

Without a doubt, the most important resource for the completion of my Honors thesis was the Weinberg Memorial Library. I had learned about the library databases in my freshman seminar, but I really came to understand and appreciate the unbelievable sources available to us through our Scranton education while I was studying abroad in Argentina last spring.

In reality, I began my research in Argentina when I chose to complete an independent project, in Spanish, on Argentina's trade relations with China. When I began, I really had no knowledge of what sorts of information I might find or what conclusions I might come to. Unfortunately, a month into the project, I still had no idea. I was in Buenos Aires, trying to talk to as many government agencies and primary sources as I could find while relying primarily on Google to help me collect information. I spent countless hours researching and only ended up with a random assortment of information that I could not transform into a thirty-page research paper.

Then I remembered that, although I was over 5,000 from Scranton, I was still a University of Scranton student and should have access to the library's resources. Sure enough, I logged into my account and began to familiarize myself with the seemingly endless supply of databases and sources. Thanks to the library, I was able to obtain more information than I could possibly have asked for, even from such a great distance. It is also worth noting that I was looking for some information specifically in Spanish, and the library's online databases were amazingly helpful with finding sources with exactly the right information in either language.

When I returned to Scranton and began to really work on my Honors thesis, which now included three countries in addition to Argentina and China, I immediately began searching through the online databases once again. Because much of the useful information for my thesis

came both from primary and secondary sources as well as from news articles, I found Lexis-Nexis to be extremely useful, although I also utilized ABI/INFORM Complete and Business Source Elite (EBSCO) a great deal. I especially appreciated the way that the library organized the databases so that I could search under the category “Business” to find the databases that would be most helpful to me. It is because of this that I came across ProQuest Asian Business and Reference, which was extremely useful for finding information about China and Taiwan’s trade in recent years. I have also come to really value the fact that the University of Scranton gives all of us the ability to access journals that only a handful of top research libraries might have on hand.

In addition to being a source for data and research, I came to appreciate the library as a physical space in which to work. It is really important, in my opinion, to have one good place in which to focus, and I know that my thesis is better because I always had the library to sit and write for as long as I needed to.

During my hours in the library, I also came to realize what a great resource the reference librarians were. They were able to help me many times, whether it was to search through a database or to look for a magazine or journal within the University Archives. Moreover, I find it amazing that I was able to reach out to the librarians even when I wasn’t actually in the building, and they have helped me locate sources from my apartment on multiple occasions. One day, a librarian even provided me, through instant messenger, with a link to the electronic Honors theses so that I could look through some past projects from my computer.

Even when I ventured outside of the library, the skills that I learned about working with library databases helped me to successfully navigate my way through the various databases of

the United Nations, World Bank and World Trade Organization, which were necessary to the completion of my project. In addition, throughout the process of writing my Honors thesis and through my familiarization with the library, I have also developed the ability to properly evaluate information and discriminate between refereed and non-refereed materials. This skill has improved the quality of my work and is something that I can take with me and use wherever I go in life. I now feel that I will be able to transfer the research skills that I have developed through the Weinberg Memorial Library to become successful in any of my future goals, whether they be in academia or my career.