

# Searching Google Scholar

## What is Google Scholar?

Google Scholar is a service provided by Google that allows you to search broadly for scholarly literature available online. Peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and other scholarly literature are covered.

## Are there limitations to Google Scholar?

Google Scholar allows you to search across many disciplines and sources; however, only a small portion of all published scholarly literature is included. Because there is no complete list of sources indexed on Google Scholar, there is no way to know how comprehensive your searches are or how much information is available using Google Scholar.

Gleeson Library/Geschke Center subscribes to many online databases and resources that provide more relevant, focused, up-to-date and comprehensive information than can be found in Google Scholar. Resources, including databases, available through the library are available as an [A - Z list](#) or organized by [subject](#), both of which are available from the library's homepage at <http://www.usfca.edu/library/>.

## How do I find Google Scholar?

You can find Google Scholar at this URL, <http://scholar.google.com>. You can also find Google Scholar by beginning at Google's homepage at <http://www.google.com/>, clicking on "More" and then selecting "Google Scholar".

## How do I search Google Scholar?

Search [Google Scholar](#) just as you search Google. Text entered in the search box will perform a keyword search that will return results that are ranked and listed according to how relevant they are to the search query. The most relevant references should appear at the top of the page. More detailed guidance for using Google Scholar can be found at [Google Scholar Help](#).

## How can I limit my search or perform more specific searches?

You can limit your search to certain authors, words in the title, publications, dates and/or subject areas by using [Advanced Scholar Search](#), which can be selected from the choices to the right of the search box. Help in performing advanced Google Scholar searches can be found on the [Advanced Search Tips](#) page.

## How do I get to the full-text of an article?

If the full-text of the article is available on the Web, you can click on the title of the item in blue and you will be brought directly to the full-text. These are often links to sources, which require you to pay in order to see and obtain the full-text of the article. If no full-text is available, clicking on the title will take you to an abstract of the article. You can also try finding the full-text of the article by clicking on the blue links below the item. The function of each of these links is described below.

Before using any option that requires you to pay for the document, always remember to check the [Journal Finder](#) that is located on the library's homepage at <http://www.usfca.edu/library/>. You can type the name of the journal that contains the article for which are looking into the Journal Finder search box. The results will give you a list of options for finding the full-text of the journal. You can examine the publication dates available and select an option by clicking on it.

## What do all the links under each item in the results list mean?

Under each item in your results list, you will see some or all of the following links.

**Cited by** – links to a list of documents that have cited the original document. This is one way of finding documents that are related to the original document. Because only documents that are indexed within Google Scholar will be retrieved, this may be a smaller set of documents than is included in some databases to which USF subscribes, such as [Sociological Abstracts](#) and [PsycINFO](#). It can be a good idea to compare your results in Google Scholar to your results in a library database.

**Related Articles** – links to a list of documents that are related to the original article. (The original article is not necessarily cited in the documents.) Only documents indexed by Google Scholar will be retrieved, which is a smaller set of documents than is included in many databases to which USF subscribes.

**Library Search** – searches the OCLC WorldCat database for books in print format that are available in a local library. If you select this link, you will retrieve records for the book at libraries that are closest geographically to the zip code from which you are searching. If you want to find sources to purchase the book, use the Web Search link.

**Web Search** – searches for information about the item on Google. This, in effect, broadens your search to search all items indexed by Google rather than just items indexed by Google Scholar. This is one method of trying to find the full-text of an article. If it is available on the Web, clicking on Web Search will retrieve links that may allow you to either purchase the article or to view it for free, if it is available at no charge. If the item is a book, you may retrieve links to sites to purchase the book. Remember to check USF library's [JOURNAL FINDER](#) or [IGNACIO](#), the library's catalog, before paying for a document. If you want to find the book at a local library and it is not available at USF, use the Library Search link.

**Cached** - the snapshot that Google took of the page as they crawled the web. The page may have changed since that time.

**BL Direct** – links to the British Library Direct site, which will give you the option of purchasing the full-text of the article. Remember to check the library's [JOURNAL FINDER](#) before paying for a document.

### **Can I sort and display search results by date, author, publication, etc.?**

No. Results in Google Scholar are always displayed in order of relevance and cannot be re-sorted to display by date, author, publication or any other variable.

However, once you have a list of results, Google will suggest authors related to your query in the left column. You can click on any of the names in this column and the list will then include only articles by this author. These are not necessarily all of the authors represented in the original results list and you cannot see results for more than one author at a time using these links.

You can also click on the "Recent Articles" link near the top of the page and the list will either be limited to recent articles as defined by Google or they will be re-sorted to take into account the currency of the items. A box with a pull-down menu will appear to the right of the search box that will say "since (followed by a year)". You can limit to since other years than the year Google has selected by using the pull-down menu to select the desired year. This is not the same as sorting by date because in determining the order of the list Google Scholar will also consider factors like the prominence of the author and of the journal's previous papers.