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A Guide to Conducting a Standalone Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Many scholars are not well trained in conducting a standalone literature review, a scholarly paper that in its entirety summarizes and synthesizes knowledge from a prior body of research. Numerous guides that exist for information systems (IS) research mainly concentrate on only certain parts of the process; few span the entire process. This paper introduces the rigorous, standardized methodology for the systematic literature review (also called systematic review) to IS scholars. This comprehensive guide extends the base methodology from the health sciences and other fields with numerous adaptations to meet the needs of methodologically diverse fields such as IS research, especially those that involve including and synthesizing both quantitative and qualitative studies. Moreover, this guide provides many examples from IS research and provides references to guides with further helpful details for conducting a rigorous and valuable literature review. Although tailored to IS research, it is sufficiently broad to be applicable and valuable to scholars from any social science field.

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