جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي
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International Student Perceptions of Google Scholar ™

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Research Design

1. Research Question. How do international students use Google Scholar™ for their research needs?
2. Focus groups. Conduct focus groups with 16 undergraduate students, grouped by class year.

3. Code. Code all interviews using Atlas.ti.

4. Verify. Re-code and verify.

5. Analyze.

"I mean, I personally, I really like Google Scholar like I know that's not a very like accepted thing, but I feel like Google Scholar is a really easy interface to use." -- 4th year history major

Key Findings:

Easy access: Students find that Google Scholar™ is easier to use than traditional library databases. The familiar interface and unseen IP authentication allow for seamless access to online materials. They also find that Google Scholar ™ allows them to avoid placing an interlibrary loan request, which can seem like a tedious process.

Discoverability: Students find that Google Scholar™ retrieves more relevant and focused articles than traditional library databases. They view Google Scholar™ as a suitable search engine for their research needs.

Faculty use: Faculty and peer tutors discuss and promote the use of Google Scholar™ in the classroom. Students see these experts using Google Scholar™ and emulate their behavior.

Timeliness: Students find that Google Scholar™ is a quick and efficient tool to locate research materials.

First and last stop: Students who use library resources tend to use Google Scholar™ as a first and/or last stop in the research process to ensure that they found all the relevant information possible.

Students of all levels use Google Scholar™: Students from every undergraduate year reported using Google Scholar™ frequently.

Recommendations:

Library instruction: Librarians should teach Google Scholar™. Ignoring the resource is not beneficial to students.

Source evaluation: Teach students to authentically evaluate sources, for example using CRAP or BEAM.

Open access: Librarians must teach students about open access materials so students are able to identify these sources over illegal online resources such as SciHub.

Library contribution: Google Scholar™ works in tandem with library subscriptions to provide access to materials. Graduation affects future access.

Teach the teachers: Students learn from their professors and mimic their research behaviors. Librarians must partner with faculty members to educate them about library resources.

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