

Google Scholar
<http://scholar.google.com/>

A brown bag discussion hosted by Candice Benjes-Small and Eric Ackermann,
Reference/Instruction Librarians

1. What is Google Scholar?

According to Google:

“Google Scholar enables you to search specifically for scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, preprints, abstracts and technical reports from all broad areas of research. Use Google Scholar to find articles from a wide variety of academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories and universities, as well as scholarly articles available across the web.”

(<http://scholar.google.com/scholar/about.html>)

According to Librarians:

“In a nutshell, Google has built an algorithm that makes a calculated guess at *what it thinks* is a scholarly content mined from the OPEN WEB, and then makes it accessible via the **Google Scholar** interface. Precisely what makes something "scholarly" enough to be included in Google Scholar, Google will not say.” (<http://www.resourceshelf.com/2004/11/wow-its-google-scholar.html>)

Google Scholar is currently in Beta, with no official launch date announced.

2. What is the difference between Google and Google Scholar?

Google Scholar tries to weed out general Web pages and bring you links to articles, conference papers, and citations to books- the kinds of sources you would expect from databases like PsycINFO, ERIC, or Criminal Justice Abstracts.

3. What are some of the positive aspects of Google Scholar?

- It's free
- A simple, appealing interface (looks exactly like regular Google)
- It looks for books, articles, and conference papers
- Google has agreements with reputable publishers like Blackwell to index their articles

- It has a “cited” section, allowing you to see how many times the item has been cited. Could be useful when evaluating the source.
- 4. What are some of the negative aspects of Google Scholar?**
- It is guessing which items are “scholarly” and never gives a definition of what “scholarly” even means
 - It includes links to citations and abstracts on journal sites that request payment for the full text. Meanwhile, you could get the full text without cost by going through the library’s resources
 - The search is by no means comprehensive- Google seems to index articles randomly/arbitrarily
 - Can be incredibly difficult to figure out the full citation of articles from the Web version linked in Google
 - Copyright issues have yet to be settled
 - No advanced searching at the moment

Read more about it:

About Google Scholar

<http://scholar.google.com/scholar/about.html>

What Google has to say about itself

Resource Shelf Analysis

<http://www.resourceshelf.com/2004/11/wow-its-google-scholar.html>

A librarian view

Harvard Crimson’s Review

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=504709>

Worries about the links to non-fulltext items

Personal Computer’s World Opinion

<http://www.pcw.co.uk/news/1159716>

Sees it as a blow for open access research