data analysis will be explored, and
- ▶ one or two pieces of useful software which are readily available will be identified and demonstrated.
- ▶ A handout will be provided with these tools listed along with online resources that will enable the participant to evaluate the need for these tools for themselves.

Computers are used many ways in research:

1. To gather **primary research data**, that is to conduct experiment/surveys, polls, gather usage statistics, etc. For example, a counter of users on a web page or a poll of opinions
2. To gather **secondary data** from scholarly journal articles, data published by government offices, stock prices, businesses annual reports,
3. To store data, for example, a database of experiment results,
4. To analyze data: To create charts, sort data, and other ways of analyzing it, for example, to create a pie chart of how much is spent on each type of class

Computers are used many ways in research ...

1. To write up reports and summarize findings
2. To communicate between researchers (email, IM, etc)
3. Using tools like MS word, Excel, Power point (for text editing, tabular calculations and table handling, presentations).