

FINDING JOURNAL ARTICLES & PAPERS

Why is looking for journal articles on Google a bad idea?

When you search for articles and papers on Google, you will most likely find technical reports, corporate papers, sales documents, student projects, class notes, etc. These are not the proper content for a research bibliography. You need to find journal papers, and possibly conference papers. So instead of using Google (= Garbage), do the following:

1. Go to www.lib.clemson.edu
2. Click on the link 'Find Articles & Databases' then choose the subject (in our case, 'Engineering'). What you get now is a list of databases which have references to most journal and conference publications. The ones which are of most interest to us are :
 - Engineering Index (Compendex)
 - INSPEC
 - IEEE Xplore
 - ACM Digital Library
3. Search for articles in any or all of the above databases. Some results may provide a link to the whole paper available, but most will just have the citation (title, journal, authors), or possibly the abstract.
4. To obtain the full text for a paper of interest, go back to www.lib.clemson.edu and go to the 'E-journal finder' link. You must have the journal title and the issue (year, volume, etc) of the article from the previous step. Put that information in here to find the paper. If the paper is of interest, print out a hard copy. Keeping only electronic copies is a sure way to never read some papers.

How should you manage all the papers that you find?

1. Try to separate relevant papers into a few piles (3-8 piles), according to topic. For example, one pile may include papers that talk about the core math involved in your research problem, one pile may cover computational aspects of the problem, and another pile may cover applications to real-world problems. The topics of the piles will evolve as you read more papers, and begin to understand how the larger research community has organized previously published research in this area. Eventually, each pile will lead to a paragraph in your thesis/publications describing related work.
2. For the core pile of papers that deals with research most relevant to your problem, use the discussion of related work and bibliography in those papers to guide your further search. When you see many cross-references in this pile of papers, you know that you have compiled most of the work going on in your field of interest.