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HANDS ON LITERATURE SEARCH

AN INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS
HANDS-ON GUIDES, VOL. 3
1ST EDITION
VERSION 1.03

PREAMBLE

Welcome to my guide on literature search!

The current amount of documented knowledge is tremendous. You do not need to start at the beginning. Moreover, you are not allowed to start at the beginning. We cannot neglect what has been done so far. Therefore, it is important to know where we can search for existing knowledge, how we can search for it, and how we can do it effectively. That is why I have written this document. Many recommendations are based on the UZH environment.

Target group for this document:

Students and participants in our courses

Motivating force behind this document:

to enhance your literature search

Objective of this document:

This document should offer you operational ideas on literature search.

And now, let's start.

Welcome and enjoy.

René Algesheimer, January 2010

1. DO NEVER START WITH...

“Attempt the end, and never stand to doubt;
Nothing's so hard but search will find it out.”

Robert Herrick

Before you start searching, no matter what for, stop (think about Edward Bear) and reflect on what you are searching for and why. First, do not start by feeding the Google window with key words. Of course, this yields many results, but it takes up a lot of time to sort out the good ones from the bad ones. On the other hand, a very good starting point is often a portal to a rich body of existing work that helps you decide on your next steps. Second, do not start with Wikipedia either. You all know that Wikipedia is “reviewed” by anyone, no matter whether he or she is an expert or not, no matter whether they have specific interests and use Wikipedia as a platform for advertising, for turning the spotlight on them, or...

Thus: Always start with major authors in major journals and search for their latest publication. Often you can also send them an email to ask for work in progress. Your professors will help you identify scientists relevant to your topic.

2. USE CITATION SOFTWARE

After reading for some time, you will lose your overview quickly and forget where a specific quote is from ... Therefore, you should start early using citation software, such as Citavi or Endnote. A good idea is to attend a course in your local library on this citation software before you plan to use it. There are plenty of opportunities and they will support your work.

We use the Citavi software. Working with our department therefore means that you are asked to deliver your bibliography in the Citavi format along with all pdf-files you used.

3. SEARCH

In the following, I am going to present a selection of tools that I find necessary for the search for literature. Nevertheless, if I have missed important ones, do not hesitate to contact me.

3.1 Virtual Private Network (VPN)

If you have not installed it yet, do it now. With this “safe” channel to the University of Zurich, you have access from your home office or elsewhere to all major search facilities at the UZH.

Source:

<http://www.id.uzh.ch/dl/mobil/zugaenge/vpn.html>

3.2 Search Options at UZH

This is the starting point for all literature-based searches at the UZH:

Source:

http://www.hbz.uzh.ch/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=272&Itemid=38

You can also call up the library’s main page:

Source:

<http://www.hbz.uzh.ch>

If you have just started your career at the UZH, or you are on the point of heading for a thesis at the UZH, it is always a good idea to participate in the introductory courses in literature search at the UZH:

Source:

http://www.hbz.uzh.ch/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=218&Itemid=110

Besides the main library and the central library, we also have a library for the business and economics faculty. Everything to this library can be found here:

Source:

<http://www.irc.uzh.ch/bfb>

You will also find copies of the course book material in this library.

Finally, the IEW’s list is a very good collection of bookmarks for searches:

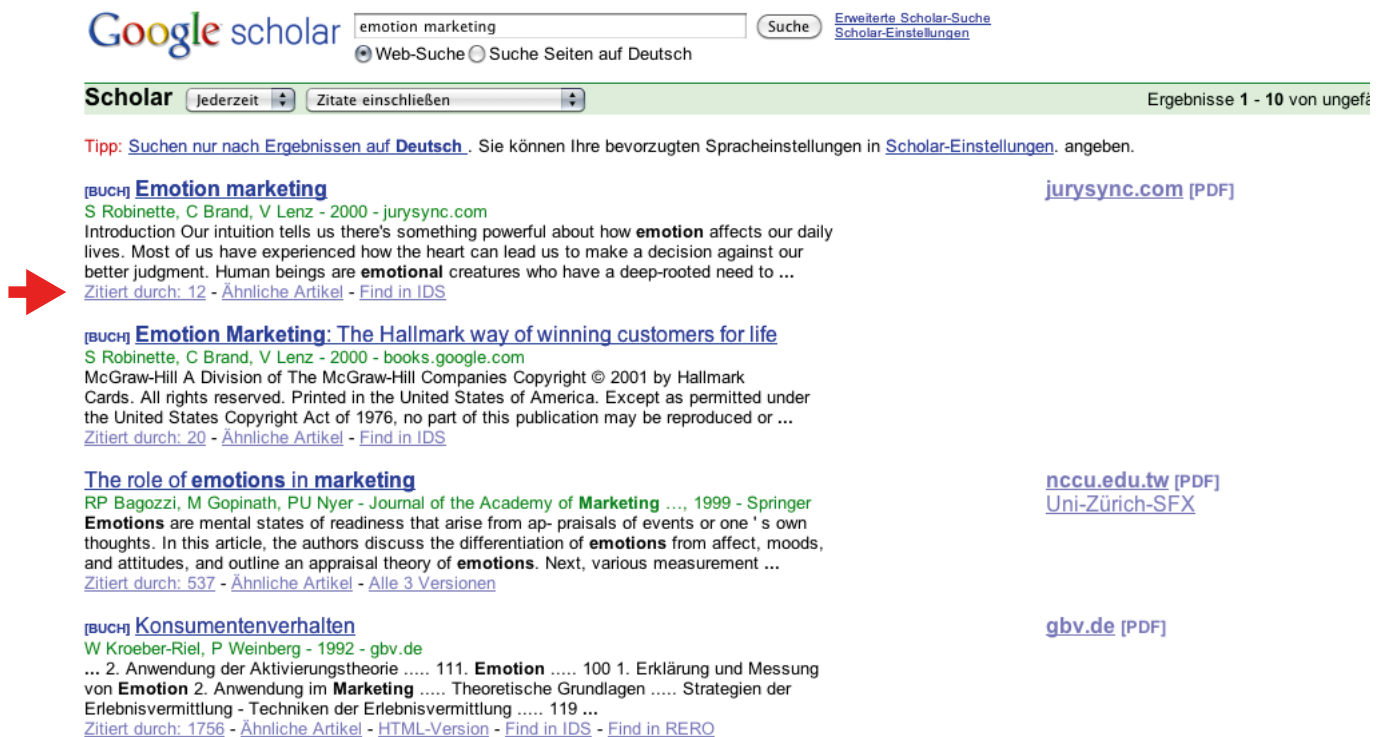
<http://www.iew.uzh.ch/library/recherche.html>

3.3 You do not know your target

If you do not know the target, i.e. you do not know a specific author, a specific journal ...then a good place to start with is Google Scholar.



Search for keywords you are interested in. When you receive the results look first at those that have the highest number of citations. Unfortunately (to my knowledge), there is no way to sort the results by the number of citations. However, in most cases, the articles or books with a higher rate of citations are listed at the beginning.



Google Scholar also delivers the key authors in your area of research. They are linked, so, when you follow them, you will find all of their work.

Wesentliche Autoren: [W Kroeber-Riel](#) - [P Weinberg](#) - [M Holbrook](#) - [R Oliver](#) - [R Bagozzi](#)

Furthermore, if you click on the citations button, you will get all papers that cite the article you focus on. Thus, if you have already found an interesting article, you may want to see where this one was cited. If you then look again at the number of citations or the quality of that journal, you will get a fairly good impression of the quality of the original article.

Having carried out this kind of search, you should have a bunch of articles that you are interested in. Then you can proceed with 3.4.

Source: scholar.google.com

3.4 You know your target

If you know your target journal, then the EZB is the best place to turn to and to continue your search.

Elektronische Zeitschriften-Bibliothek Regensburg (EZB)

This is a good (maybe the best) starting point if you already know the journal or article that you are interested in. Here you search for names of journals and editions.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek (EZB). The header includes the title 'Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek' and logos for the University of Zurich and the Zentralbibliothek Zurich. Below the header, there are navigation links like 'Unser Angebot' and 'Einstellungen'. The main content area is titled 'Die Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek' and describes the service as a cooperative of 553 libraries. It lists search options: 'nach Fächern', 'alphabetisch', and 'suchen'. There is a search bar with a 'suchen' button. A section titled 'Kontakt' lists 'Ansprechpartner' and 'Titelvorschlag'. At the bottom, there is a footer with copyright information (© 1997-2010), a link to the Regensburg website, and logos for the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung and the DFG.

Source: <http://rzblx1.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit>

This first portal should support you in being successful in your literature search. Updates are coming up.

Good search!

APPENDIX: LIST OF HANDS-ON GUIDES

Vol. 1	Hands on Curriculum
Vol. 2	Hands off Plagiarism
Vol. 3	Hands on Literature search (@ UZH)
Vol. 4	Hands on Presentations
Vol. 5	Hands on e.Learning with OLAT
Vol. 6	Hands on Scientific Writing

Other hands-on guides are already in preparation. If you have suggestions or do have an update for a guide, please let us know. Feedback is always appreciated.