

# Guidelines for Searching Literature

## General

When you search for literature, a natural starting point is to evaluate the list of references of a known paper (typically the main paper you are supposed to study). A single article can thus serve as an important source of information for your literature search. However, you should *always* consult other sources, too. This is because the list of references in any article is necessarily selective. In addition, by evaluating the list of references of any given article, you restrict yourself to papers that have been published before the article you are evaluating. In the following, we list several ways to conduct an in-depth search for literature.

Before we turn to the search strategies, a word of caution is warranted. You should be aware that there exist two types of scientific literature. The first type is work published mostly in scientific journals (like the *American Economic Review*, the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, the *Journal of Public Economics*, etc.). These journals contain work that has been thoroughly checked in a peer-review process. The second type is work that often has not been checked by anybody: researchers all over the world just publish their fresh output to make it available to other researchers and the general public. Nowadays, most researchers just put online their fresh output on their web pages. There are also discussion paper or working paper series that publish unchecked (not peer-reviewed) work. Well-known series are the NBER Working Papers or the CESifo Working Papers. We encourage you to search this literature, because it often contains the newest and therefore most exciting work. But you should keep in mind that the peer-review process makes a difference.

## Options for online search

1. Search in catalogues
2. Search in scientific journals
3. Search using search engines

### *1. Library catalogues*

Library catalogues contain all publications available in a given library. Please note that collections (books with essays of different authors) and periodicals (newspapers and journals) are only listed as such (so you cannot see the individual articles contained in the collection or journal). Catalogues can be searched systematically for authors, keywords, titles, or years.

- OPAC-Server of FAU's University Library

### *2. Scientific journals*

The Electronic Journals Library offers a large collection of scientific journals. It can be searched for journals and current articles, and you can check if the journals you are looking for are available online. However, there is no keyword search.

- Electronic Journals Library of FAU's University Library

### *3. Search engines*

Internet search engines provide a simple alternative when searching for articles and authors:

- RePEc: In the RePEc (Research Papers in Economics) database, you can search for working papers, journal articles, or articles of certain authors. Working papers are freely available.
- Google Scholar: Google Scholar offers a general search for scientific literature. It also displays other articles that might be relevant for your search, the citation frequency, and the citation list of articles.
- ScienceDirect: In addition to the searched article, the database of ScienceDirect lists other articles that might be relevant for your search. Access to the articles is often restricted (you can only access abstracts and bibliography). However, if you do your search from within the university network, access is unrestricted.
- EBSCO: The EBSCOhost Online Research Database is similar to the ScienceDirect database. Access to the articles is restricted. However, if you do your search from within the university network, access is unrestricted.