

Exercise #1
SJSU
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I have chosen to investigate ethics, values, and foundational principals of library and information professionals and their role in the promotion of intellectual freedom. The ethical challenges faced by information professionals reflect the escalating worth of information. I feel that the ways in which these challenges are handled are of crucial importance to society.

Information provides the means to knowledge, which in turn forms the basis for cultural expression and self-realization. The pursuit of goals, a vital aspect of human nature, is dependent on information seeking. Therefore, humans must have political and moral rights to ensure free and equal access to information (Freeman & Peace, 2005; Mason, 1986). Although the rights to privacy, intellectual freedom, and free speech are protected by Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, they must be balanced with the needs of society as a whole. Librarians and information professionals regularly experience the tension between these opposing forces.

As the future moves towards an environment in which humans increasingly depend on digital information and technology, access, ownership, and control of information take on an unprecedented significance. An ethical approach to the collection, storage, and use of information is essential (Floridi, 2010). Information professionals are continually required to rely not only on a broad code of ethics and set of core values, but also on their own background knowledge, morals and values. My interest in this aspect of the information profession drove my research.

In structuring queries, I focused on library and information professionals, intellectual freedom, ethics, and values. With these words and phrases as a starting point, I employed various search strategies. **Table 1** demonstrates the queries I designed to search my topic using Google Scholar and Library and Information Science & Technology Abstracts with Full Text (LISTA). Google Scholar is an intermediary information retrieval system that searches many repositories, while the LISTA service is a primary information retrieval system in which one repository is searched. The number of results for each search reflects their strengths and weakness.

Google Scholar	# of Results	LISTA	# of Results
"intellectual freedom" +library	19,300	DE "LIBRARIANS -- Professional ethics"	53
"information ethics" + "American Library Association"	800	(DE "LIBRARIANS -- Professional ethics") OR (DE "LIBRARY science -- Moral & ethical aspects")	69
~values + "American Library Association"	28,800	DE "LIBRARIANS -- Training of"	149
"information rights" + library	2,240	DE "FREEDOM of information"	189
~ethics + "information professionals"	5,410	DE "LIBRARY science -- Moral & ethical aspects"	23
"information ethics" author:Mason	18	DE "LIBRARY science -- Moral & ethical aspects" AND Mason AU	0
"information ethics" author:Hauptman	11	DE "LIBRARY science -- Moral & ethical aspects" AND Hauptman AU	0
censorship site:ala.org	54	DE "CENSORSHIP in libraries"	33
censorship +ethics	66,000	DE "CENSORSHIP in libraries"	33
intext:privacy +library	2,930,000	DE "INFORMATION policy"	152
intext:confidentiality +library	209,000	DE "CONFIDENTIAL communications -- Library records"	5
Total Results	3,261,633	Total Results	706

Table 1: Query results

Since Google Scholar searches many repositories, queries may yield an unmanageable number of results. Google Scholar does not have the capability of limiting results to a specific type of document. Additionally, users are not able to request Google Scholar to display only results containing links to the full text. Results can, however, be narrowed by the exclusion of case laws, patents and citations, or by date, author, and keywords (**Figure 1**). A Google Scholar search can sometimes be helpful when databases do not hold any required materials. For example, whereas LISTA searches yielded zero results for materials on ethics authored by Mason or Hauptman, Google Scholar provided records for several sources.

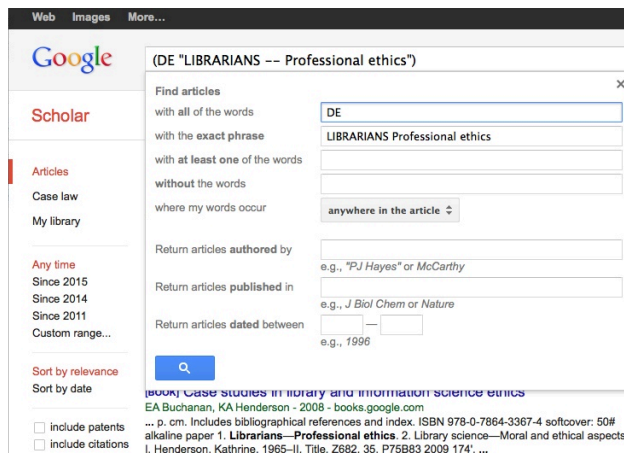


Figure 1. Google Scholar Advanced Scholar Search

When Google Scholar is configured to link to SJSU's library collection, sources that are accessible by the university library are easy to locate. Users can access these materials by clicking on the SJSU GetText link (**Figure 2**). However, electronic versions of these materials may or may not be available.

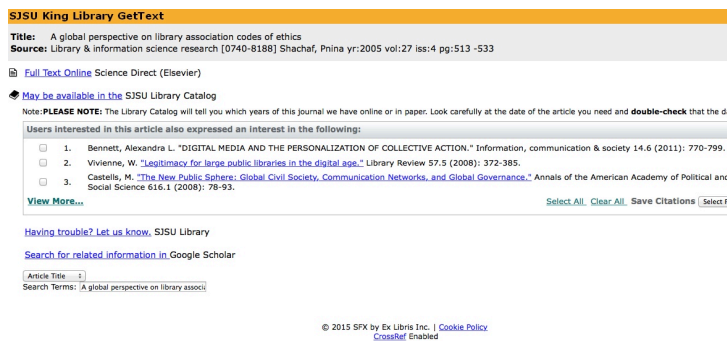


Figure 2. Google Scholar SJSU GetText

Users are able to limit LISTA searches to specific types of resources, such as magazines, scholarly journals, trade publications, magazines, or reviews. It is also possible to display only the results where the full text is available (**Figure 3**). These techniques are extremely helpful in narrowing down the amount of results to include only those that are useful and relevant.

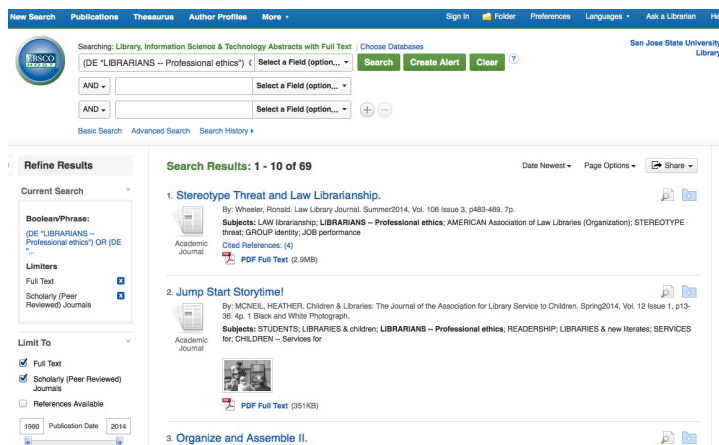


Figure 3. LISTA Advanced Search Techniques

Google Scholar search operators are tools that allow users to more clearly define a search. For example, for information regarding the American Library Association's (ALA) stance on values in information science, the ALA website may be a good starting point. One could use the *site:* operator to

search relevant pages on the ALA website (**Figure 4**). LISTA does not have a similar capability, as this database does not include web pages.

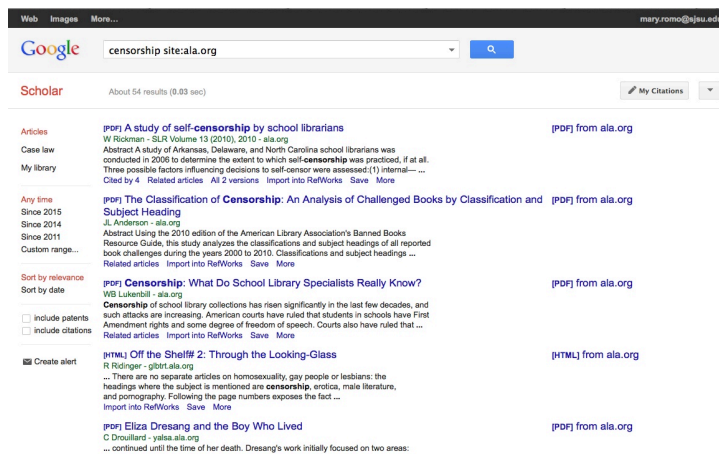


Figure 4. Google Scholar site: Operator Search

The most powerful feature of searching the LISTA database is its thesaurus. Designed by information professionals, the thesaurus helps users clarify and shape their queries in order to produce pertinent and specific results. It can also give users ideas for further research. Users enter a general topic, and are then presented with a list of subject terms, or descriptors (DE), that are related to the topic. Users can select any of these descriptors, along with Boolean phrases, to retrieve articles on a subject (**Figure 5**).

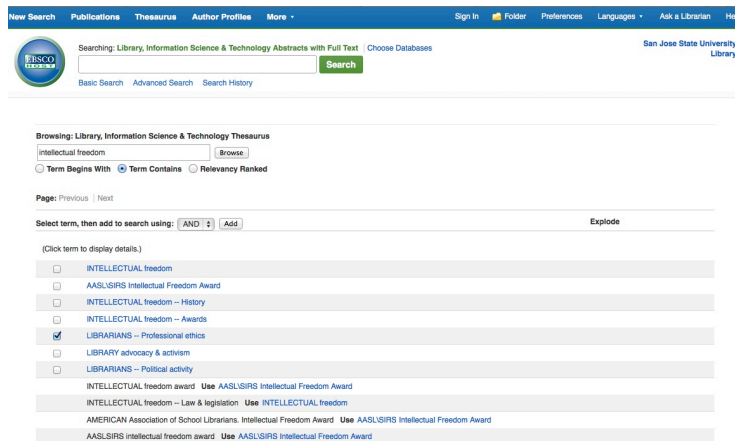


Figure 5. LISTA Thesaurus Subject Terms

RefWorks is a reference software application that is effectively a personal information retrieval system. Both Google Scholar and LISTA facilitate the process of saving citations and full-text articles to RefWorks. Records displayed by Google Scholar include an *Import into RefWorks* link. Clicking on this link automatically saves the citation to the user's personal RefWorks database. PDFs can be downloaded

and attached (**Figure 6**). Citations can also be imported to RefWorks directly from LISTA by clicking on the appropriate link. Users may download a PDF, which can then be saved and attached to the RefWorks record. The process of exporting citations and attaching PDFs from both Google Scholar and LISTA to RefWorks is similar.

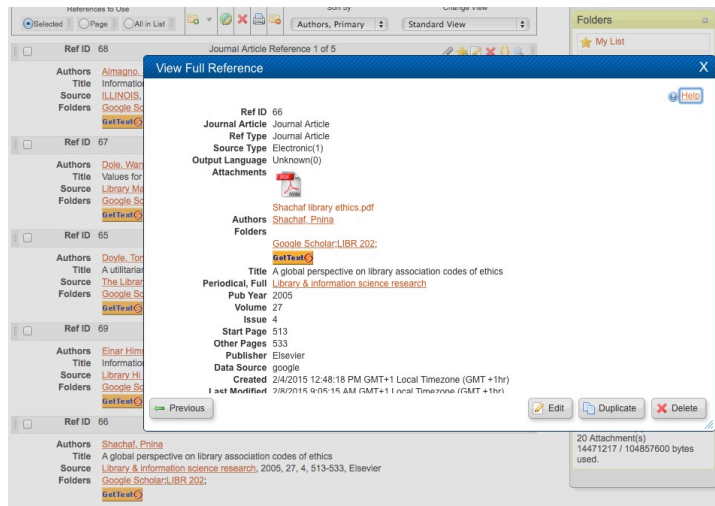


Figure 6. RefWorks Attachment from Google Scholar Resource

RefWorks enables users to organize records into folders, in order to facilitate retrieval. **Figure 9** shows five sources retrieved from Google Scholar pertaining to my topic, and **Figure 10** shows five sources retrieved from LISTA.

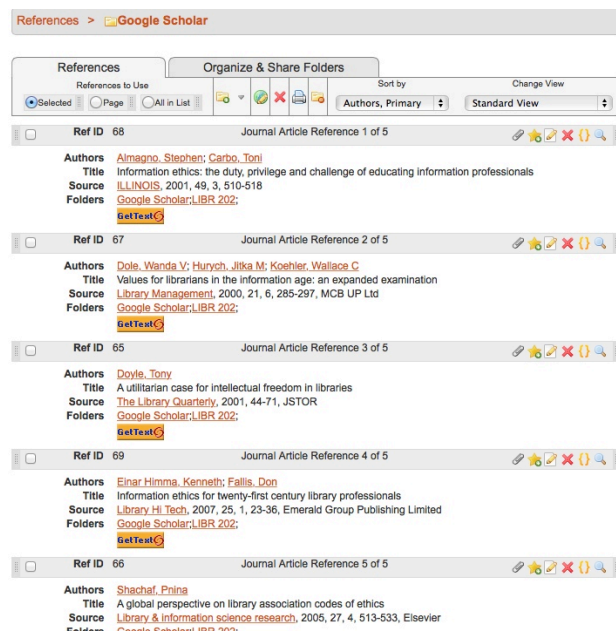


Figure 9. RefWorks Google Scholar Folder

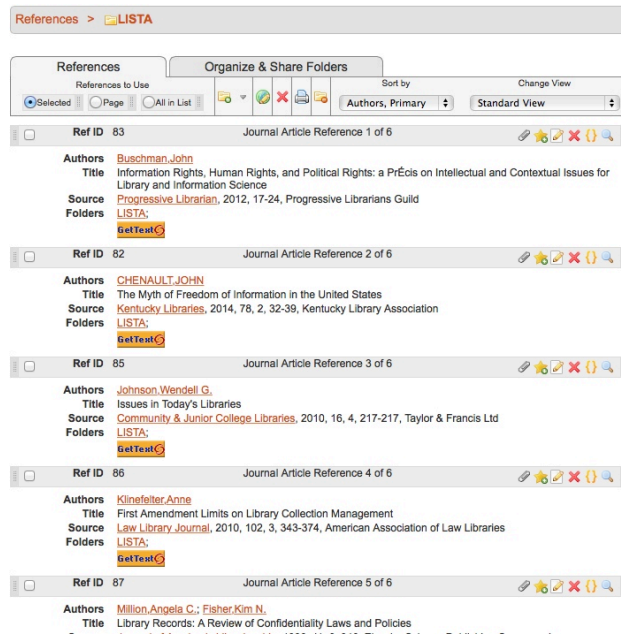


Figure 10. RefWorks LISTA Folder

In conducting my research, I found that the most frustrating aspects of Google Scholar are the uncertainty of accessing full texts, the inability to specify the type of resource needed, and the necessity of scrolling through long pages of unhelpful results. Although these difficulties can, in some cases, be rectified by LISTA's capabilities, the results available from one database may not be sufficient, and may not provide the desired breadth.

Since Google Scholar and LISTA each have different strengths and weaknesses, research work would benefit from a combination of the two information retrieval systems. Resources obtained from both systems would contribute to a well-rounded investigation of ethics, values, and foundational principals of library and information professionals and their role in the promotion of intellectual freedom.

References

- Floridi, L. (2010). Ethics after the information revolution. In L. Floridi (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of information and computer ethics* (pp. 3-19). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Freeman, L. A., & Peace, A. G. (2005). Revisiting Mason: The last 18 years and onward. *Information ethics: Privacy and intellectual property* (pp. 1-18). London: Information Science Publishing.
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