

Google Expert

Google (<http://www.google.com/>) is a database of copies of webpages. The database is created by "spiderbots" which follow all available links and copy the text. Google uses keyword search, automatically searches for all words (default AND) and looks for variations (default *). PageRank is their proprietary algorithm for ranking results (based on keyword quantity and proximity, links).

Basic Google tips (good for Books and Scholar also)

- Use four or more words
- Add even more words to get more specific, use less to get more broad
- If first 2 pages of results aren't good, use different words or synonyms (with ~)

Advanced Google features and shortcuts

- limit to exact phrase (with "")
- limit with NOT (with -) or include common words with +
- limit to domain (for example, site:.edu)
- limit to site (for example, site:nyu.edu)
- limit to government documents (US Government topic-specific search linked at the bottom of the Advanced Search page, no shortcut)
- include synonyms (with ~)

Potential Complications

- inability to include everything (because of technical limitations)
- no editor, user must carefully evaluate pages
- impermanent links
- proprietary nature (PageRank, ads, can't complain, privacy issues)

Benefits

- no cost (to creators as well as searchers)
- vast size
- helpful relevance/ranking
- multimedia (webpages, images, video, news, collaborative software, etc.)

Google Books (<http://books.google.com/> or "more" link from main Google)

Universities and institutions (including Harvard, Oxford, NYPL) have allowed Google to scan parts of their collections with special equipment. 100,000 volumes are included in the database, with 1 million scanned so far, and 3000 a day. Google Books includes some fulltext, depending on publisher and the year of publication (before 1923 is public domain fulltext).

Advanced features in Google Books

- limit by author, title, publication date
- find other books that have cited a book
- find similar books
- use "Find this book in a library" to find full records in Bobcat, and then locate the books in the library (call numbers etc.)
- use Library of Congress Subject Headings and library layout to find similar books

Potential Complications

- mistakes in scanning
- fulltext only before 1923
- scope is unknown
- printing isn't easy (unless fulltext)

Benefits

- keyword searching within the book
- table of contents and publisher descriptions
- articles in physical sciences/computer sciences/interdisciplinary are easy
- preservation of public domain, cultural record

Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/> or "more" link from main Google page) is a database of citations/abstracts (sometimes fulltext) of scholarly articles. It also includes preprints, conference proceedings, dissertations. The content is submitted by publishers (or is open-access).

Advanced features in Google Scholar

- limit by author, title, journal, publication date, subject
- use "Cited by" link for other works that have cited a work
- change preferences to "Library Links" to get off-campus electronic access ("Get at NYU")
- use EZProxy pop-up to locate "non-electronic" articles through BobCat or request ILL
- change preferences to show Refworks/Endnote link

Potential Complications

- no definition of "scholarly"
- limited publishers (Elsevier uses its own search Scirus)
- unknown scope, varies by discipline
- books, random citations are included with no explanation

Benefits

- free database
- vast collection of scholarly articles (and other scholarly communication)
- interdisciplinary topics
- good coverage of physical/computer science and medical topics
- cited references (only present in two fee-based databases)

Other Neat Google Products to Try Out

Docs <http://docs.google.com/> (word processor, spreadsheets, presentations)

Images <http://images.google.com/>

Maps <http://maps.google.com/>

News Archives <http://news.google.com/archivesearch> (for historical news articles)

Patents <http://www.google.com/ptshp>

More Help with Google

"Advanced Search Tips" link at top-right of Advanced Search page

Bobst Library Help with Google or General Research

Ask-a-Librarian <http://library.nyu.edu/ask/>

Third-Party Help with Google

online interactive tutorial <http://www.googleguide.com/>

quick reference http://www.googleguide.com/advanced_operators_reference.html