



## Using Google for Academic Research

### 5 Keys to Success

In recent years the Internet has given us the opportunity to conduct research without the need to visit the library. We can easily type in a search phrase and quickly find a multitude of results that may or may not meet our needs. We should be aware of the possible biases and lack of credibility in the information we find. Here are five ways to use Google for academic-quality research.

1. **Use credible sources** – A quick Google search on almost any topic will return seemingly unlimited results, but how many of those are from credible sources? Put more faith in sources from government agencies, academic institutions and faculty, and non-profit organizations, than from those at for-profit companies and unaffiliated individuals.
2. **Expand your search the right way** – It may be tempting to use the first few search results and avoid digging deeper to save time, but going beyond that first page will help round out your research by finding less common search results that offer alternative points of view. Another great way to find alternate points of view is to click on the “*Similar pages*” link on the search result that meets your criteria.
3. **Explore new tools from the Google lab** – Google is always coming up with new ways to search for things. Try Google Book Search (<http://books.google.com/>), Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/>), and Google News (<http://news.google.com/>). These tools allow users to search unique repositories of information that were previously more difficult to access.
4. **Refine your search by using advanced search** – Using Google’s advanced search, users can narrow their search by a wide array of criteria. For example, to search only the websites of academic institutions, input “.edu” into the domain field. You can also narrow your result by language, for example to find only articles in *Spanish*, and by file type, for example only search for *PDF* files that meet the criteria.
5. **Keep searching** – Since the Internet is full of information minefields, with so many sources that may lack credibility, it’s important to find at least three independent sources that verify any critical information needed for the research. If all of the sources have used similar research methods and have the same findings, the information is most likely accurate than if all three sources differ in their results.