

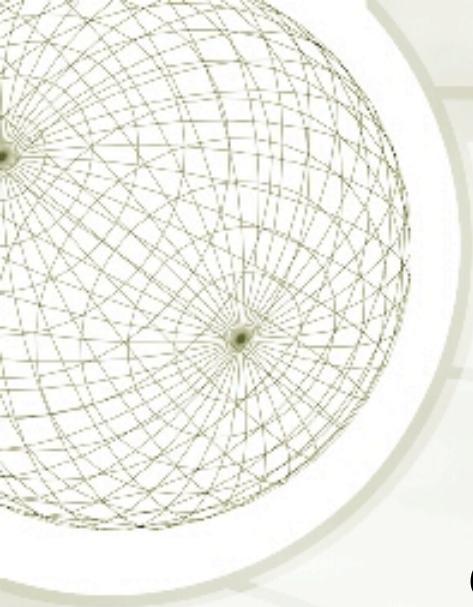
Graduate Research Seminar

IUM, September 2006



Outline

- ★ Planning.
- ★ Execution:
 - ✦ Databases.
 - ✦ Getting the best out of the internet.
- ★ Write-up:
 - ✦ Citation.
 - ✦ Bibliographies.



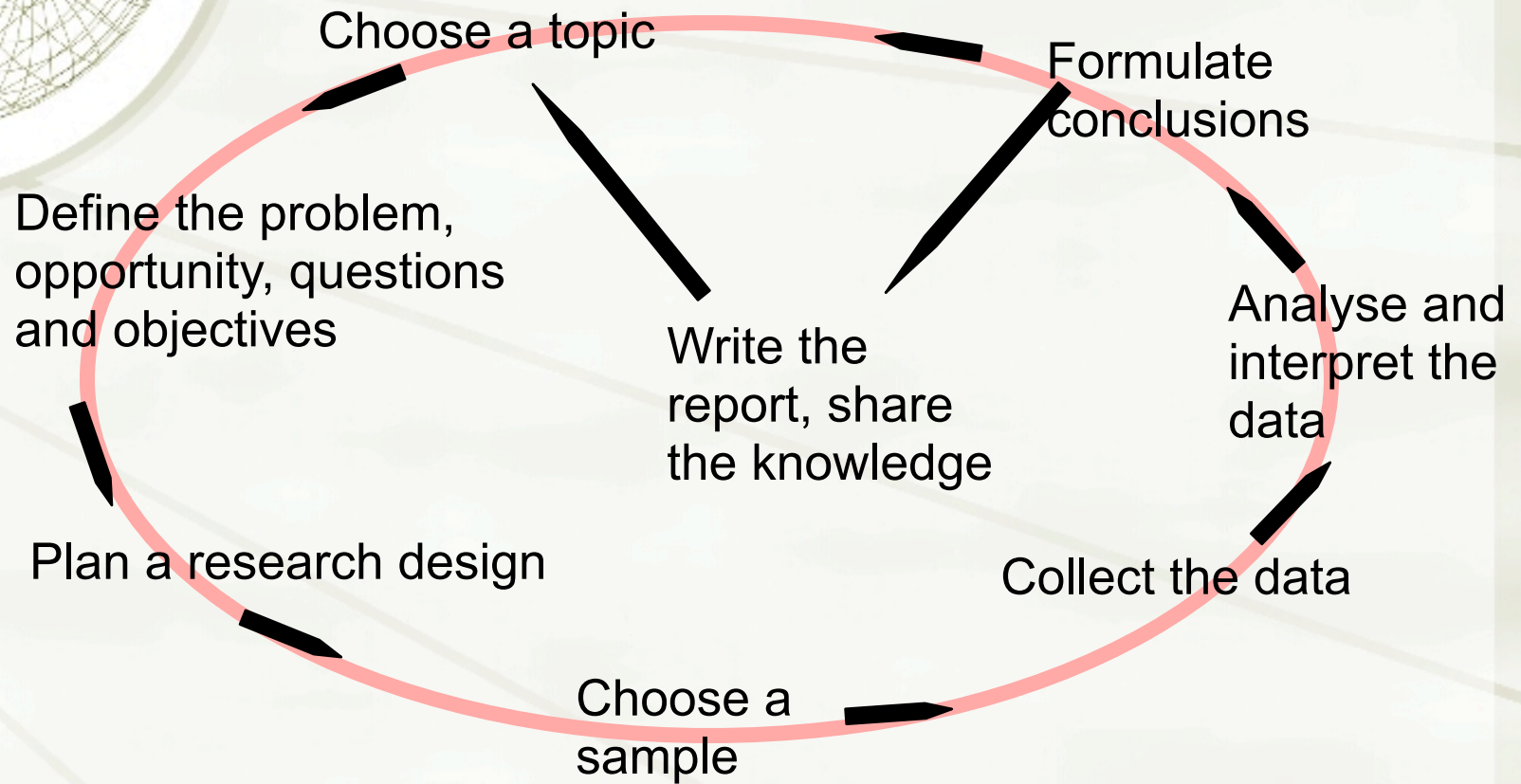
Session 1: Planning



What is research?

- ★ A process of “finding out”, enquiry, investigation.
 - ✦ Starts with a question.
- ★ Systematic and methodical.
 - ✦ Follows a plan.
- ★ Increases knowledge.
 - ✦ Personal and social.

The research process





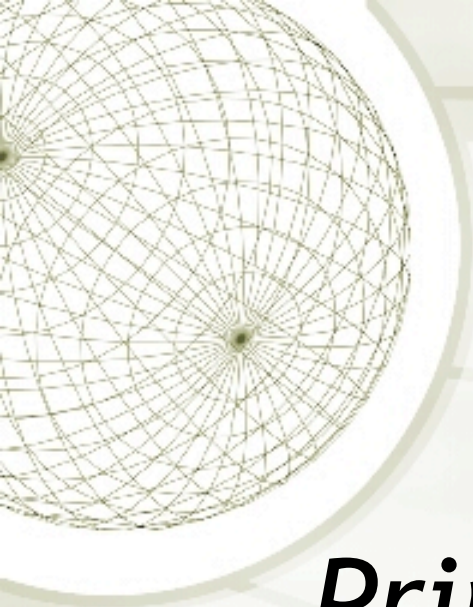
Defining the problem

- ★ Alice: Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?
- ★ Cat: That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.
- ★ Alice: I don't much care where...
- ★ Cat: Then it doesn't matter which way you go.



Spend time planning

- ★ Definition.
- ★ Scope.
- ★ Outcomes.
- ★ Housekeeping.
- ★ Plan the primary research design, or the sources to be searched
- ★ Execution.



Primary Research Design




Research design

- ★ A framework for the collection and analysis of data.
- ★ Ask “how important is it to:
 - ✦ Express causal connections between variables?
 - ✦ Generalize to larger groups than those being investigated?
 - ✦ Understand behaviour and its meaning in a specific social context?
 - ✦ Have an appreciation of phenomena over time?”




Bias and noise

- ★ All research has some error in it.
 - ✦ Even yours.
- ★ Some errors are systematic:
 - ✦ Always in the same direction.
 - ✦ The result of a specific source.
 - ✦ Bias.
- ★ Some errors are random.
 - ✦ Noise.



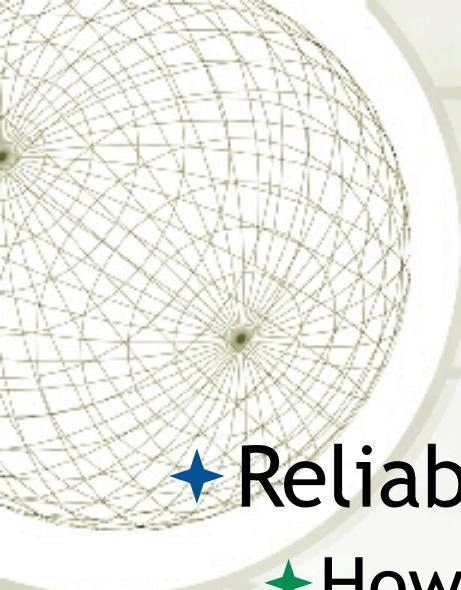
Major sources of bias within the research

- ★ Researchers.
- ★ Participants.
- ★ Research designs.



Major sources of noise within the research

- ★ Differences among people.
 - ✦ Health, education, personality, etc.
- ★ Fuzzy criteria.
 - ✦ Non-standardisation of procedures.
- ★ The “mixing” process.
 - ✦ How much bias has been replaced by noise.



Criteria for evaluating research

- ★ Reliability:

- ★ How much “noise” is there?

- ★ Replication

- ★ Validity

- ★ How much bias is there?



Choosing a design

- ★ Quantitative:

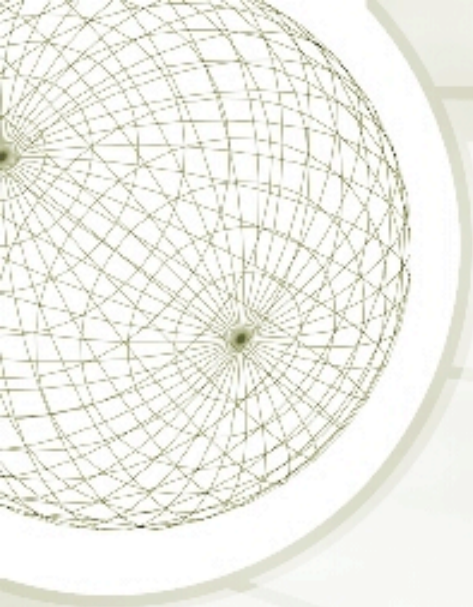
- ★ Experimental.

- ★ Survey (cross-section, longitudinal).

- ★ Qualitative:

- ★ Case study.

- ★ Ethnography.



Collecting the data

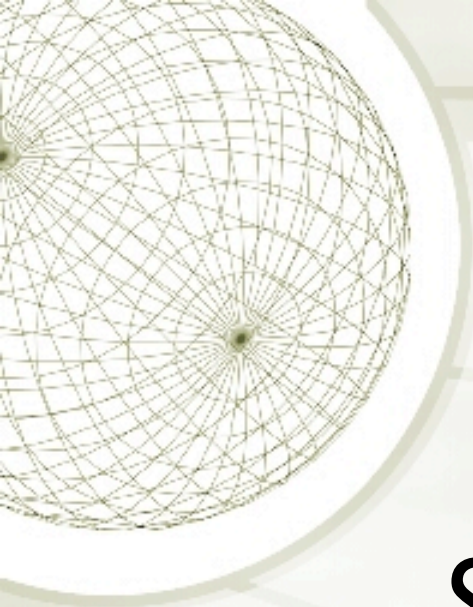
many research designs = many data collection methods

primary research versus secondary research



Primary research methods

- ★ A technique for collecting data:
 - ★ Instruments for measuring:
 - ★ Self-completion questionnaires.
 - ★ Structured interviews.
 - ★ Structured observation.
 - ★ Participation for understanding:
 - ★ Depth interviews.
 - ★ Unstructured observation.



Secondary Research



Using secondary data

★ Advantages

- ★ Saves time & money.
- ★ Unobtrusive.
- ★ Makes longitudinal and comparative studies possible.
- ★ Can give context to your own data.
- ★ Can result in new discoveries and new directions for research.
- ★ Permanence and public scrutiny.

★ Disadvantages

- ★ Original purpose may not match your need.
- ★ Data may be too old.
- ★ Access may be difficult or costly.
- ★ Aggregations and definitions may be unsuitable.
- ★ Data may be presented in a distorted way.
- ★ May be difficult to verify the data's accuracy.



General observations

- ★ Important industries = large amounts of published information.
- ★ Specialist industries = small amounts of published information.

Porter (1980) states that “the larger the industry, the older it is, and the slower the rate of technological change, the better the available published information tends to be.”



Who collects the data?

- ★ Government & international agencies.
- ★ Trade associations & clubs.
- ★ Trade & business press.
- ★ Market research companies.
- ★ Market players.

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Market players

- ★ Competitors.
 - ★ Ethical issues.
- ★ Suppliers, intermediaries, buyers.
- ★ Where to go for information:
 - ★ Websites.
 - ★ PR departments.
 - ★ Company archivist/librarian.
- ★ Understand the company structure.
 - ★ Do your research first.

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Based on: Jenster, P. and Hussey, D. (2001) *Company analysis: determining strategic capability*. John Wiley, Chichester, p. 243.

