Greetings!
Welcome to “Get Ready for Summer (Research!)”
○ Part of VCU Libraries Advance Your Research,
○ Series of online and in-person training designed to help make your research process better, faster and smarter.
○ My name is John Glover, and I am the Humanities Research Librarian at VCU
  ■ Been a librarian here for over a decade
  ■ Content comes from years of watching students and faculty thriving, succeeding, struggling, or failing to research during the summer
○ Today you’ll get a range of Tips, Tricks, and Solutions that should help make your summer more productive
○ My colleague, Julie Arendt, Science and Engineering Research Librarian, will be helping run the webinar today, and she will be sharing URLs
You’ll encounter a number of themes today in the webinar
○ Theme 1: Know Before You Go
  ■ This is about being aware of challenges or stumbling blocks that can unexpected slowdowns for you.
○ Theme 2: Early, Regularly, or On Time
  ■ This is about ways to be continuously productive.
○ Theme 3: Find Your Path
  ■ Finding what works for you.
  ■ Nothing here is proscriptive. The best thesis, dissertation, article, or book is the one that you finish.
Along with those themes, you’ll see various kinds of content appearing throughout the webinar.
  ○ Tools to make your research easier
    ■ Mostly links to websites
  ○ Resources to use your time more effective
    ■ In-depth learning options
  ○ Processes to help keep you moving
    ■ Processes you can adopt
  ○ Time savers
    ■ Informational tidbits that can help you get past roadblocks

The outline for today’s webinar looks like this:
  ○ Productivity
  ○ Campus down time
  ○ Maximizing library time
  ○ Research travel
  ○ Conference preparation
  ○ Graduation and new jobs

A productive summer may look different for different people. Sometimes you need to finish a book, sometimes you need to go to the beach.

I assume that, for most of you, your summer is going to look something like this: a computer, accompanied by books and articles.

Time for a poll! Please take a second to choose the option that best fits your style of research and writing. This will help us understand what our collective practice is in terms of how we schedule our research.
  ○ Discussion of results
• Scheduling and use of productivity techniques can be a great help in staying on task during the summer. Academics regularly schedule:
  ○ Research
  ○ Writing
  ○ Travel
  ○ Conferences
  ○ Publications

• I’m going to talk now about a few techniques that you can adopt to help yourself remain productive during the summer:
  ○ Goals
  ○ Writing buddies
  ○ Tricks & hacks
  ○ Celebrate victories
  ○ Do it your way

• Goals
  ○ Extensive research supports the conclusion that goal-setting is an effective technique for enhancing productivity.
  ○ Some people are more productive with extensive amounts of unstructured time, but the reality is that few of us have that luxury.
  ○ Short, medium, and long-term goals are a good idea. What you can accomplish in one day, one week, or one year are very different things, yet it is helpful to keep them all on your radar.
  ○ Be ambitious, but be reasonable.
    ■ What is reasonable for one person (two books) isn’t for another (data collection) during a season.

• Writing Buddy
○ A writing buddy can serve many purposes.
○ They can be an accountability partner, helping to make sure that you are doing what you said you were going to do.
○ They can help keep/get you going to a write-a-thon, a committed period of time where you sit and write together.
○ Writing buddies can also be your revision/critique partners.
○ Groups can serve similar functions.

● For productivity success, try the Pomodoro method.
  ○ Developed late 1980s by Francesco Cirillo
  ○ Working intensively for focused period, like interval fitness training.
  ○ 25 minutes on, 5 off, and make a note each time you’ve completed a cycle.
  ○ Physical effects of using a timer are notable in increasing effectiveness. You can also do a digital/online timer.

● Consider wordcount or other productivity software
  ○ Word counters are built into most word processors.
  ○ Track progress via spreadsheet, if you like the idea of seeing what you do on a given day, or total toward a goal.
  ○ Use other productivity tools to limit internet access (Freedom), compel you to write at a fixed rate (Write or Die), etc.

● Positive Reinforcement is important as well. I have used a trip to the ice cream parlor or a trip to the movies to reward myself.
  ○ Poll to see what other people had/have done. Discussion of results

● Find a Method that Works for you.
There are many writing advice books out there that can help you with your process. Finding them in the library can be done using a few methods.

Sample LC subjects include:
- Academic writing
- Dissertations, Academic – Authorship
- Report writing

Try browsing near these call numbers at Cabell Library:
- LB2369 .b57 (dissertations)
- PN146 .m877 (academic writing)

I recommend a number of different writing books. Try ones that work specifically for the project you are working on -- general writing, an article, or a dissertation.

Check out VCU’s Lynda account
- Open to all current VCU students, staff, and faculty
- Videos on goal-setting, productivity, writing

Campus in the Summer
- Poll to see how often people have been to campus in summer
- Make sure you are aware of transit variations -- changes in stops, frequency, etc.
- Some dining options at VCU, on and off campus, will close or be operating under reduced hours in the summer.
- Construction may impact your travel
- Be aware that some offices and buildings will close on campuses in the summer. Know before you go.

Finding People in the Summer
- People gone, stay gone
○ For faculty: are they 12 months or 9? That literally may determine whether they around, based on their contract
○ “Scholar summer” -- the time when many academics do the work that they are not able to do easily during the busy times of fall and autumn
○ Adjunct faculty are hired on a per-class basis. If you need to contact them, do it before spring ends!
○ Leave? Vacation? Believe it or not, faculty take them as well
○ Contact advisors, chairs, mentors, etc., before spring ends in order to set communication expectations and to be aware of schedule variations, if they are going to conferences, etc.

● Academic Libraries in the Summer are also often operating on a different schedule
  ○ Hours may be different
  ○ Checkout periods or availability may change
  ○ Buildings less occupied, or at some institutions, they may be closed! Know before you go
  ○ Equipment Availability
    ■ The Workshop, in Cabell’s basement, is much less busy.
● Research Travel! As with academic libraries, check in advance for
  ○ Facilities Hours
  ○ Equipment that’s allowed (pens vs. pencils, computers or cameras, etc.)
  ○ Entrance requirements
  ○ Access to resources. Can you browse shelves, or do you request in advance?
Different Cultures may have much different expectations and permissions, either nationally or at the type of library. Bring your patience and sense of humor.

- Conference Preparation
  - How to give a paper: plenty of resources out there, but don’t skip the basics
  - Bring your paper/poster/slides in multiple formats!
  - Prepare for questions by considering likely ones
  - Speak—slowly—to the room—in clear words—using a microphone
  - Check the conference website & guide for useful info.
  - Talk to past attendees to get their advice.
  - Use a checklist -- many are available online.

- Graduation & New Jobs
  - Final semester?
  - Return your items if you want to graduate!
  - Use your electronic access
  - Prepare (maybe) for life without subscription journals. VCU Libraries pays for many things on your behalf that aren’t free out there in the world
  - Study the library website for your next institution for an idea of what they have in advance of getting there.

- Resources Further Afield: VCU Libraries has many guides to help you find related content when you graduate, like the Community Members, Open Access, or Google for Research guides.
Learn to make the most of summer! With **advance planning**, you can **optimize** your **research and writing time**, keep your **productivity** up, and have more time for beaches and barbecues.