

WHERE TO LOOK

how to choose a search tool

	DISCOVERY SEARCH	DATABASES	GOOGLE SCHOLAR	GOOGLE
What's in it?	All of Virginia Tech's physical collection and most electronic content: books, ebooks, videos, magazine articles, journal articles, newspaper articles, and more.	Wide variety of content types depending on database. May be dedicated to a type of content, like newspaper articles, or to a particular subject area.	Scholarly journal articles, theses, books, court opinions, and abstracts.	Anything that's available on the internet: newspapers, magazine articles, government documents, blogs, social media, organization homepages, and more.
How do I access it?	Via lib.vt.edu to be authenticated as part of the VT community.	Via lib.vt.edu to be authenticated as part of the VT community.	Via scholar.google.com .	Via google.com .
What's it really good at?	Finding books and ebooks, items from many disciplines, or items from a wide range of source types. Preliminary searching when you're just getting started.	Finding items in a specific discipline or narrow scope. Narrowing your search using filters and limiters specific to a particular database.	Finding items that are freely available in institutional repositories and other places on the web. Finding out who has cited published items.	Finding freely-available government information, some statistics, and other information that isn't necessarily available in a book or article. Conducting background research.
Anything to watch out for?	Broad scope can mean a very large number of results. Use filters or advanced search to narrow results.	Narrow scope of individual databases can mean searching multiple databases.	Can be difficult to get a manageable number of results because few search limiters are available. Not all results from scholarly, peer-reviewed journals.	Often get a large number of results. Sometimes difficult to discern the context and thus the credibility of items found online.
Is full text available?	Yes. Request non-linked items through interlibrary loan.	Yes. Request non-linked items through interlibrary loan.	Maybe. Connect Scholar to VT Libraries for most access.	Maybe. Some items may be behind a paywall. Check Discovery Search for access.