

## **Doing Research in the Social Sciences**

Social scientists **analyze and interpret human behaviour**. They generally use **empirical methods** of research. Experimentation through field work is then important in the social science research. Nevertheless, though original data gathering and analysis are central to social sciences research, researchers also use library and Internet resources in order to

1. obtain raw data for model building or analysis.
2. locate information about a particular model, theory, or methodology to be used in a research project.
3. review the literature to place new research in context

Subjects of study in the social sciences often **cross disciplines**. In addition, new theories may take some time to circulate in the literature, especially in print sources. Consequently, the researcher should be prepared to

1. identify potential search terms by scanning indexes and abstracts in relevant works.
2. use the references in published articles and books to trace connections among theories and ideas
3. work with most recent sources as well as older ones.

A review of the literature for a social sciences research project not only should identify what research has been done but should also compare and contrast the available information and evaluate its significance.