



FINDING INFORMATION ON AND OBTAINING RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Searches for research instruments and information about research instruments can be tricky. This help sheet is designed to help you understand some of the issues surrounding instruments as well as introduce information resources that can be used to find information about them.

The first question you need to answer is this: Do I need to find information about a research instrument or do I need to obtain a copy for use in research? If you need information about a research instrument, what kind of information do you need: information on content, development, psychometric properties (reliability, validity, etc.)? If you plan to use the instrument in research, you need to be concerned not only with obtaining the instrument, but also obtaining permission to use the instrument. Here's a review of the main sources of test and instrument information.

CINAHL

CINAHL (<http://hsc.utoledo.edu/lib/cinahl.htm>). CINAHL is best known as a tool to identify articles in the nursing and allied health literature, but it can also be used to find information on instruments used in nursing and allied health research. Beginning in 1994, CINAHL began indexing research instruments. (NOTE: The indexing is retrospective; many of the indexed instruments were developed before 1994.) Each instrument record includes developers' names, title, abstract, and details about the instrument: year developed, purpose, variables of interest, original population, question format, administration, scoring, psychometrics, copyright holders, modifications, and ordering address. To identify instruments for a given condition or situation, do a search for the topic of interest, then limit the search to the publication type *Research Instrument*. To see the full listing of instruments indexed in CINAHL, type **PT research-instrument** in the **Find** box and hit search. The PT convention tells CINAHL to search for "research instrument" in the publication type field.

In addition to indexing research instruments, CINAHL also includes a record field named *Instrumentation* in the **Display Field** drop down menu. This field includes names of research instruments and abbreviations of instruments used in research studies. Although names of clinical assessment tools also appear in this field, instrument names do not include subscales, revision numbers, edition numbers, etc. To search the instrumentation field, enter the search in this manner: **IN beck depression inventory** or **IN BDI** When searching by name, it is most effective to use a unique term or phrase from the name of the instrument. For more information about searching CINAHL, see <http://hsc.utoledo.edu/lib/education/cinahl.html>.

PsycINFO

PsycINFO (<http://rave.ohiolink.edu/databases/login/psyc>), the psychology database can be used to find information on tests and instruments as well as research using particular instruments. PsycINFO has an instrumentation field too, but it is searched with a slightly different format. To search the instrumentation field, enter the search in this manner: **beck depression inventory.ins.** or **BDI.ins.** When searching by name, it is most effective to use a unique term or phrase from the name of the instrument. A subject heading search for the name of the instrument will result in articles about the instrument: psychometric properties, analysis, evaluation, etc. There are also limits for tests and measures (look in Classification Codes limits). For more information about searching PsycINFO, see <http://hsc.utoledo.edu/lib/education/psycinfo.html>.

Mental Measurements Yearbook and Tests in Print

Mental Measurements Yearbook (Reference Collection BF176 M549 2001) is a print resource that contains reviews of English-language tests and instruments that are commercially published and which are still in print. *MMY* reviews usually provide descriptive information about the test, psychometric properties, test development and norming, and a summary including recommended uses. Each edition of the *MMY* (the most recent edition is the fourteenth, published in 2001) covers a different collection of tests, so you may want to start your search with the current edition of *Tests in Print* (Reference Collection BF176 T342 1999).

Tests in Print is the cumulative index to all tests that are included in one or more of the editions of the *Mental Measurements Yearbook*. It is a two-volume set, with test information arranged by test name. The entries in *Tests in Print* are brief (because *MMY* contains the full review) and include the name, purpose, population, publication date, acronym, scores, and administration and pricing information. Some tests include a list of English-language references that address the construction, validity, and use of the instrument. *Tests in Print* also includes indexes for titles, recently out-of-print titles, test acronyms, classified subject, publishers (which includes contact information), names (test authors, reviewers, or references), and scores (can be considered a list of operationalized variables). The Buros Institute has a searchable database (<http://buros.unl.edu/buros/jsp/search.jsp>) of the instruments indexed in the *MMY*. You can purchase reviews online if you would like, but we have access to the print versions of the same reviews for free.

Other Online Resources for Tests and Instrument Information

Health Services and Sciences Research Resources from the National Information Center on Health Services Research and Health Care Technology (http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nichsr/hsrr_search/). HSRR contains information about research datasets and instruments/indices employed in health services research, behavioral and social sciences, and public health. Includes links to PubMed searches and publishers' web sites.

TestLink Database from ETS (<http://www.ets.org/testcoll/>). The Test Collection Database contains descriptions of over 20,000 tests that reside in the library of Educational Testing Service. *Tests in Microfiche* (TIM) is a subset of this collection consisting of 1,000+ tests. They include research and unpublished instruments that may be of interest to students doing research.

Finding Information on Psychological Tests, from the American Psychological Association (<http://www.apa.org/science/faq-findtests.html>). The APA provides detailed information about finding information about published and unpublished instruments.

Other Print Resources at Mulford for Test and Instrument Information

Tests: A Comprehensive Reference for Assessments in Psychology, Education, and Business (2003; Reference Collection BF176 T345 2003). This volume contains the following information about each test: title, authors, year, publisher, population, purpose, description, administration, and cost.

Encyclopedia of Psychological Assessment (2003; Reference Collection BF176 E56 2003). This two-volume work covers a wide range of test/instrument issues, from information on assessments in specific areas (achievement, child development, coping, eating disorders, stress, violence, social networks, brain activity, etc.), methodologies (self-report, analogue behavioral observation, interviewing, development of research instruments, etc.), and measurement theory (reliability, validity, classical test theory, generalizability theory, item response theory, norm- and criterion-referenced assessment, factor analysis, item bias, etc.). It includes a reader's guide at the beginning of each volume to help you find relevant sections.

Other Print Resources not at Mulford for Test and Instrument Information

Other resources, not available at the Mulford Library, are available at local libraries:

Directory of Unpublished Experimental Mental Measures (1974-2003). Locally, the Carlson Library at the University of Toledo has this eight-volume set in its reference collection; the Jerome Library at BGSU appears to have most of the volumes in its reference collection. Both libraries also have the title index for the first seven volumes of the series. Check the OhioLINK Central Catalog for holdings information of other libraries.

Measures for Psychological Assessment: A Guide to 3,000 Original Sources and Their Applications (1975). If you're looking for information on a classic psychological instrument, this might be the source for you. A number of OhioLINK libraries allow this volume to circulate, so you can request a copy be sent to Mulford for your use.

When searching the OhioLINK Central Catalog for other print resources, remember that some test directories cover instruments in specific disciplines, such as the *Directory of Psychological Tests in the Sport and Exercise Sciences* and *Child Health Assessment: A Handbook of Measurement Techniques*.

Obtaining a Copy of an Instrument

How you obtain an instrument to use for a project depends upon whether the instrument has been published or not.

If the instrument is available from a commercial test publisher, you'll need to contact the publisher and purchase the number of copies that you need. (Depending upon the instrument, you may be able to code and analyze them yourself, or you may have to return them to the publisher for analysis.)

If the instrument is in the ETS Tests in Microfiche Collection, you can order a copy of the instrument from ETS. Go to www.ets.org/testcoll/ and click on the **Order a Test** tab. The use of these instruments are described under the **Terms of Use** tab.

If the instrument has only been published in the literature, you need to ask for copyright permission from the copyright holder. Sometimes the journal publisher is the copyright holder; sometimes it is the author of the article. Even when the journal publisher is the copyright holder, contact the people who constructed the instrument anyway because there may be a newer version of the instrument available. (As you can imagine, this sometimes entails contacting multiple individuals between the journal publisher and the authors, especially if the author has moved to a new institution.)

Additional Help with Research Instruments

You can get additional help finding and obtaining research instruments from a reference librarian:

- Request a reference appointment (call 419-383-4218, send email to MulfordReference@utoledo.edu, or complete the request form at <http://hsc.utoledo.edu/lib/resources.html>)
- Use the Library's chat reference service from campus or home (access at <http://hsc.utoledo.edu/lib/resources.html>)