Creating a Working Bibliography

What is a working bibliography? A working bibliography includes the sources that you discover in your initial inquiry into a topic. It is your first step after deciding on a preliminary topic for a paper. The working bibliography includes all sources that you discover as you begin your research. They may not all be used in your final writing as the focus of your paper can change, you may find duplication of what sources are saying, you may find too many sources.

As you discover these sources, be sure that you document all sources as to their bibliographic information (what you will need for your References page). Make any notes so that you can remember the significance of a source at a later time.

At this point you may not need to enter them in “perfect” APA formatting, but if you do, you will just be that much farther ahead when you are writing the paper and you will be sure to have all the necessary parts of the citation before you move away from the source, e.g. web site, electronic database journal article, etc. You might not even want to alphabetize them at this point but rather group them by the kind of source, e.g. journal articles, books, web sites, interviews, etc.

How might a working bibliography look?


Book, obtained from IWU library. Has one chapter that discusses Nokia’s rise as a major company in telecommunications.


This article discusses 3 key reasons why Nokia is noted for strategic agility. Covers the company for 20 years. Probably will use this one as it discusses some of the philosophical reasons for their success. Got the article from Business Source Complete.