Google Scholar

a jumping off point for your research

This time we will have a closer look at one of the most popular databases - Google Scholar.

As we have already mentioned in our previous lecture, Google Scholar is super accessible because it is **free**. It means that you can use the resource from anywhere you like, the only thing needed is Internet connection.

What can Google Scholar provide you with?

Google Scholar includes journal and conference papers, theses and dissertations, academic books, abstracts, technical reports and other scholarly literature across a range of disciplines and topics. Google Scholar creators promise that you'll find works from a wide variety of academic publishers, professional societies and university repositories. Thus, **articles from all over the web** are indexed in Google Scholar.

Google Scholar database is **regularly updated**. According to the official information on the website, they normally add new papers several times a week. So, you can get access to the most relevant resources in your area of research.

Sounds too good to be true, right?

Well, we have to admit that Google Scholar has a number of limitations.

1. When we find the article we are interested in we feel a natural desire to read it. Abstracts for most of the articles are freely available. As for the articles themselves, full-text versions are not always provided. Unfortunately, reading a full text article may require a further search, and a subscription. Luckily, all links to related websites are provided in search results.

2. Besides, Google Scholar is very much automated. Robots search for articles on the web and “bring” them to the site. This means that rigorous quality control is not always possible.

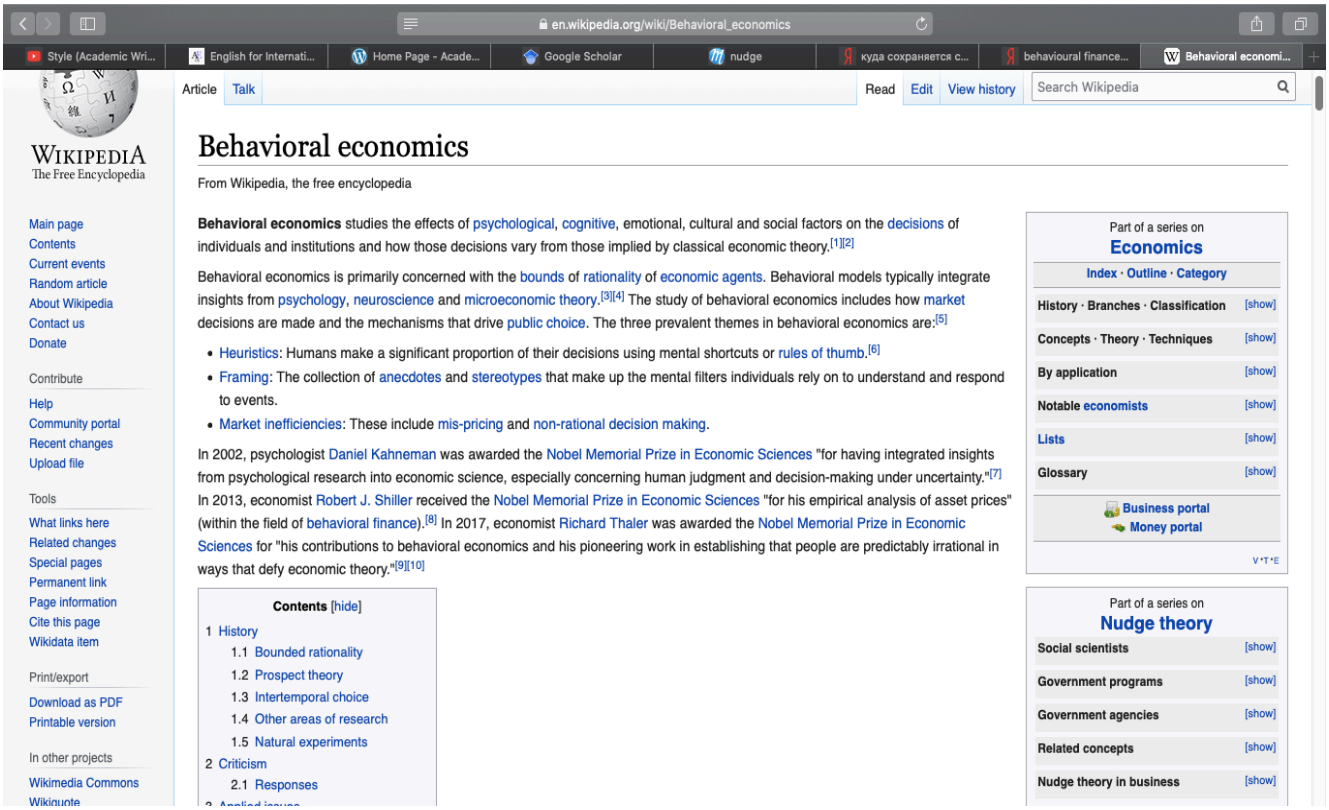
However, Google Scholar is a great jumping off point for your research.

Let’s have a closer look at how it works.

Let’s go to https://scholar.google.com , you’ll be automatically redirected to a Russian-language version of the site, which is rather convenient, but anyway we will be mostly interested in English-language resources by Western scholars, so our search inquiries will include key words in English.

The first thing to do is to decide what exactly you are looking for. You may search for articles by the name of a scholar who is supposed to be the leading figure in your research area, or by key words.

If you're new to the subject, it may be helpful to pick up the terminology from secondary sources. E.g., a Wikipedia article for "behavioral economics" might suggest a Scholar search for "behavioral finance", “nudge theory”, “behavioral game theory”, etc. The same Wiki article will suggest search inquiries for Daniel Kahneman, Robert J. Shiller, Richard Thaler.



Let's try one of these names first and then key words. We type "behavioral finance" and click "search".

The first two lines of each result provide the title of the document (e.g. of an article, book, chapter, or report). The second line provides the bibliographic information about the document, in order: the author(s), the journal or book it appears in, the year of publication, and the publisher. Clicking on the title link will bring you to the publisher's page where you may be able to access more information about the document including the abstract.

Below the text snippet/abstract you can find a number of useful links. The first of these is the **Cited by** link which will show other articles that have cited this resource. That is a super useful feature that can help you in many ways. First, it is a good way to track the more recent research that has referenced this article, and second the fact that other researches cited this document means that it is a reliable source.

Clicking on the quotation mark icon will display a popup with commonly used citation formats such as MLA, APA, Chicago, Harvard that may be copy-pasted.

Very importantly, your search results are normally sorted by relevance, not by date. (Google Scholar attempts to bring the more relevant results to the top of the results list). To find newer articles, you can try some options *in the left sidebar*:

1. click "Since Year" to show only recently published papers, sorted by relevance; Let's try this option. You can expand the period of time by adjusting your "Custom range"

2. click "Sort by date" to show just the new additions, sorted by date;
3. If you want to always be aware of what is going on in your field of research, you can also click the envelope icon to have new results periodically delivered to your email address. Let's try it.
    - enter your email address, and click "Create alert". Then you will periodically get newly published papers that match your search criteria by email.
    - You don't even have to have a Google account to receive email alerts, you can enter any email address of your choice. If the email address isn't a Google account, then they will email you a verification link, which you'll need to click in order to start receiving alerts. (Show!)

OK, I've got my search results, what next? Of course, I would like to read the article that I have found interesting.

Good news is that abstracts are freely available for most of the articles. Sometimes that is enough to get the main idea. But usually we need further information. For each Scholar search result, they try to find a full-text version of the article that you can read. These access links are labelled [PDF] or [HTML] and appear to the right of the search result. Unfortunately, some full-text papers are not available

In this case reading the entire article may require a subscription or even paying a fee. Here're a few things you could try:

1. click "All versions" under the search result and check out the alternative sources;
2. click "Related articles" or "Cited by" under the search result to explore similar articles.

   <u>You are free to explore</u>! There's rarely a single answer to a research question. Click "Related articles" or "Cited by" to see closely related work, or search for author's name and see what else they have written.