# How to Do a Literature Review for your Master Thesis?

UNIL | Université de Lausanne

HEC Lausanne

# Why do we Need a Literature Review?

"… the use of ideas in the literature to justify the particular approach to the topic, the selection of methods, and demonstration that this research contributes something new" (Hart, 1999, p. 1)

- Help the researcher understand the existing body of knowledge
  – What we know
  – What we do not know

- Develop a validated framework for the study
  – Research questions
  – Goals
  – Approach and Methodology

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne

# Literature Review Guidelines

Frequent **problems** in Master thesis:

- Mostly Web sources
- Students «reinvent» the wheel, because they are unaware of existing knowledge (e.g. established frameworks, models or methods) and do not use them as starting point for their investigation
- Many formatting problems (citations and reference lists)

Recommendations:

1) Critically assess the **quality of the sources** (Not every Web resource is a suitable reference!)
2) Use a systematic **search strategy** (Google search is not enough, use databases to search for academic literature!)
3) follow the guidelines for **formatting in-text citations and reference list** (Zotero may help)

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne

# 1. Quality of References (1)

Depending on your topic, different type of references may be relevant:
- Articles in academic journals
- Articles in conference proceedings
- Books
- Practitioner reports, market studies,
- Documentation and whitepapers from software vendors
- …

The following criteria may be helpful in assessing the (academic) quality:
- Peer-reviewed academic publications (journals, conferences, …)
- Number of citations
- Reputation of the author(s)

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne

# 1. Quality of References (2)

Which journals are relevant?

**8 Top IS Journals** have been defined by the « AIS senior scholar's basket of journals »

- MIS Quarterly
- European Journal of Information Systems
- Information Systems Journal
- Journal of Information Technology
- Journal of Management Information Systems
- Journal of Strategic Information Systems
- Journal of the Association for Information Systems

**Systèmes d'information et Management (SIM)** is the leading French-speaking IS journal

**Management journals**, especially when reporting on technology trends: Harvard Business Review, Sloan Management Review, …

**Computer Science journals**: IEEE Transactions, Communications of the ACM, …

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne

# 2. Search Strategy – Overview

- Use appropriate databases (cf. next slides):
  - Search for scholarly literature (scholar.google.com)
  - Academic literature databases (EBSCO, ProQuest)
  - Online Libraries offered by academic associations (AIS, IEEE, ACM)

- Start (but don't stop) with keyword searches
  - Keywords change over the years
  - "Buzzwords" especially volatile
- Proceed to "backward searching"
  - Reference search
  - Author search
  - Terms and concepts
- Then on to "forward searching"
  - References
  - Authors
  - Terms and concepts

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne

# 2. Search Strategy – UNIL Access

- Campus in-site workstations and UNIL provided VPN (www.bcu-lausanne.ch/)



- PerUNIL: Recherche de périodiques disponibles sur les sites UNIL, CHUV et BCUL: unil.ch/perunil

# 2. Search Strategy – Databases (1)

Google Scholar (scholar.google.com) provides a **search of** *scholarly* **literature** across many disciplines and sources, including theses, books, abstracts and articles.

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne

# 2. Search Strategy – Databases (2)

Academic literature databases provide online access to articles from the most prestigious scientific journals:

- **EBSCOhost (search.ebscohost.com)**: Select "Business Source Premier" for access (table content, articles including full text) to the top management and IS journals

# 2. Search Strategy – Databases (3)

**Academic literature databases** provide online access to articles from the most prestigious scientific journals (cont.):

- **ProQuest** (search.proquest.com/index)

To search in a specific publication e.g. a journal

To search your keyword in the whole database

# 2. Search Strategy – Databases (4)

Online libraries from associations, such as AIS, IEEE or ACM provide online access to journals and conference proceeedings to their members:

- The **AIS Electronic Library (aisel.aisnet.org)** provides online access to the journals edited by the Association of Information Systems (AIS), such as Journal of the AIS and Communication of the AIS, and the AIS affiliated conferences, notably International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS), European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS) and others.
→ *institutional access, available for all UNIL students!*

- The **IEEE Digital Library** (ieeexplore.ieee.org/Xplore/guesthome.jsp) provides online access to IEEE journals, such as IEEE Transactions on Mobile Computing and others, and the IEEE affiliated conferences.

- The **ACM Digital Library** (dl.acm.org) provides online access to ACM journals, such as Communications of the ACM, and the ACM affiliated conferences.

You may need to register (for free). Some articles are for free, but some may require a member login which your professor should provide you upon request.

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne
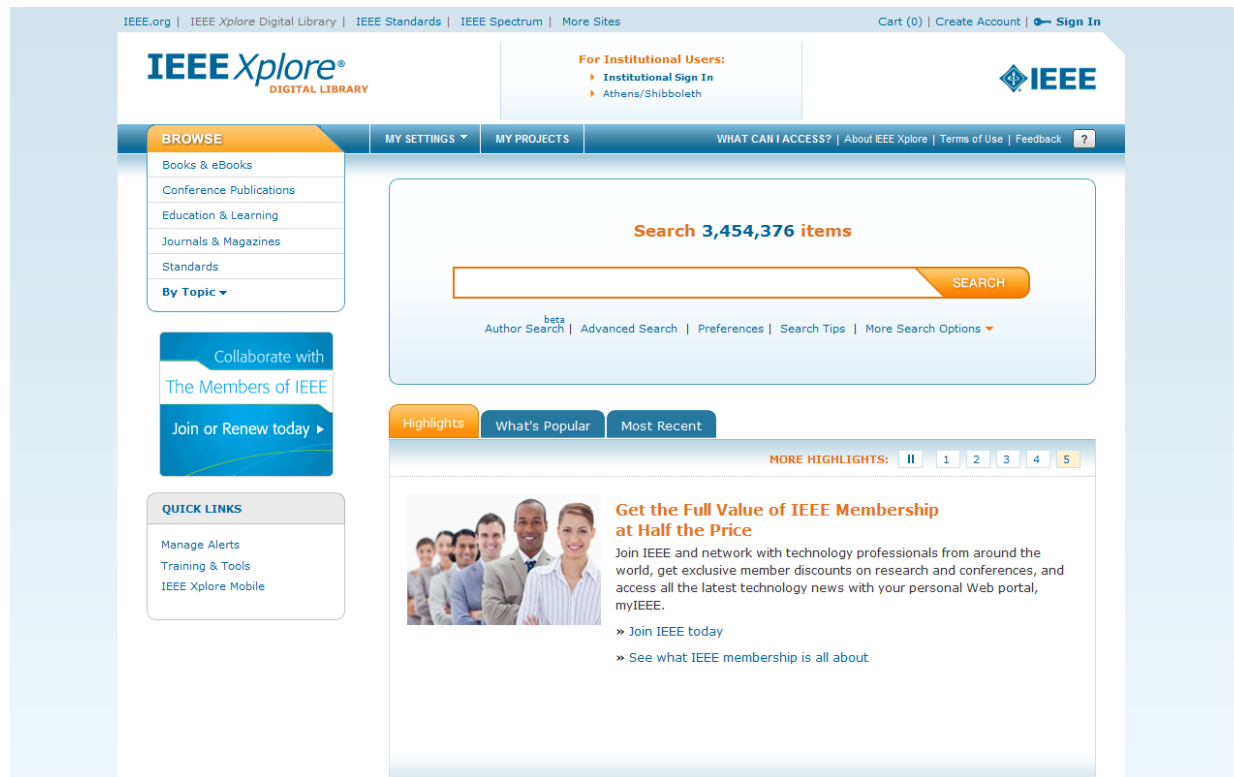
# 2. Search Strategy – Databases (5)

**Online libraries**: AIS Electronic Library (aisel.aisnet.org):

→ *Institutional membership at UNIL, access available for all UNIL students!*
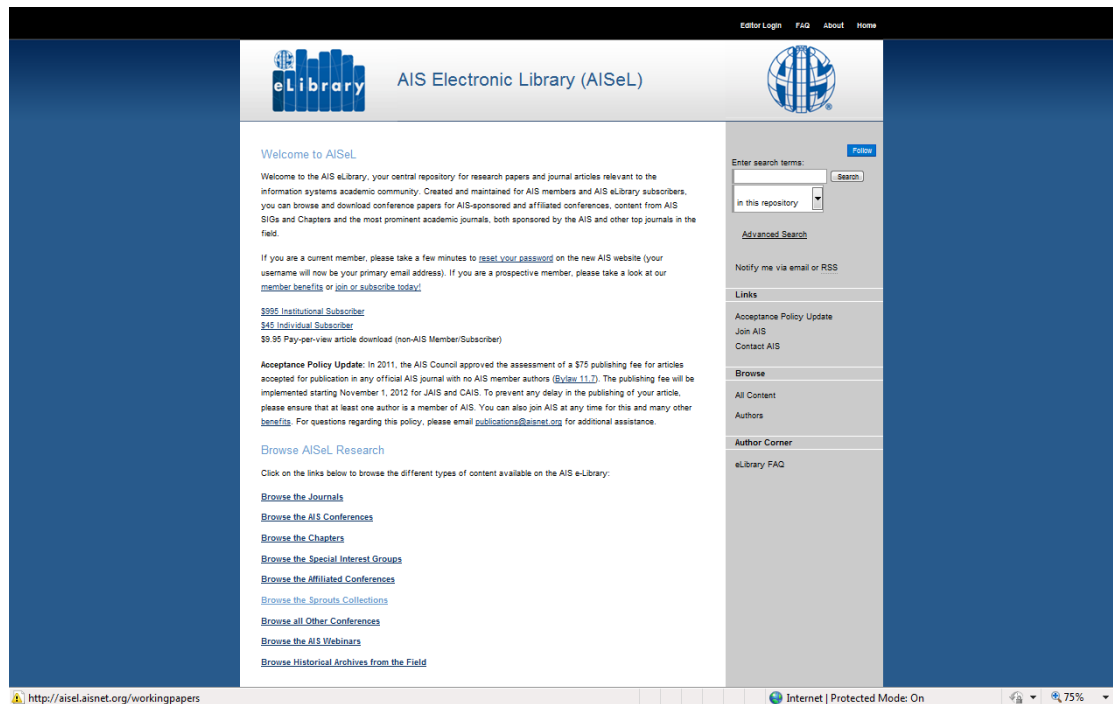
# 2. Search Strategy – Databases (6)

Online libraries: IEEE Digital Library (ieeexplore.ieee.org/Xplore/guesthome.jsp)
→ *available from EPFL, some UNIL professors have also (personal) access*

# 2. Search Strategy – Databases (7)

**ACM Digital Library** (dl.acm.org)

➔ *available from EPFL, some UNIL professors have also (personal) access*

# 3. Bibliography – Requirements

- The Master thesis comprises a list of all references that were cited in the manuscript.

- **The reference list should be in alphabetical sort.**

- Depending on reference sources (journal, conference, book, etc.), each reference should be made up all necessary elements, such as authors, date, title, page numbers, publisher, etc.
  - **Journal**: Schmidt, C. & Buxmann, P. (2010) Outcomes and success factors of enterprise IT architecture management: empirical insight from the international financial services industry. European Journal of Information Systems, 20, pp. 168-185.
  - **Book**: Hersey, P., Blanchard, K.H. & Johnson, D.E. (2008) Management of Organizational Behavior: Leading Human Resources. Ninth version. Pearson Prentice Hall.
  - **Website**: Open Group, (2009). TOGAF Version 9, Available at: http://www.opengroup.org/togaf/, Accessed 29 May 2009
  - **Report**: Langenberg, K. & Wegmann, A. (2004) Enterprise Architecture: What Aspects is Current Research Targeting? , (EPFL Technical Report IC/2004/77).

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne

# 3. Bibliography – Software (1)

**Zotero** is software to manage bibliographic data and related materials (such as PDFs, images, audio and video files, snapshots of web pages).

It offers:

- web browser integration,
- online syncing,
- generation of in-text citations, footnotes and bibliographies,
- integration with the word processors [Microsoft Word](#), [LibreOffice](#), [OpenOffice.org Writer](#) and [NeoOffice](#).

Installation

- Students can download Zotero on [http://www.zotero.org/](http://www.zotero.org/). The first step is to download Zotero for Firefox in order to use web browser integration's feature. Then Word Processor Plugins for Zotero for Firefox have to be installed.

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
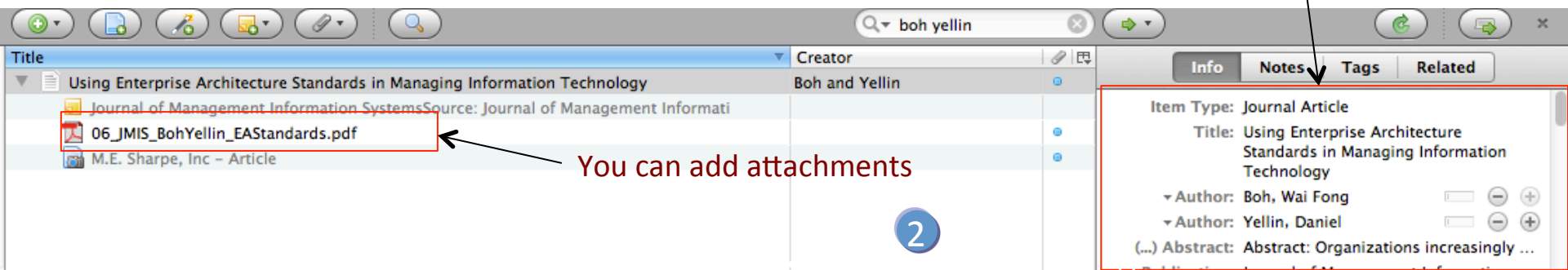HEC Lausanne

# 3. Bibliography – Software (2)

**Searching for literature:** Add a reference in Zotero ①

Click here to add the given paper in your reference list on Zotero

All the paper info. automatically goes here. Make sure that they are all correct e.g., item type, authors, publisher, date, etc.
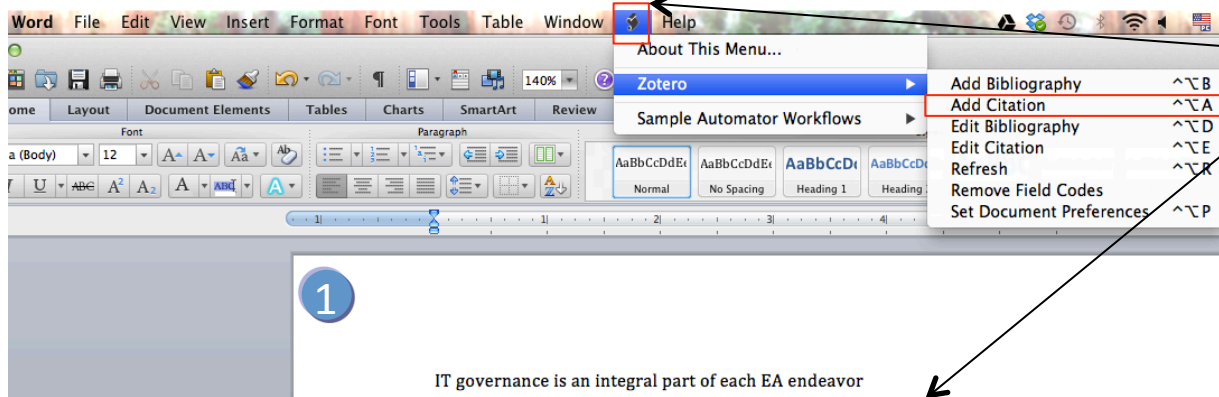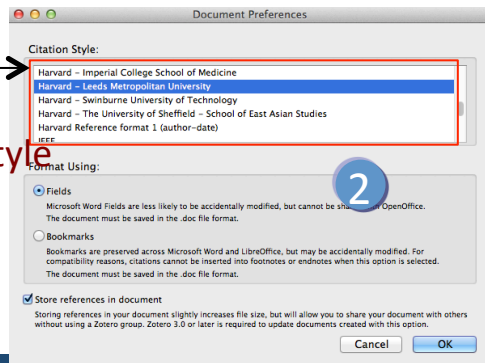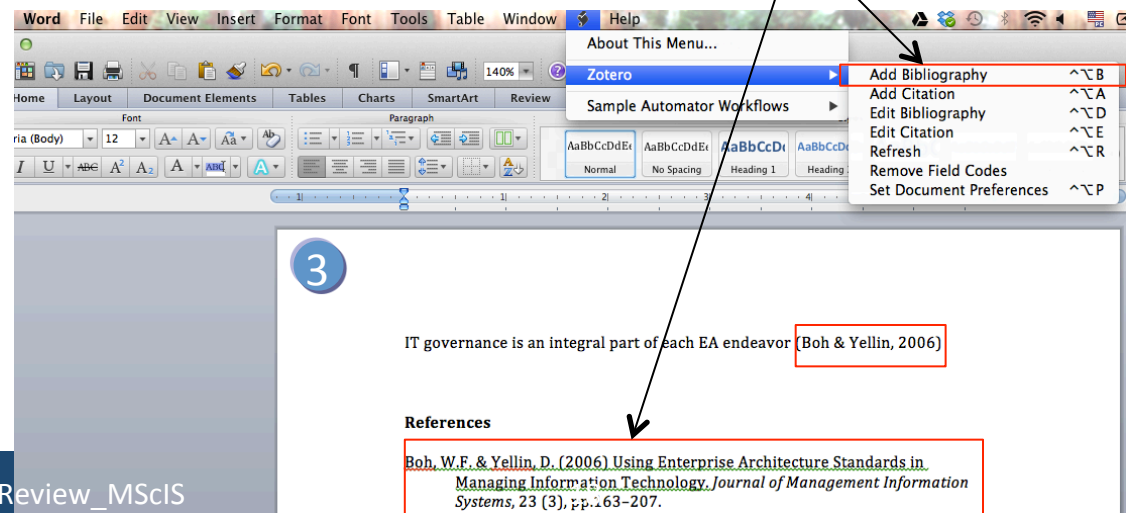


You can add attachments

②

# 3. Bibliography – Software (3)

Creating references with the Zotero plugin in Word:
Add a citation and its related bibliography in your text



Click on the part of your text tha[t] you want to add the reference. Then, click on "add citation"

Add bibliography to your text

Select your referencing style e.g., Harvard

UNIL | Université de Lausanne
HEC Lausanne