

## TECHNOLOGY & TEACHING

- Using Google Books as a Research Tool

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Google Books -- <http://books.google.com> -- is the world's largest digital library. As of this past June, Google has scanned approximately 12 million books, making its collection about half the size of the Library of Congress and about the same size as Harvard's libraries, the Boston Public Library, and the New York Public Library -- and 20 percent larger than Columbia's collections.

Some scholars and librarians have criticized Google Book's classification and metadata: the cataloguing data that it provides. Nevertheless, there are at least nine ways that Google Books can expedite and supplement your library research.

For many books, including books under copyright, Google Books allows you to preview and conduct full-text searches. This means that you can:

- 1. Check citations:** Google books allows you to find particular phrases in a book, making it easy to ensure that a citation is accurate.
- 2. Track quotations:** If you search for a particular quotation, Google books will show you the volume in which the quotation first appeared.
- 3. Browse:** In many cases, introductions (and sample chapters) of scholarly books under copyright are available online, allowing you to determine whether the book would be useful.
- 4. Read public domain books:** In general, all pre-1923 books of scholarly interest are readable online.
- 5. Download public domain books:** Use the download "button" on the upper right of the page.
- 6. Compare editions:** The category "other editions" allows you to quickly determine what other editions of a particular book are available.
- 7. Find books unavailable in the library:** Because Google scanned books from many research libraries, books unavailable at the library may well be available on Google Books.
- 8. Check the changing usage of words:** You can determine when one word (for example, "happiness") supplanted another word (e.g. "felicity").
- 9. Compare translations:** You can determine how various translators translated key passages in texts.