Google Scholar: quick user guide

What is Google Scholar?
In the last few years, the Google search engine producers have used Google’s searching technology to develop another search engine with the academic community in mind, called Google Scholar. Google Scholar is more like a database than a search engine. It is also very popular but must be used with care.

You can use Google Scholar to search specifically for academic-type material such as peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, preprints, abstracts and technical reports. It will retrieve information from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories and universities, as well as electronic journal articles.

When should I use Google Scholar?
- Use Google Scholar in conjunction with bibliographic resources such as Social Science Citation Index. If you only use Google Scholar you will miss a lot of excellent material;
- Use Google Scholar to find out if a journal article or book is available online (after you have checked the University’s Library Catalogue);
- Google Scholar will often locate reviews of books which may help you to decide whether a book is worth ordering as an interlibrary loan or not.

Accessing Google Scholar
Google Scholar is freely available and can be accessed directly at: http://scholar.google.co.uk

Searching Google Scholar
To get the best out of Google Scholar (and the Google search engine itself) it is advisable to use the Advanced Search facility.

Click on the drop-down arrow in the main Scholar search box to select the Advanced Scholar Search.

Here you can carry out a sophisticated search with dates, phrases, author names and other options – for example:

Note that truncation (e.g. using cultur* to find culture, cultures, cultural etc.) of words is not possible.
Viewing and downloading results

When you have found some useful search results on Google Scholar, look for the Full Text @ York link in some references. This is similar to Find It @ York for our electronic journals. It means the e-journal or e-book is subscribed to at York and therefore the article or chapter is available to you in full text.

There are a few points to bear in mind about the results that you retrieve:

- The online documents which the search engine retrieves are not necessarily available to you: i.e. the University of York will not necessarily have full text access to the resources that Google Scholar finds;
- School websites are included in Google Scholar so the scope is not always appropriate for UK Higher Education.

Full text at York

When you use a campus–networked PC, Google Scholar will automatically link to the University Library Catalogue so that you can check whether the books and journal articles in your list of results are available in the Library. If you are using a PC off campus, it is possible to set your preferences within Google Scholar so that you can still see the Full text at York links. To do this:

- Click Settings (Settings top right corner) and then on Library links;
- In the Library links section, type in University of York and click on Search;
- Then click the tickbox next to University of York Library;
- Click on Save.

Exporting results into Endnote

Google Scholar can be set-up to allow you to download the references into Endnote:

- Click Settings (Settings top right corner);
- Scroll down to the Bibliographic Manager section and select Show links to import citations into;
- Select the Endnote option and Save the changes;
- When you search Google Scholar you will now see an Import into Endnote link with each result, click on this link to download each (single) reference into Endnote.

Note that the information downloaded from Google Scholar is very limited. Abstracts, keywords or other additional information which you will find on bibliographic databases are not included. You can only download one reference at a time, instead of downloading large numbers of results. In addition, as your results may not map to the correct Endnote field you will need to check your results.

For all of these reasons you may prefer to search our online databases available via the E-resources Guide http://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/e-resources instead - downloading from these will give you fuller information in EndNote, allow you to download large sets of results and will also enable you to use advanced search features, create search alerts etc.