CSC: CoR: Chapter 5: From Problems to Sources

The 10 salient sentence strings presented below are lifted from the chapter as is, without modification (except, perhaps, for a bit of punctuation here or there). They are presented in order of appearance in the chapter.

Ten Salient Sentence Strings

1. But if you have a deadline, you need more than luck to find good sources in time: you have to search systematically for those sources that will help you advance your research project or, just as usefully, challenge you to improve it.
2. Primary sources are "original" materials that provide you with the "raw data" or evidence you will use to develop, test, and ultimately justify your hypothesis or claim.
3. Secondary sources are books, articles, or reports that are based on primary sources and are intended for scholarly or professional audiences.
4. Tertiary Sources, these are books and articles that synthesize and report on secondary sources for general readers, such as textbooks, articles in encyclopedias (including *Wikipedia*), and articles in mass circulation publications like *Psychology Today.* In the early stages of research, you can use tertiary sources to get a feel for a topic. But if you are making a scholarly argument, you should rely on secondary sources, because these make up the "conversation" in which you are seeking to participate.
5. It is important to understand that the classification of primary, secondary, and tertiary are not absolute but relative to a researchers project.
6. Remember that these classifications are just means to an end. The important thing, ultimately, is not what you *call* your sources but how well you *use* them to address your research problems, develop new ideas, and make interesting arguments
7. Libraries not only let us access information but also ensures that our sources are reliable. Even if your public or academic library is comparatively small, it can serve as a *portal* to a much broader range of resources – research guides, reference works, and online databases – that extends the library's reach.
8. A more successful strategy is to allow reference works to shape your search efforts. Compiled by experts, both general reference works such as *Encyclopedia of Britanncia* and more specialized work such as the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* will give you the lay of the land, so that later it will be easier to see how your sources fit within the bigger picture.
9. There is no one to vouch for the credibility of materials posted to, and sent from, countless websites. And finally, keep in mind that companies offering free search engines make their money by acquiring data about you through your online behavior and by selling advertising, and the webmasters routinely modify their sites to make them appear higher in search results.
10. One of the paradoxes of twenty-first-century research is that even as new technologies allow us to access an unprecedent wealth of materials with unprecedented ease, research has also become more personal. So as you undertake your project, don't forget about the human element.