One of the earliest assignments in FWIS 101, Bible in Pop Culture, was to complete an annotated bibliography using books and articles from Fondren. Since this was so early on in the semester, I was still averse to going to the complex and daunting library. Instead of going to the library physically and risking getting lost in the maze of printed materials, I decided to make use of Fondren’s website to complete the assignment. On the website, I found an abundance of resources including subject specific databases and online catalogs that made the research process surprisingly enjoyable and efficient.

The bibliography was meant to get us started on our term paper, meaning that it forced us to start thinking about a topic months before the paper was due. Our prompt was fairly broad, leaving room for each of us students to be creative and to find something that interests us. We were simply asked to select a story or character from the Bible, find a pop cultural adaptation of it, and compare the two. Though it appeared simple enough, I was doubtful that I would be able to find material anywhere that combines biblical scholarship with pop culture. With these doubts in mind, I began poring through catalogs and databases looking for any articles about the Bible in relation to pop culture. Just as I had predicted, I was unable to find anything useful.

After some moments of frustration, I realized that my search query was both too broad and too specific. In my time of fruitless searching I discovered that there are far too many articles on the Bible to find anything useful without spending days reading through hundreds of articles, and there are very few items that discuss both the Bible and pop culture in anything but incredibly broad terms. In order to find sources relevant to my prompt, I had to search for articles on the specific character that I wanted to write about rather than articles that include both the bible and pop culture.
After some time thinking, I remembered that we had briefly mentioned Samson in class but did not spend much time discussing his role in the Bible. This became the new objective of my research: to find scholarly interpretations of Samson’s character and importance in the narrative of Judges, the book of the Bible where he is found. With this as my focus, I quickly found that Samson is actually a much discussed character among biblical scholars. The events of his life have stirred up much debate about whether he should be considered a heroic or failed character, and I found an abundance of articles arguing for each side.

The ATLA Religion Database and the Classic Catalog were particularly useful in finding interpretations of the Samson narrative. These two online resources were ultimately all that I needed in gathering information for my paper. Through Fondren’s website, I was able to access an abundance of books and articles online that I would have struggled to find otherwise, all without ever stepping foot in the library itself.