



Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination

Chris Hart

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The ultimate guide to the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of literature reviewing, the second edition of the classic text shows how the literature review will unlock the full potential of one's research with:

A thorough exploration of the literature review process from start to finish

Two brand new chapters explaining the different types of review and evidence and evaluation

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A critical thinking focus that will help you construct convincing arguments and improve your research decisions

In combining a critical, philosophical approach with an expertly selected body of practical examples, the Second Edition of Chris Hart's landmark text provides both the intellectual understanding and the technical skills required to produce sophisticated, robust literature reviews of the very highest standard.

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Author : Chris Hart

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Brian says

I like the idea of being able to do this without having to run experiments to get published.

Mark Ward says

Not really necessary and overly complicated.

k8inorbit says

This is a very very very comprehensive and detailed intro to writing a lit review. The overview is interesting, but I can't help feeling like this could also just all be simplified into a really handy 5-10 page handout.

Carole Tansley says

Great book for business studies and humanities students. Clearly written and full of ideas for doing that 'deep dive' into texts and constructing visual presentations of the overall picture provided by your literature review.

Glenn says

This book gave me a lot of good points to consider before writing the dissertation for an MA. The book covers not only how to research information but how to approach critically evaluating research. Discussion of Fisher's (1993) approach to argumentation analysis was extremely helpful and whilst I would have liked more discussion on inference indicators, I was able to take themes and ideas from the book and follow them up. My overall impression is that this book offers more an opportunity to critically reflect on aspects of writing a literature review rather than serving as a how-to do a literature review book. For a how-to approach I found that Diana Ridley's book "The Literature Review" offers a more basic approach which less discussion.

Katie says

I picked this book up after hearing good reviews from a few of my PhD student twitter mates. I have never put together a formal literature review the size of a dissertation before, and needing help with my analytical and social science writing skills I thought this book would be a good fit. I was especially excited about this text as it is written by a scholar in the information science field.

What this book does well is present schemas and frameworks for organizing and analyzing texts and I will use these frameworks to inform my own approach to conducting the literature review.

I think the biggest challenge with this book is that the author wrote for a perceived audience of undergraduate, Masters and PhD researchers. Thus, the text spent a lot of time explaining basic research methods and tips (e.g. how to use keywords to search a database) and not enough time digging down into issues more prevalent to a PhD audience. And, like most research methods books, it is just no replacement for actually doing the work. I just wish the text would have given more guidance.

Phillip says

Helpful, a very well-informed and well-organised book for those undertaking literature reviews as well as those reflecting on research methodologies more broadly.
