How to find information on the web

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Introduction

The Google search box is not the best way to look for appropriate and pertinent scientific information in specific areas of study and research. There are other better and more specific resources such as Google Scholar or other specialist search engines.

We also need to stress that most scientific information is only accessible via specialist databases, academic portals and scientific repositories. These offer access to journal articles, research papers, publications pending review, doctoral theses, conference proceedings, etc. This kind of information cannot be found via Google or the other general search engines.

1. The other Googles

Google offers other more specific search options and products, beyond the simple search box, such as Google Scholar, Google Patents or Google Finance.

Google Scholar is a useful resource for finding information in the field of academic research. It lets users search specialist bibliography from a range of different sources and disciplines. These include peer-reviewed studies, theses, books, abstracts and articles from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities or other academic organisations.

Google Scholar offers search options that increase accuracy and efficiency, including searches by author, filters for the date and publication, and the possibility of adding advanced web search operators. The results appear ordered by relevance and, as with other Google searches, the most useful preferences are shown at the top of the page.

> We also want to mention the integration of Google Scholar with the UOC Library's electronic journal search engine. This service lets users access the full text of articles available in the Library directly from Google Scholar, provided the searches are made from one of the UOC's centres.

If you search on Google Scholar, the system will let you know if the full text is available from the UOC Library via the features offered by the electronic journal search engine's services button. Specifically, the results page shows two types of links to references:

1) UOC Library full text

This shows that the Library has the full text of the article. If you click on the link, you will be taken to the electronic journal search engine screen, where you will find information on which databases hold the article and the period covered.

2) Document Supply Service

This shows that the Library does not subscribe to this journal, but offers other alternative services, such as abstracts, summaries or the chance to request it via the *Document Supply Service* (DSS).

Google Scholar also lets you import bibliographical references directly into your RefWorks account, by simply modifying your search preferences. You can find instructions on how to carry out this importing via the following link: http://biblioteca.uoc.edu/eng/index.html?services/services06_D

2. Beyond Google, specialist search engines

There are other search engines beyond Google, both general search engines and other more interesting and specialised ones, such as Scirus or Scientific Commons which are open access and can prove very useful. There is also an alternative to Wikipedia called Scholarpedia, which is a version of Wikipedia that is revised and maintained by academics from around the world.

SCIrUS
for scientific information only

Scirus is a powerful and wide-ranging search engine for specifically academic and scientific subjects on the web. It searches over 370 million exclusively scientific websites.

It uses the latest search engine technology and an algorithm to calculate a hierarchical classification in terms of relevance. Scirus, unlike general search engines, filters information according to academic criteria.

- It filters out non-scientific sites. For example, if you are searching for REM, Google offers results on the rock band, whereas Scirus will retrieve information on sleeping, among other things.

- It finds peer-reviewed articles, including PDF files and encrypted files that are often not found by other search engines.

- It searches the widest reaching combination of web information, preprint servers, digital files, and patent and journal repositories and databases. Scirus goes deeper than the first two levels of a website, finding much more relevant information.

Scirus has received a number of awards including a Search Engine Watch award, given to the best search engines, and a Webby Award in the best science website category.

SciTopics
Research summaries by experts

Scirus offers another service: SciTopics. It is a free resource for sharing knowledge in the scientific community. It consists of a series of pages written by experts on a single site. It is organised by subject, covering a wide range of scientific, technical and biomedical topics.

SciTopics aims to act as the starting point for researchers, providing a general introductory overview into a given subject, while also identifying sources for deeper and wider analysis. Unlike other web services for the scientific community, SciTopics does not focus on any one specific scientific discipline, but is instead open to researchers from all areas of science.

Alongside the up-to-date description in each entry, there is also a summary of the contents, bibliographic references provided by the author, a selection of recent articles and those most cited (from the Scopus database), and links to web pages indexed by Scirus with further information.

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