Generations of Bibliography

This scavenger hunt teaches students how to follow a bibliographical trail. It also shows them how much a line of research can change over time.

Materials

You will need a current academic article for each student or group.

Process

1. Individually or in groups, students must trace the bibliography in their article back a set number of generations (minimally five; for a challenge, ten). A “generation” is at least three years; the trail must be continuous.

2. Give students instructions something like this:
   - The article you have is your “first generation.”
   - Pick one of the articles cited in your first generation article that is at least three years older than the first generation. This one is your second generation. Find it in the library or on the net.
   - Pick one of the articles cited in your second generation article that is at least three years older than the second generation. This one is your third generation. Find it in the library or on the net.
   - Continue until you reach the Xth generation.

3. Require students to document their search, with a written bibliography, copies of title pages and works cited, or both.

4. Have students share in class what they learned about the techniques of following bibliographical trails. Ask them to report how much difference there was between the first generation and the last.