

Using Google Scholar for Research

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Hello, everyone, and welcome to Using Google Scholar for Research. My name is Kaitlin Hennessy. I'm the program coordinator here at Global Connections. And at Global Connections, our goal is to provide engaging, extracurricular and co-curricular activities for online students.

And throughout the evening, as many of you are already doing, please you do use that chat box to discuss tonight's content, as well as you can submit questions for our presenter. And presenting this evening is Erica England. She is the WSU library liaison for Global Campus. And she's going to get started. Thank you.

ERICA ENGLAND: OK? OK. Hi, everyone. How's it going tonight? So we're quickly going to run through Google Scholar. A lot of people aren't even really sure what Google Scholar is. And so I figured it would be best to start off by talking a little bit about Google Scholar.

It's basically just, well, Google, right? But it's a web search engine that has-- what it does is it actually searches the public web content for scholarly literature and academic work. It is inclusive, and the nice thing about it, it's updated regularly.

So we are going to run through basically the difference between Google and Google Scholar. So you'll see that Google has a very broad scope. It will bring back websites. You'll get in some videos. You'll, of course, also get in some journal articles, whereas Google Scholar is focused on just that research.

And so Google, of course, is ranked by popularity. So Google's going to return what they think is the most relevant and useful results for whatever your search topic is. And Google Scholar, the nice thing is is they rank by the way that academics do. So the first thing that they look at is the citation counts. And this is how many people have actually cited this article.

They also take a look at the author themselves, like how credible those authors are, the publication that it is in, and of course, the actual content of the full text article as well. So Google's a really good place for starting background research. Google Scholar is a really good place for starting your preliminary research.

So the types of information that you'll actually find in Google Scholar is, of course, journal articles. You're also going to get back pre-prints of journal articles. What this is is they are not officially published articles. And so you'll also get back academic books, whether they've been scanned in or they're eBooks. You will get those conference papers-- conference proceedings, usually.

You'll also get a lot of information from university repositories. And so these are academics who have put in their own scholarly work into university repositories. And so they may be the pre-

published versions, or they may actually be the published versions of their journal articles, whatever they've worked out with their publisher.

You'll also find theses and dissertations and, of course, trade publications. But the nice thing is that they actually have court documents in it. And the court documents actually-- the Supreme Court documents found in here date as far back as 1791. And then the state supreme and appellate courts, they date back from 1950. So you should get a lot of really good court information as well.

So tonight, what we're actually going to cover is I take a look at how to actually make sure that what you're searching is what WSU has. That way, you guys can get access to that-- so of course, looking for full-text things. We're also going to take a look at different advanced search techniques that you can actually do. And then, of course, looking at setting up email alerts, things along that line, things that can help you simplify what you are searching.

So there's a couple ways that you can actually get to Google Scholar. The first, of course, is going scholar.google.com. And this is going to pull this up.

You always want to make sure that you're logged in. I'm already logged in. It's just a free Gmail account, basically, is what it is.

So the first thing that you want to do is go over here to the menu-- the hamburger, as I call it-- and click on that. And if you go into Settings, you want to click on Library Links. And so this is really important when you're off campus. When you're on campus, this is automatically going to pull up what we have access to. But when you're off campus, you want to make sure that these four options are checked because they're going to pull back everything that you are going to be able to get immediate access to.

Unfortunately, with Google Scholar, not everything is accessible. And so if we don't have it, or if it's not free out on the web somewhere, they're going to prompt you to pay for that. And in fact, we're going to get to that in a minute.

So the very first thing that you want to do is check to make sure that you have all four of these clicked. If you're out of state, all you have to do is search for "Washington" in this search bar, and it's going to pull up these. Make sure that you actually click on these, all right?

And then the other way to get to it is from the library's web page. Interestingly enough, you cannot search Google Scholar in SearchIt. For whatever reason, it doesn't link to it. And so you actually have to go through the databases list to get to it. And so again, to get to that, you just click on Find Articles, Databases, Databases A to Z, and then click on G for Google. And it's actually going to be on the second page of it. It'll pull up.

And so if you just go down the second page and then scroll down just a little bit, and it's right here. So when you click on this, it is going to automatically-- if you're logged into your WSU

account, then it's automatically going to pull in those WSU links to make sure that you have, OK?

And then from here, you just want to start searching for things, right? And this is just going to be like you would with Google. So keep in mind that you want to do things like more than one word, you want to put quotation marks around them. You want to include those ands if you're going to connect keywords, stuff along that line.

So tonight, we're actually going to be searching for cannibalism. And so we're just going to type it in. And so we're just going to do generic cannibalism right now. And you'll notice over here, right away, we are getting all kinds of information popping up, right? And it can look kind of overwhelming, but it really isn't.

So the ones that say WSU full-text or they have a PDF to, these are the ones that you are actually going to get through the library databases. Some of these, like I said, it's not guaranteed that you're going to get them. But you can just randomly click on these.

And like, for example, this is a book that has been digitized through Google. The problem with Google Books is maybe they don't always have the content, for whatever reason. And so you might not actually get everything in there.

So again, to actually get through what we have, you can click on WSU full-text. And of course, the first one I pull up is not going to pull up nicely for me. And what it will do is it will pull up the record in SearchIt.

And then again, all you have to do is click on the database title, and it should hopefully pull up-- yeah, here's the actual record. Of course, always read your abstract to make sure that it's relevant to your topic. But then to actually access the actual article, you want to look for either where it says View Full Text, or you want to look for the PDF symbol. And that's going to give you the actual article.

So to go back to our search-- so again, there's a couple things that you can do. If you start taking a look at the actual records-- so you'll notice here, we have, "cited by 924." This means 924 articles have actually cited this article.

And so if you click on Cited By, it actually will pull up every single article that will cite it. And again, you can go through, and you can see what we have access to and what we don't have access to. And so that is really nice when you are looking at a comprehensive overview or you are looking for updated information about whatever your topic is.

And then what else is really nice is over here under Related Articles, this is going to pull up all of the information that Google has deemed is related to your actual article. So again, if you click on this, it's going to pull up all of the articles that are related to whatever your topic is. Again,

all you have to do is click on the PDF, which will pull up the article for you. Or you can go through WSU and see what's going on there.

So let's say that we-- if you notice within our results, we're getting a whole bunch of different types of cannibalism. Like, we're getting cannibalism in humans. We're getting them in spiders. We're getting them in insects.

So if we wanted to look-- let's say we wanted to look at just cannibalism in humans. We would just change our search terms, right? And so again, you'll see that we're getting a ton of stuff over here. But when you started looking over here on the left-hand side, this is where it gets really nice. Like, you can actually look at what the most recent articles are that were published, or you can actually go back to see what's going on.

So if we-- actually, let's undo this. If we want to see what was published between-- I don't know-- 2000 and 2010-- and we just want to search. Now we have narrowed down our search. This is really important for a couple reasons. Number one, especially if your instructor says it's got to be published before 1950, anything along that line, it will, of course, only give you those publications.

But then, it's a really nice way to look at what the most recent articles that are pertaining to your topics are. The STEM, medical fields, you want to make sure that you're not using anything older than five to seven years because it's going to be considered outdated at that point.

And then you'll notice over here, you can either sort by the date, or you can sort by relevance. This is, again, what Google has deemed is the most relevant for your topics. So if you click on Sort by Date, this is actually going to be all of the articles that have been published recently in the order, the date of publication, whatever-- the most recent publication there is, OK? All right.

So if you look over here on the left-hand side, you can actually start creating alerts for what you are searching. So if you just simply click on this, it's going to pull up what your search term is that you're using. And the nice thing is is when you actually create this alert, when something new comes in, they actually email you. And so it's a really nice way of keeping current with whatever your topic is.

And so to create it, you just want to put in whenever your search query is, and then click Create Alert. And then here it is, right? And it's really nice because when you go back into your Google Scholar account, if you click on My Library-- why is it not going to show up? Well, that's not going to work. This is the story of my life today.

So actually, yeah, I don't know why it's not going to work. We're going to go back in, and we're going to redo this. OK, cannibalism in humans, we're going to create a new alert. Oh, this is why, because nothing-- of course. Nothing has been updated yet, right?

So what you want to do is when you go through and you see what is going to be the most interesting to you, you can click on these stars. And let's say we wanted to look at this one, and we wanted to look at this one, and we thought these were going to be interesting. This is actually what's going to be saved under My Library. Sorry about that.

And so what's nice from here is that you can-- of course, if you're not going to use it, you're going to delete it. You can actually export this, and it exports into RefWorks, all kinds of different citations management tools. You can actually add your own labels to this. And that will actually help you with keeping track of what you want to actually use this source for within your research, OK? All right.

And then under here, if you look at Advanced Search, you'll see that it brings up all kinds of different ways that you can narrow down your topic. The first four fields are going to bring up different search terms. It's going to do different things with them.

And then, of course, you can also look at what your author-- other works they have published. The publications themselves-- like, you can just search within particular journals, things along that line. And then, of course, you can look at the publication dates as well.

And then-- good grief. OK, and then one last thing is looking for court information. So if we're looking again for cannibalism in humans, what you can do is we're already searching for articles here. But if you click the hamburger again and go down to Case Law, it's actually going to pull out court materials that deal with cannibalism in humans.

And I think this is really interesting. It's all court proceedings, court rulings, court opinions, things along that line. And of course, you can look if you want to just look at particular areas. Maybe we want to look at cannibalism in humans in Florida.

And so that's a really nice way. Over here on the left-hand side, you can actually look. Like, maybe we just want to look at federal courts, federal court rulings, right? Or if you click on Select Courts, it's going to pull up all of the different courts that you can look at. And here, just to change things, if you can Clear All, it gets rid of everything.

If we just wanted to see what Washington has, we would select that and then hit Done. And oh, we're still searching for Florida. So let's take out "in Florida." And let's search. OK, now we're not [INAUDIBLE].

Let me just go back and do cannibalism in Washington. There we go. And you'll see that there are four court rulings-- they're very interesting-- but that deal with cannibalism in the state of Washington.

And then, of course, this will work for anything. Let's say you're not going to research cannibalism. Let's say instead, you're doing health insurance. So of course, when you look at health insurance, you want to make sure that you are putting that in quotation marks because

it's more than one word. Otherwise, you would be searching health and insurance and health insurance.

And so when you click on this, of course, it's going to bring up all of the different health insurance issues. Again, you can look at breaking it down by federal courts. We're still looking at Washington courts.

And so now we can start looking at things like maybe we want to go back and see what's going on with health insurance in Florida. And at this point, you can just start narrowing it down differently, set up alerts, all kinds of different things.

So you don't always have to go in over here when you are on the actual homepage. You can just start searching right here with case laws. You don't always have to go in that way, all right?

So that's about it for me. That was a really quick Google Scholar overview for you guys.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: We do have a few questions.

ERICA ENGLAND: Sure.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: So our first question asks, are results limited to peer-reviewed content, especially theses and dissertations?

ERICA ENGLAND: They unfortunately are not. And that's kind of why you want to you still just do this for preliminary research. But that's why it is so important that you do actually go into those library databases. That way, you can filter out and you can look at just scholarly peer-reviewed articles at that point.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Excellent. Another question asks, does Google Scholar use the asterisks as a wildcard in the same way as Google? Is there a different wildcard to use in place of individual characters? For example, if we don't know whether the name is Atkins or Adkins, could we use A*kins or some other wildcard?

ERICA ENGLAND: In that case-- so the asterisk is used for what's called truncation searching. And that's really useful when it is at the end of the word-- so, for example, if we were looking at environment or environmental or environmentally. And so if we put in "environment" with an asterisk and we actually search, we should be getting-- oh no, we're still in case law. We should be getting all kinds of variations of that word.

So when you're searching for, like, an author and you're not really sure on the spelling, what I would actually do is if you put in "Atkins," you want to use the "or" in this. And what that is doing is it's going to search for both of those terms. And then you can just search for it, and it's going to pull up the results that way.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Excellent. And then, how do we link WSU resources to Google Scholar search? Can we access WSU library resources with just a Gmail account? Can you demonstrate that process again?

ERICA ENGLAND: About how to set up?

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Yeah.

ERICA ENGLAND: Yeah, sure. Yeah, so when you log into Google Scholar-- again, this is just your Gmail account information. Over here, if you click on this little hamburger, go down to Settings, and then click on Library Links.

Since I'm on campus, it's already going to search for these. Chances are you guys are not on campus right now. And so what you actually want to do is you want to type in "Washington," and then search for this. And it's going to pull up all of the universities in Washington.

In fact, if we searched for Washington State University, it should just pull up all of ours. Yeah, so if you type in "Washington State University," it's going to pull up the one that you have access to. You just want to make sure that you click these.

The Open WorldCat, this is actually catalogs of books. And so it's going to pull in book materials as well that are open and free online. Or again, if you want to just simply things and go through the library's website, that is from-- if you click on Find Articles, Databases, go down to Databases A to Z, go to G, scroll over one more page to page two, it's going to be right here.

And then when you are in here, you're going to automatically get everything that WSU does have, OK?

KAITLIN HENNESSY: And we have a clarification on the use of the asterisk.

ERICA ENGLAND: Sure. Yeah.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: So does that mean that there is not a character wildcard that can be used other than at the end of a word?

ERICA ENGLAND: Not that I'm aware of, yeah. I mean, there may be. I don't know. And if there is, please email me and let me know. Yeah, definitely. But I don't think that there is.

The asterisk is just usually used at the base of a word. And that way, it searches for different variations of what that base ending could be. Sometimes, it could be used at the beginning of a word, but that's rarely used. It's usually at the end of it.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: And do you have any expert or advanced user tips for Google Scholar?

ERICA ENGLAND: I don't. I really don't, I mean, other than going in over here to the advanced searching and then going through this way, just to narrow it down a little bit more because when you actually go in and you start doing your search, you may get 33,000 results. And so if you can go in and narrow it down by the particular journal that you're looking at or the dates that you're looking at, that is the best way.

Again, this is Google, and it is information overload, as wonderful as it is. But they are just scouring the internet. And so it's not just refined to what our library has access to. It is everything that's out there that they can find.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: OK. And then if one is looking for a broad spectrum of hits, is there a way to transition to Google Scholar in the middle of a Google search?

ERICA ENGLAND: Not that I'm aware of. No, I don't think that there is. It's just like everything else that's on Google. It's very user-friendly, but each thing is separate, whether it's Google Slides or anything along any of those products that they have. This is just one of the things that they offer, yeah.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Excellent. And if anyone does have any other questions, please get those into the chat box now. Otherwise, I would like to ask you to please fill out our event survey at connections.wsu.edu/eventsurvey. And I will put that link in the chat box in a moment to let us know what you thought of tonight's program, and also let us know what you would like to see the future.

And we do have another question, asking, does Google Scholar have an image search capability?

ERICA ENGLAND: Oh, hm. You know, I don't know if they do, but that is something we can google. So basically, the nice thing about Google is it's very user-friendly. And so if you do have questions about Google Scholar, you can just google them.

So let's see. Well, according to this, it doesn't look like you can do imaging searching within Google Scholar. No, it doesn't look like you can.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: And another question asks, is there an email or help desk for Google Scholar-- so if you want help using it.

ERICA ENGLAND: Hm, I do know that they do give these tips, which it's really useful. But I don't think that there's a way that you can actually contact them. There's a lot of frequently asked questions. But I don't think that there's a certain help desk at all.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: And could they get a hold of their subject librarians if they did need help?

ERICA ENGLAND: Oh yeah, definitely. Yes, definitely. And of course, let me show you real quick how you find those. The easiest way is if you click on this Research button and scroll down just a little bit, it says Librarian Subject Specialists right here. So look for who works with your particular discipline. And of course, they're always here to help you, yeah.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: Excellent. And that looks like all the questions we have for tonight.

ERICA ENGLAND: OK, awesome.

KAITLIN HENNESSY: And thank you all so much for attending, and please do let us know what you thought of tonight's program at connections.wsu.edu/eventsurvey. And have a good evening. Thanks, Erica.

ERICA ENGLAND: Bye. Thank you.