



INFORMATION RESEARCH STANDARDS - GUIDELINES

Information Research (IR) encompasses tiers of service provided by research professionals who, with the research requestor, identify, analyze, and present information and data to support the generation of knowledge and ideas.

- **ACCOUNTABLE:** Associate your identity with every product you create; you are responsible for the timeliness and accuracy of what you produce.
- **ACCURATE:** Use accurate and reliable sources and techniques when accessing and analyzing data; check for the introduction of errors when you are manipulating data.
- **APPROPRIATE:** Engage in dialog with the research requestor in order to ensure that the product you create will serve to further his/her expressed aims.
- **ARCHIVED AND RECOVERABLE:** Archive all data sets, documentation, programs, exhibits, etc. in a safe and conveniently accessed manner.
- **CONFIDENTIAL:** Assume confidentiality on all projects unless expressly told otherwise by the research requestor; this does not preclude requesting help from other internal research providers on sources or methodologies that will further the research requestor's aims.
- **ETHICALLY COLLECTED:** Obtain permission for use of all licensed and primary source data; any restrictions on use must be observed; HU guidelines must be observed with respect to human subjects, as outlined in "Statement of Policies and Procedures Governing the use of Human Subjects in Research at Harvard University" <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~research/greybook/humsubs.html>
- **METHODOLOGICALLY SOUND AND VALID:** Present your analysis clearly and completely cited, with sufficient discussion to support your inferences and conclusions.
- **REPRODUCIBLE AND VERIFIABLE:** Cite, label, document and preserve every research product you create, in order to assure the integrity of the research process, and to allow verification by other researchers.
- **SOURCED AND DOCUMENTED:** Keep careful records of all sources, transformations, mathematical operations, and analyses; provide these records to the research requestor when the product is delivered.
- **TIMELY:** Deliver all products within a reasonable time and on a predictable schedule based on a common understanding with the research requestor; set realistic expectations, and inform the research requestor of any unanticipated delays as soon as possible.
- **TRANSPARENT:** Ensure that all products will be clear and understandable to any reader, and particularly, to the research requestor; clearly define and label all data items, sources, units of measure, periodicities, and time frames so they are clear and unambiguous; provide clear explanations of all transformations of original data.