

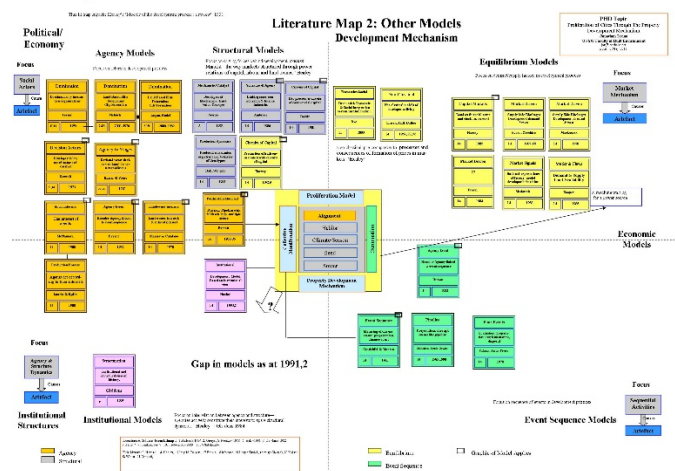
The Literature Map: Organising your Literature Search

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Whether you are writing a university assignment, undertaking a Masters thesis or doctorate, you will be familiar with the overwhelming feeling of data overload from all the sources you will gather in the initial literature review phase. How do you make sense of these articles and papers which all have some common thread to your topic. They must have a common thread right? Because you collected the article and put it in a folder or some place. So one way of sorting all this out is to create a literature map. It works a little like your desktop on your PC.

Look at your desktop now and see how you have spread the icons over the desktop. Each icon has a meaning (an app, a file, a note, an image etc) and you probably place similar things together.



This is how a literature map works. To get started why dont you clear your desktop for now with a clear space and then start creating small one line files and saving them to the desktop. e.g. write the title of one of your books you collected e.g. 'The Communist Manifesto' and then on the next line type the author 'Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels'. Now save the note to desktop. It will come up with the title and an icon on your desktop. Now do this for more of your articles/books, it will not take long.

Then start moving them around so similar are in one place. With either windows or mac you can give these icons a different appearance or colour depending on a theme within the article or book. A theme from the Communist Manifesto is 'oppression of the capitalist system' . Now step back and have a look at all these and see if you have learned something.

Above is an example of a literature map used in a doctoral situation (Dr Jonathan Drane 2015).

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