

Science-specific Search: Bridging the gap in dissemination of and access to information

The amount of free scientific information available to researchers, students and librarians on the Internet is growing at a pace faster than ever before. Students, in particular, are finding it difficult to sift through the multitude of sources available to them on the Web. How can people know what is important and credible? How can they know they're searching the correct web sites?

General search engines such as Google, Yahoo and MSN are search engines more and more used by the academic community, however the information they provide is frequently not credible or verified and therefore users can spend hours searching for the information they need. Complicating matters further is that users need to tediously sift through the non-relevant information that appears in a non-specific search engine.

Science-specific search engines take the guessing out of scientific web search and allow the users to find the information they're looking for quickly and efficiently, thus providing more time for their research projects. Additionally, these search engines are increasingly able to provide the most science-specific up-to-date information available on the Web. Compiling millions of science-specific web sites, full-text articles from scientific publishers and University web sites from around the world, these comprehensive search engines prove invaluable to researchers, students and librarians.

This paper will explore how science-specific search engines can provide thorough and accurate information to students and researchers who want a single place from which to search. Additionally, it will explore how librarians can make use of these types of search engines and how they fit into the catalogue of scientific resources available to researchers. We will also outline the areas where libraries might need other resources to supplement these search engines.