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GOOGLE SCHOLAR

Google Scholar is an internet-based search engine designed to locate scholarly information, including peer-reviewed articles, theses, books, preprints, abstracts, and court opinions from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities, and other Web sites. Google Scholar is a freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines. Released in beta in November 2004, the Google Scholar index includes most peer-reviewed online academic journals and books, conference papers, theses and dissertations, preprints, abstracts, technical reports, and other scholarly literature, including court opinions and patents.

Since its launch in 2004, Google Scholar has firmly established itself as a critical resource for those conducting academic research. Bolstered by its hard-to-beat pricing (free) and its broad, interdisciplinary coverage, Google Scholar is now included as a resource on many library Web sites and taught to students. Certainly, Google Scholar is a solid entrant into the world of scholarly research and offers both students and serious researchers alike a highly accessible, easy-to-use research tool.

Features and specifications

Google Scholar allows users to search for digital or physical copies of articles, whether online or in libraries. It indexes "full-text journal articles, technical reports, preprints, theses, books, and other documents, including selected Web pages that are deemed to be 'scholarly.'" Because many of Google Scholar's search results link to commercial journal articles, most people will be able to access only an abstract and the citation details of an article, and have to pay a fee to access the entire article. The most relevant results for the searched keywords will be listed first, in order of the author's ranking, the number of references that are linked to it and their relevance to other scholarly literature, and the ranking of the publication that the journal appears in.

Groups and access to literature

Using its "group of" feature, it shows the available links to journal articles. In the 2005 version, this feature provided a link to both subscription-access versions of an article and to free full-text versions of articles; for most of 2006, it provided links to only the publishers' versions.

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Since December 2006, it has provided links to both published versions and major open access repositories, including those posted on individual faculty web pages and other unstructured sources identified by similarity. On the other hand, Google Scholar doesn't allow to filter explicitly between toll access and open access resources, a feature offered Unpaywall and the tools which embed its data, such as Web of Science, Scopus and Unpaywall Journals, used by libraries to calculate the real costs and value of their collections.

Citation analysis and tools

Through its "cited by" feature, Google Scholar provides access to abstracts of articles that have cited the article being viewed. It is this feature in particular that provides the citation indexing previously only found in CiteSeer, Scopus, and Web of Science. Google Scholar also provides links so that citations can be either copied in various formats or imported into user-chosen reference managers such as Zotero.

"Scholar Citations profiles" are public author profiles that are editable by authors themselves. Individuals, logging on through a Google account with a bona fide address usually linked to an academic institution, can now create their own page giving their fields of interest and citations. Google Scholar automatically calculates and displays the individual's total citation count, h-index, and i10-index. According to Google, "three quarters of Scholar search results pages [...] show links to the authors' public profiles" as of August 2014.

Related articles

Through its "Related articles" feature, Google Scholar presents a list of closely related articles, ranked primarily by how similar these articles are to the original result, but also taking into account the relevance of each paper.

US legal case database

Google Scholar's legal database of US cases is extensive. Users can search and read published opinions of US state appellate and supreme court cases since 1950, US federal district, appellate, tax, and bankruptcy courts since 1923 and US Supreme Court cases since 1791. Google Scholar embeds clickable citation links within the case and the How Cited tab allows lawyers to research prior case law and the subsequent citations to the court decision. The

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Google Scholar Legal Content Star Paginator extension inserts Westlaw and LexisNexis style page numbers in line with the text of the case.

Advantages of using Google Scholar?

1. In addition to showing resources like journal articles in our subscription databases, it also shows free "open access" and gray literature items (like conference proceedings, organization white papers, etc.) found on the web. The open access movement is increasing in popularity (e.g., Liberty's Digital Commons). Some of the items found in Google Scholar are not available in our subscription databases (such as EbscoHost or ProQuest platforms).

2. If you choose the Liberty University Library in your initial settings it will point to journal articles and search for books in WorldCat (Library Search).

3. The default sort for results is by relevance ranking. Articles that are cited the most by others show up higher in the rankings. The relevance ranking in our subscription databases is often determined by the number of times the search term(s) is found in the metadata. Thus, Google Scholar can be helpful in finding key or seminal authors on a topic because they will be the most cited.

4. It shows who has cited each work so that you can trace patterns of research. If the older, original article is helpful, it is likely that at least some of the more recent articles that cite the older article will also be helpful in your research.

5. It provides suggested machine generated citations in the three format styles used by Liberty University (APA, MLA, and Turabian Notes/Bibliography style).

6. If you are a published author (even in Digital Commons) you can trace those who cite your work.

7. Like regular Google, it can be more "forgiving" then our subscription databases. So if you are looking for a particular article, but you only know partial information it might bring up what you are interested in by providing only incomplete details.

Disadvantages to using Google Scholar?

1. Google Scholar is compiled by computers scanning the web, rather than professional indexers. This means that there can be greater transcription errors in the data.

2. Google Scholar operates on keyword searching only. So there are no indexers adding controlled vocabulary subject headings. So you will have to perform multiple searches for various forms of search terms.

3. Google Scholar can't perform complex Boolean or truncated searches like Ebsco or ProQuest can.

4. Like Summon, Google Scholar does not index entire journals or replicate entire databases. It indexes individual articles, particularly ones that have a dedicated web page for individual articles. So there are many journals for which there is no coverage or incomplete coverage.

5. It is hard to determine the quality of some sources and how to cite them. For instance, Google Scholar often struggles with essays (chapters from books) or gray literature, not knowing whether to treat them as books or journal articles.

6. There is not an easy way to distinguish which articles are peer-reviewed.

7. With a Google Scholar search you cannot:

    a. search by peer review

    b. sort/search by disciplinary field

    c. limit search results in as many ways as you can with our subscription databases (only articles, only books, only full-text, etc.)