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# Improve ILL Workflows with this OA Search Tool

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Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/kirstin\\_duffin/27/](https://works.bepress.com/kirstin_duffin/27/)



# Improve ILL Workflows with this OA Search Tool

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## Introduction

Given the ease with which information is exchanged in the online environment, library users have an increased expectation for the speed with which their interlibrary loan (ILL) requests are filled. Users may discover articles through library databases but not, due to the restraints of library harvesting tools, be able to identify what content is immediately available via institutional repositories or other open access (OA) channels. Several free online tools cross-search repositories for OA content, and ILL staff can use these tools to locate and provide users with their requests more quickly than by following traditional ILL workflows, but it takes time to do these additional searches. This study examined:

- **Is it worth investing staff time to look for OA content?**
- **Is any one tool better than another at locating OA content?**

## Methods

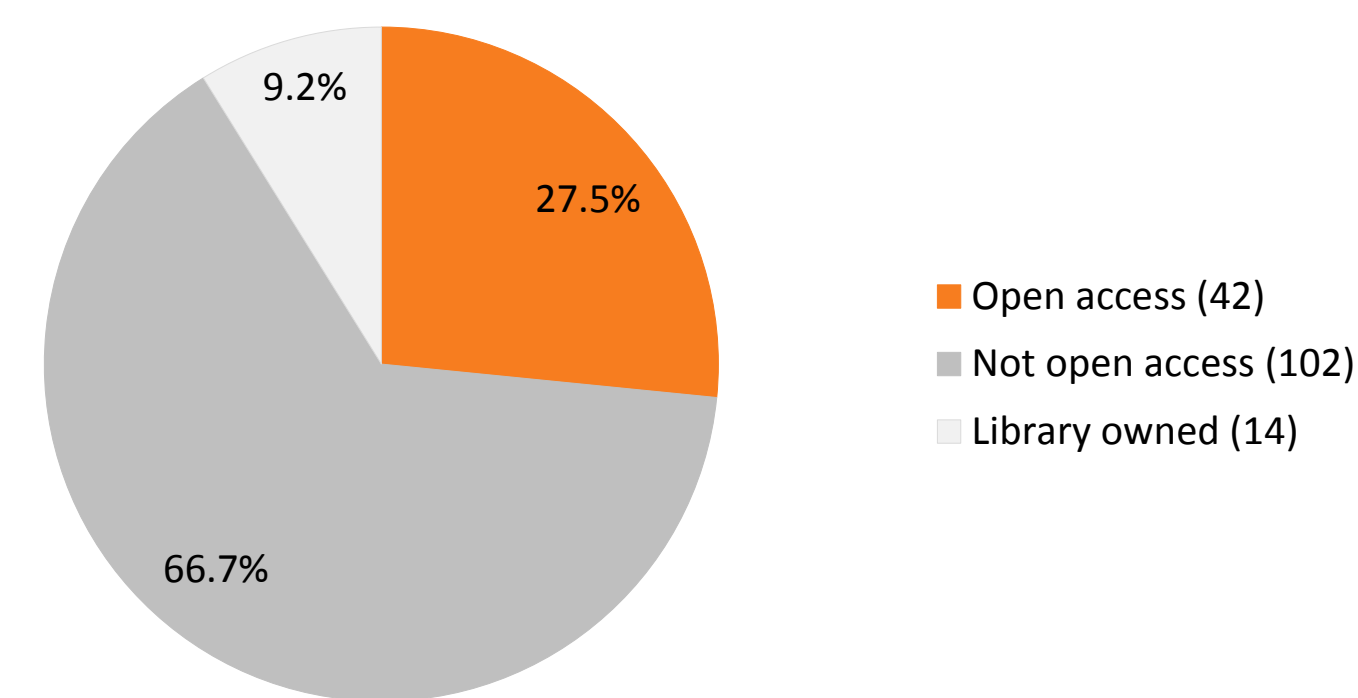
Seven OA search tools were selected for comparison based on their breadth of coverage.

- **Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)** “contains ca. 10000 open access journals covering all areas of science, technology, medicine, social science and humanities.” <https://doaj.org/about>
- **JURN** “harnesses all the power of Google, but focusses your search through a hand-crafted and curated index.” <https://jurnsearch.wordpress.com/about/>
- **Google** has the broadest search of all tools used, including scholarly and general web content.
- **Google Scholar** includes easy-to-identify HTML and PDF links to freely available articles in the right-hand column of search results.
- **OAister** “is a union catalog of millions of records that represent open access resources.” <https://www.oclc.org/en/oaister.html>
- **Open Access Button** “sources include all of the aggregated repositories in the world: Unpaywall Data, Share, CORE, OpenAIRE, Dissemin, Europe PMC, BASE.” <https://openaccessbutton.org/about>
- **OpenDOAR** “provides a quality-assured listing of open access repositories around the world.” <http://www.opendoar.org/about.html>

From the pool of daily incoming ILL requests, five were selected each day for six weeks during September-October 2017. Of the 160 potential total requests over the period of data collection, 153 were usable. Of the seven unusable requests, four were due to the fact that less than five requests came in during two days of the study period; one request was an incomplete citation; one was a duplication of an earlier request; and one was a request for a dissertation (for a more equal comparison, it was later decided that only content published in periodicals would be used in this study).

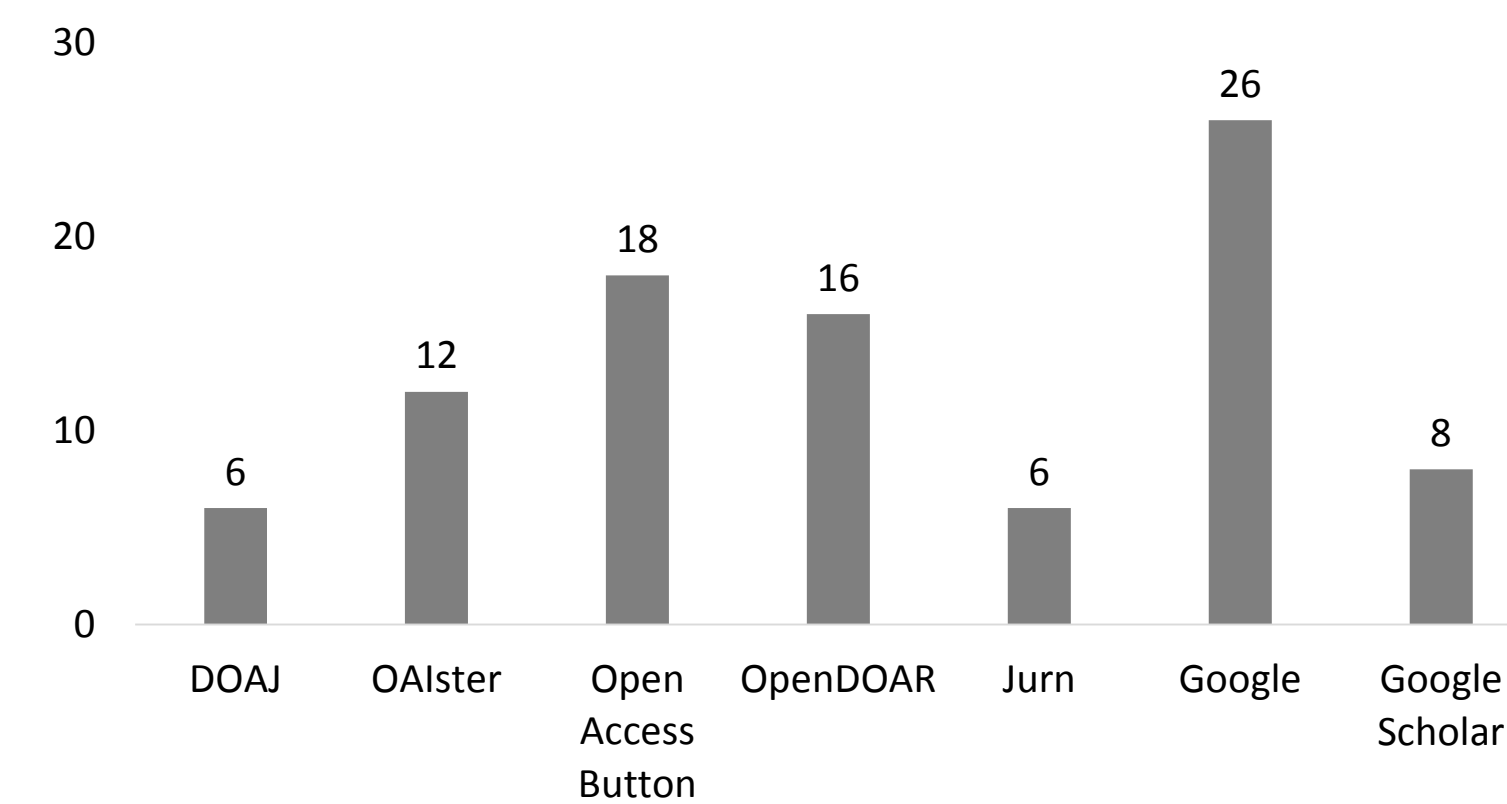
Usable requests were searched for availability across the seven OA search tools.

ILL article requests available OA



Percentages add up to >100% due to some content overlap between library owned and OA (5 articles).

False hits by search tool

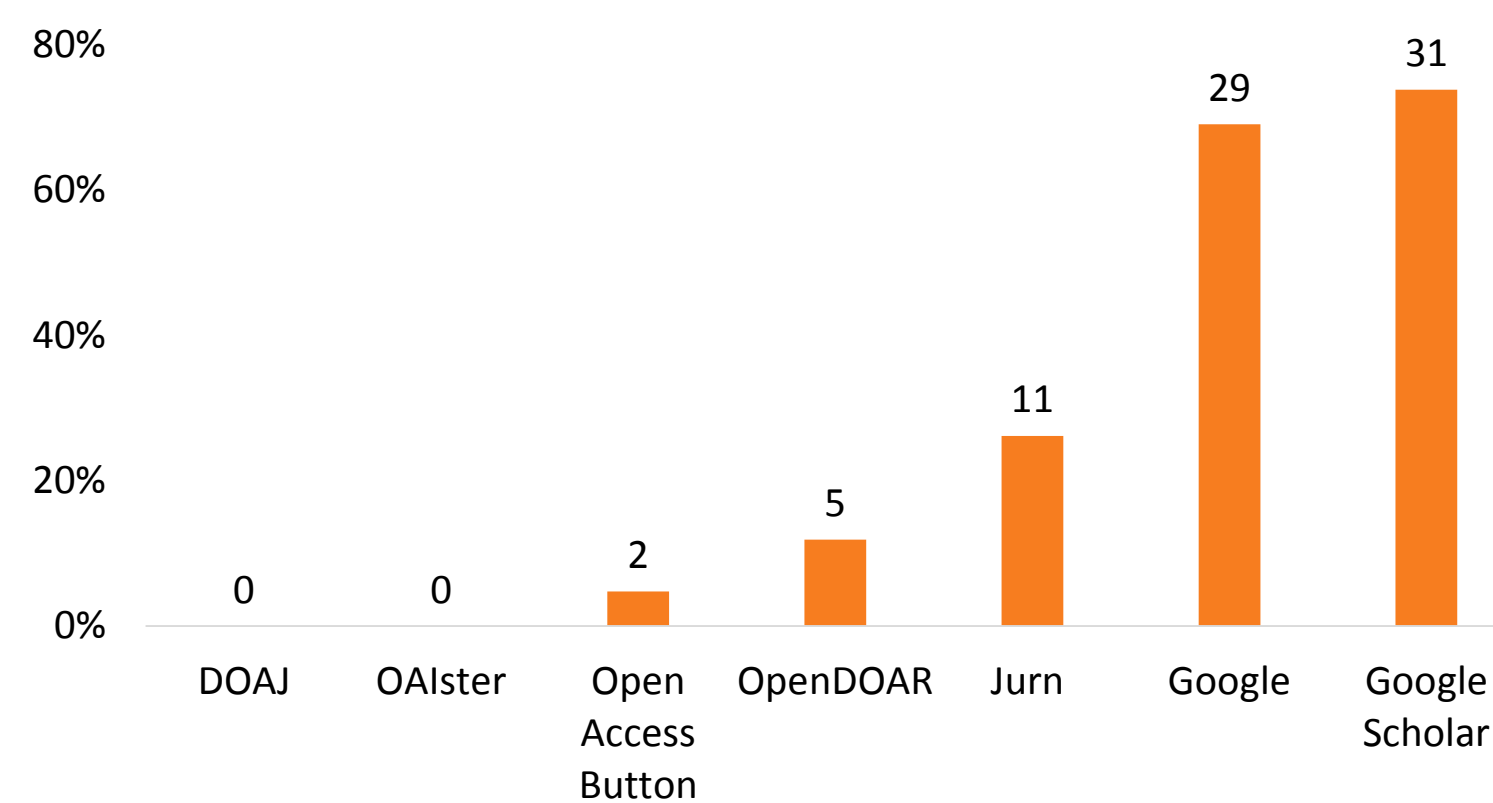


A false hit:

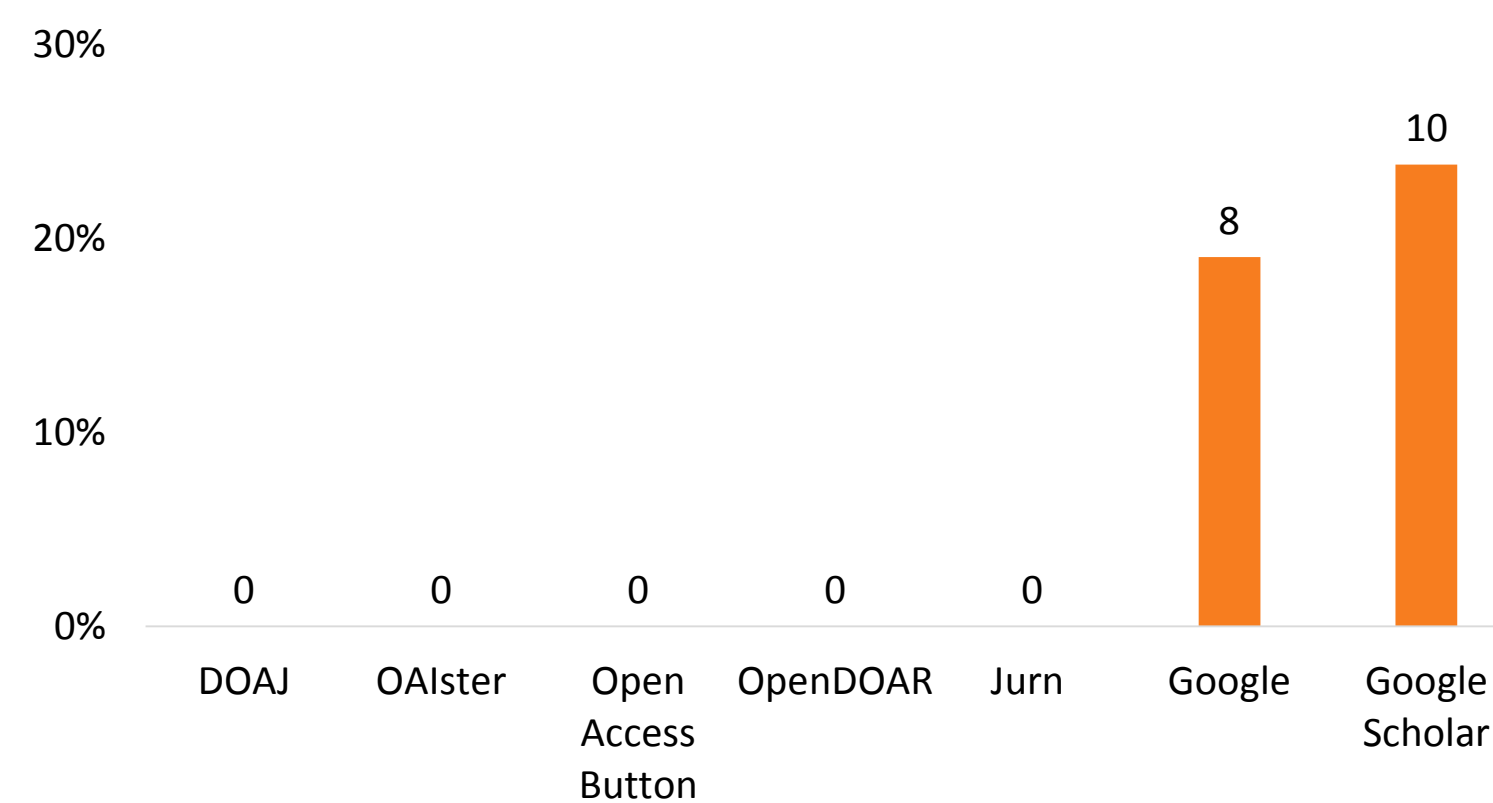
- (1) links to the wrong content,
- (2) links to an item record, but not the full-text article,
- (3) does not link to a known OA article, or
- (4) links to an anticipated or known illegal posting of an article.

False hits include (a) links to full-text articles that are buried lower on results pages and are therefore difficult to identify (exclusive to Google), and (b) suggestions that content is not available, although full-text was found using another search tool (exclusive to Open Access Button).

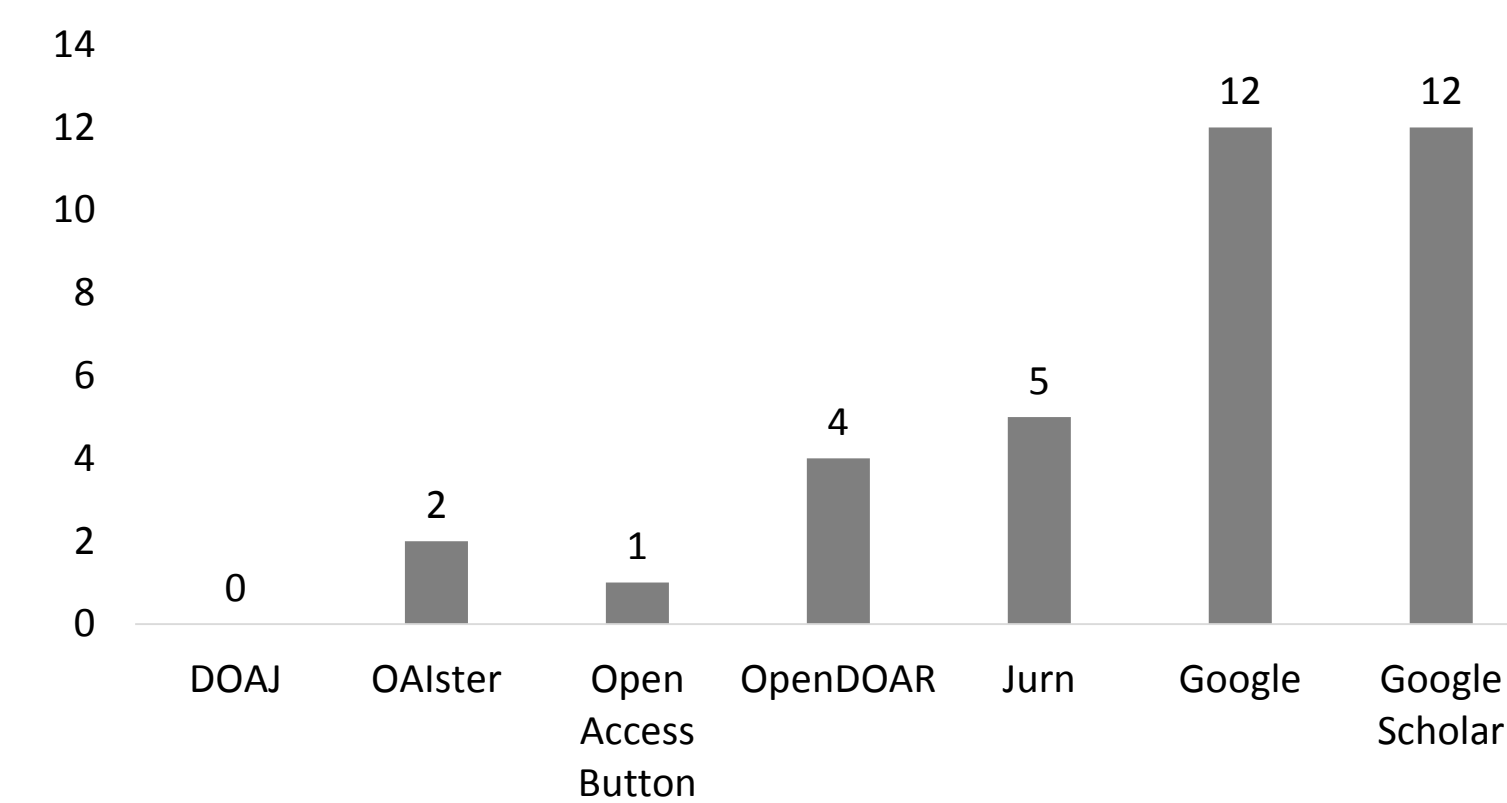
OA articles located by search tool



OA articles located uniquely by search tool



Preprints located by search tool



See Conclusion and Recommendations for a note about preprints.

## Discussion

Many of the OA search tools were likely not successful due to:  
(1) material being located by library harvesting tools prior to ILL request submission, or  
(2) not indexing a sufficiently broad amount of material:

- **DOAJ** titles are active in our local instance of SFX;
- **OAister** content is integrated with WorldCat and FirstSearch, and content focuses on non-journal material (technical reports, research papers, theses, image collections);
- **OpenDOAR** does not index e-journals, focusing instead on content in institutional and subject repositories.

**Open Access Button** does not include content from ResearchGate or Academia.edu. It does allow the user to send a request to the author to make the article freely available.

**Jurn** does not index most commercial e-journals (except those that can “target *only* their open access articles”), and while subject coverage has grown in recent years, some disciplines (e.g., educational studies, social studies, psychology) are less well represented by this search tool.

**Google** and **Google Scholar** were successful because they include content outside the realm of library harvesting tools and seem to cast the widest net in searching for content.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

With just over one in four ILL requests in this study freely available online, it is worth devoting staff time to search for OA content.

- **Google Scholar** returned the most results, with the largest amount of unique content found and the fewest false hits.
- **Google**, despite having a fairly high number of false hits, is a good secondary source to use in searching for OA content. Google tends to find news and magazine articles not located by other OA search tools.
- The highly specialized OA search tools provide too much of a niche search at this time to be worth using in the context of ILL workflows. Of these tools, **Jurn** was most successful in locating OA content.

Caution should be exercised with preprints. Since a preprint is not the finalized version of a publication, it will lack proper pagination and may omit peer-reviewed revisions. Google and Google Scholar located a higher number of preprints compared to the other search tools; preprints do not satisfy our local criteria for fulfilling ILL requests.