

What does Google Scholar include?

Google Scholar www.scholar.google.com provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, you can search across many disciplines and sources: articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities and other web sites. Google Scholar helps you find relevant work across the world of scholarly research.



Articles include patents Legal documents

Stand on the shoulders of giants

(Important note: If you are doing a comprehensive review of the literature, you should always check other sources such as Summon and discipline-specific databases rather than relying solely on Google Scholar.)

- Google Scholar only contains citation references to books, journal articles, and other resources, not general websites like the Google Search engine.
- It is more complete in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and medicine) literature. It is also fairly comprehensive in the Social Sciences (such as Education and Counseling).
- Has the fewest indexed articles in the Humanities, including Religion and Biblical Studies. (See the "Metrics" link at the top to show the major disciplines and the most highly indexed journals in each discipline.) It also tends to include more recent literature rather than pre-1990 literature because this older literature has often never been digitized and put on the web.
- Although it contains patent records, court cases, and legal documents, we will not be discussing those in this handout.

What are some 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 (Get it @ LU) and search for books in WorldCat (Library Search). (If you don't see Get it @ LU, check under the "More" links.)
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" than 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.

Are there 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.)

Finding recent papers

Your search results are normally sorted by relevance, not by date. To find newer articles, try the following options in the left sidebar:

1. Click "Since Year" to show only recently published papers, sorted by relevance;
2. Click "Sort by date" to show just the new additions, sorted by date;
3. Click the envelope icon to have new results periodically delivered by email as they are added to Google Scholar.

Locating the full text of an article

Abstracts are freely available for most of the articles. However, reading the entire article may require a subscription database. Don't ever PAY for articles. If Liberty doesn't have it, we can try to borrow it from another library. Here're a few things to try:

1. click a library link, e.g., "Get it @LU", to the right of the search result;
2. click a link labeled [PDF] (or DOC or HTML) to the right of the search result;
3. click "All versions" under the search result and check out the alternative sources;
4. click "Related articles" or "Cited by" under the search result to explore similar articles.

If you are a current faculty or staff member or a currently enrolled Liberty student, you should see "Get it @LU" on campus. Off campus, you need to tell Google Scholar what institution you are associated with.

1. Go to "Settings" and then "Library Links" and type in "Liberty University." (Choose "Get it @ LU" and WorldCat. Don't choose "Get it @ LU options." That was for our former article linker and those links won't work anymore.)
2. Links to BL Direct (British Library) are going to try to sell you the article.
3. When you click on "Get it @ LU" and then a specific "article" link, if you are off-campus it will require you to log into EZProxy and will then provide access to the article.
4. Some articles might show that they are only be available in our print collection. In that case, you may submit an ILLiad request (there is a link that will automatically fill in the form for you) and we will scan the article for you.
5. Sometimes, if you click on the title of an article rather than "Get it @ LU" it will offer to sell you the article. Never pay for articles. You can use "Journal Finder" (on the Library's articles/journals/database page) to see which, if any, of our databases contain the journal and that article or request it via interlibrary loan.

What if you just see [Citation] for a particular resource?

Citation notations are made when Google knows that a resource exists (because some other source cited it) but they can find no web resource to match it. These tend to be older sources or those that don't have a web page for a specific article or a preview available in Google books. You can either choose to have Google Scholar display these known citations to other works or suppress them by unchecking "include citations" on the left.

Getting better answers

1. If you're new to the subject, it may be helpful to pick up the terminology from secondary sources. E.g., a Wikipedia article for "overweight" might suggest a Scholar search for "morbid obesity." Sometimes there are more scholarly terms used in research rather than the popular terminology. "Heart attacks" might show up in medical articles as "myocardial

infarctions.” You might want to do a search on alternate wordings such as both “capital punishment” and “death penalty” or both “teenagers” and “adolescents.”

2. Remember that scholarly works are usually written by scholars for other scholars. If you want just an initial broad overview of a topic you might want to check Wikipedia (but just use this to become more informed, don't cite it in your paper), other reference works, textbooks, or popular books or magazines.
3. When you find an article that is particularly applicable to your research, you can see whether others have later cited that article. It might say “Cited by 312.” If you click on that link, it will show you the 312 other books or articles within Google Scholar that cited the first article. You can even “search within these results” among the 312 for key words if there is some particular aspect of the topic you are researching.
4. Explore! There's rarely a single answer to a research question. Click "Related articles" or "Cited by" to see closely related work, or search for author's name and see what else they have written.

Advanced search screen features

1. If you click to the right of the search box on the main screen, you will see an advanced search screen.
2. Google suggests using first initials when searching for author names. Many articles only include the first initial of the author.
3. Abbreviations of journal names are often used, e.g. J Biol Chem rather than Journal of Biological Chemistry.
4. Keep in mind that Google Scholar gathers bibliographical data from text and citations, (including pre-prints, which may include incomplete information).
5. Often, when searching in Google Scholar “less is more.”



The image shows a screenshot of the Google Scholar advanced search interface. At the top, the Google logo is partially visible. The search interface is titled "Find articles" and includes several search options: "with all of the words", "with the exact phrase", "with at least one of the words", and "without the words". There is a dropdown menu for "where my words occur" set to "anywhere in the article". Below these are fields for "Return articles authored by" (with an example: "PJ Hayes" or McCarthy), "Return articles published in" (with an example: J Biol Chem or Nature), and "Return articles dated between" (with an example: 1996). A blue search button with a magnifying glass icon is at the bottom left.

To find articles that have cited you

1. Start by clicking the **Advanced Scholar Search** link to the right of the search button.
2. Put your name in the “Return articles authored by” box. Google suggests entering your name by putting quotation marks around your first initial(s) and last name (for instance, Jeffrey Dull would search for "**J DULL**"), and this is generally the best way to start. Click **Search Scholar**.
3. On the results page, look underneath the article you want to see citations for and click the leftmost link, **Cited by** followed by a number. If you don't see a **Cited by** link, Google was unable to find any articles that cited it. Click the **Cited by** link for an article of interest to you.
4. You'll see a list of results that have cited this article.
5. You can create an email alert to be notified when others cite you in the future.
6. Go to “My Citations” to set up your personal author profile.

Other Google Scholar Tips and Tricks

1. You can click on “Cite” to get a suggested citation. You might have to fix the capitalization or punctuation and in some cases it doesn't do a great job of distinguishing between books and journal articles.
2. In Settings, you can choose which citation manager (such as EndNote, which the Liberty Library provides) to export your citations to. Or, on the fly, you can choose this from the bottom of the “Cite” screen.
3. The “My Citations” link is designed for authors and scholars to track their citations, not for students or researchers to have a personal folder like those available in WorldCat, Ebsco, and ProQuest.
4. If you are looking for only the latest research, you can set a date range to only displays items within those dates.
5. You can save the URL (web address) for Google Scholar searches to repeat the same search later. You can also “Copy this link” for the Get it @ LU links Scholar finds. These links don't need proxying information so they will work off campus. When you click on an individual article that the link brings up, that is where you are proxied in.

The screenshot shows a Google Scholar search for "integration faith counseling". The search results are displayed in a list format. Several callouts are overlaid on the image to highlight specific features:

- Search terms are bolded in results:** A callout points to the search terms "integration faith counseling" in the search bar and the bolded words "integration" and "faith" in the article titles and snippets.
- Click here to see 75 articles that cite this one:** A callout points to the "Cited by 75" link in the first article's snippet.
- This article has 10 different online versions:** A callout points to the "All 10 versions" link in the second article's snippet.
- Set a date range to find the latest research or particular years:** A callout points to the "Any time" filter options on the left sidebar.
- Create an alert to receive future results for this topic:** A callout points to the "Create alert" checkbox on the left sidebar.
- Click here to see which of our databases might contain the article:** A callout points to the "Get It @ LU" link in the second article's snippet.
- This is an open access PDF that you can just click to view:** A callout points to the "[PDF] from ccaa.net.au" link in the third article's snippet.

6. If you are off campus, you will often have to tell Google Scholar you are affiliated with Liberty University each time you log in. Your web browser remembers your settings in a "cookie" on your computer's disk, and sends this cookie to the website along with every search. Check that your browser isn't configured to discard cookies. Also, check your privacy settings. Your settings are stored on your computer, not on Google's servers, so look at your browser's preferences or internet options if it keeps forgetting to show you "Get it @ LU."
7. Remember, if you are on campus and assisting an off-campus student, what you can access from our subscription databases with one click might take some additional steps to see off-campus.
8. If you are an author wanting to track your citations, there are other services available such as ISI Web of Science and Scopus. Google Scholar covers a wider variety of subject areas and a greater number of journals than Web of Science but lacks precise search-refining tools.

Some other open access sources

1. Try a Google "site" search. Entering "site:.edu" (without quotes) before your search term will only show you results from institutions of higher education. These are often more scholarly websites. You can also try "site:.gov," etc.
2. For Biblical and theological topics, try www.tinyurl.com/theojour. This is a homemade search engine for theological journals on the web.
3. There is a difference between Google alerts and Google Scholar alerts. Google alerts show you if pages show up on your search terms anywhere on the web. Google Scholar alerts just show you when things are added to Google Scholar's citations of books, articles, etc.
4. Try Google Books www.books.google.com. There are four types of views (No preview, snippet view, preview, and free Google E-books.) Of these, the "preview" tends to be the most helpful. Full-view books tend to be older than 1923, whereas you can view (and use in your research because it is a scan of the actual book) up to 10% of many current, in-print books if a "preview" view is available. On the left side of the screen, click on "Find it in a library" to get citation information for the book you are viewing.