

Scite

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Summary

[Scite](#) is a [literature search tool](#) that integrates [artificial intelligence](#) to help develop search queries and [provide contextual information about citations](#). It also provides [visual](#) and textual summaries of literature. Northeastern University has a subscription to Scite. If you are associated with Northeastern, you can [login using your university email and credentials](#) to access Scite's more advanced features.

This handout provides a quick guide to Scite's primary capabilities. The influence of AI and the range of its capabilities are rapidly changing, so please be aware that any information provided here should be taken in tandem with your current knowledge of these subjects. Please also note that you should follow your professor's stated guidelines for AI use in your class. For more information on Northeastern University AI policies as well as AI tutorials and tips, visit the [Northeastern Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research](#).

AI Ethics

AI ethics are a large and complex topic. Before you use an AI tool, consider how it derives information, what/whom its sources are, what information it is privileging or leaving out, and which resources are depleted and communities harmed in its development and use. For more information on AI ethics and bias as they pertain to literature reviews, please see our [AI for Literature Reviews slides](#).

Strengths and Weaknesses

Scite may be helpful for performing an initial literature search; however, we do not recommend relying on it exclusively due to its relatively [small database and potential classification errors](#). Below are some [key strengths and weaknesses](#) of Scite (primarily sourced from [Scite.ai Guide](#) by the Florida State University Libraries).

Strengths

- In addition to displaying how many times an article was cited by other articles, Scite also uses an [AI model to classify the citations](#) into supporting, mentioning, and contrasting citation types (sometimes with limited accuracy, see weaknesses). This could help provide an initial understanding of how an article relates to the broader literature.
- Scite uses large language models (such as Claude or GPT) to turn natural language questions into structured queries with keywords. Users can then edit these queries to refine their search.
- The [dashboard feature](#) can be used to track research evolution.
- Scite reports [if an article has been retracted](#).
- Scite includes a [browser extension](#) for searching academic articles related to text found online.

Weaknesses

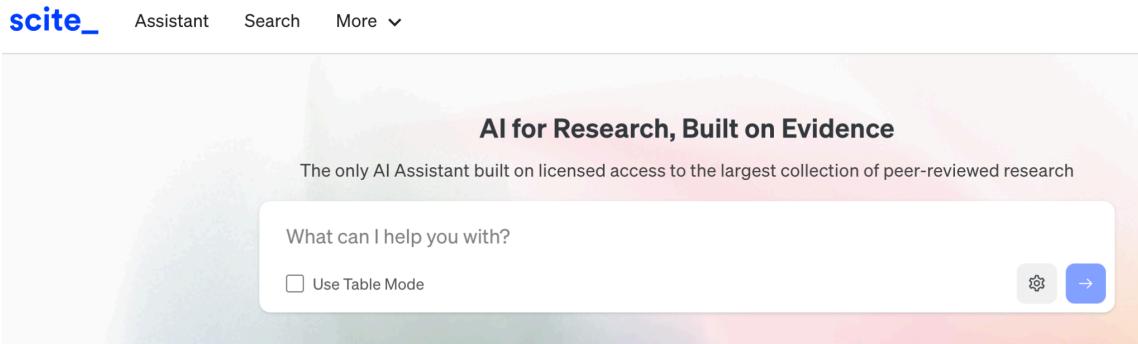
- The database supporting Scite is relatively small compared to other literature [databases](#), may not have good coverage of [social sciences](#) and [humanities](#) topics, and may exclude non-academic article sources such as books.
- Citation types may be [misclassified](#) and the overall citation counts may be lower than the actual number of citations an article received.
- Results may include irrelevant sources.
- The dashboard feature does not always function reliably.

Using Scite

When [using Scite for a literature search](#) it is important to adjust the assistant settings, review and potentially refine the search terms, and double check the results with [other sources](#).

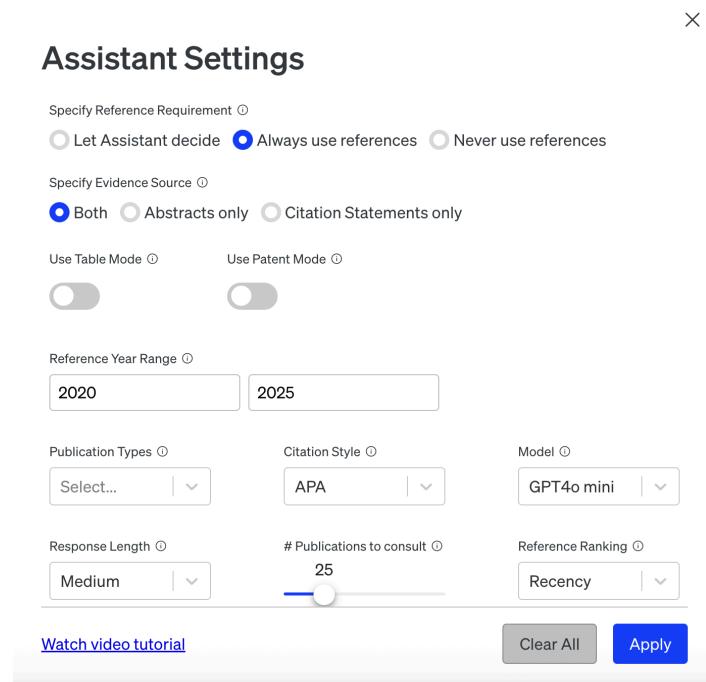
1. When you go to <https://scite.ai/> you will see a prompt box, similar to ChatGPT or Claude. If you prefer not to prompt a large language model, you can go directly to the [search page](#) and enter your search there. While an [AI classifier](#) is still used to provide contextual information about citations, the environmental impact of this [classifier](#) is significantly lower than that of [larger AI models](#). If you do choose to use the assistant feature, it is important to adjust the settings and consider how your prompt can help to mitigate biases in the results. For more information on designing prompts to counter bias, see our [AI for Literature Reviews slides](#). To change the assistant settings, click the gear icon

in the lower right corner of the box.



Caption: Scite landing page, including text box for prompt.

Once you have the assistant settings open, adjust the settings to align with your search goals. You may be able to improve the quality of the results by changing the **Reference Requirement** to **Always use references**, specifying a Reference Year Range, and selecting your preferred **Reference Ranking**. To minimize the environmental impact of your prompt, you can also select a smaller model, such as GPT4o mini, under **Model**. However, regardless of model, ethical implications of AI remain.



Caption: Assistant Settings menu

- After you have adjusted the settings, enter your prompt and click the arrow in the lower right corner to run the prompt. If you receive an error, try changing the model you are using. Once you have your results, navigate to the **Search Strategy** panel on the right and review the search terms. If necessary, click **Edit Searches** to refine the search terms and gather more relevant results.

The screenshot shows the AI Assistant interface. At the top, there's a header with a 'References' tab and a 'Search Strategy' tab (which is active). Below the header, a message says 'Custom Assistant Settings are being used for this session.' On the left, a sidebar shows a search history entry for 'Bias in AI'. The main content area displays a detailed response about bias in AI, mentioning its emergence as a central issue, its sources, and its societal implications. To the right of the response, the 'Search Strategy' panel shows three search queries:

- ("fairness" in machine learning" OR "fairness in AI" OR "equity in AI") AND (method OR framework OR approach OR model) AND (taxonomy OR taxonomy* OR survey OR review)
- ("bias" NEAR/3 "artificial intelligence" OR "bias" NEAR/3 "AI" OR "algorithmic bias") AND (ethics OR fairness OR discrimination OR equity) AND (practice OR impact OR evaluation OR measurement)
- ("algorithmic bias" OR "statistical bias" OR "data bias" OR "sampling bias" OR "representation bias") AND (AI OR "artificial intelligence" OR "machine learning" OR "deep learning") AND (detection OR mitigation OR reduction OR evaluation)

At the bottom right of the search strategy panel is a 'Edit Searches' button.

Caption: Assistant results

- To view the citation summary information for the returned articles, scroll to the end of the response and click **Add references to dashboard**, then select **Add to new dashboard** or **Add to existing dashboard**, then click **View**. The top of the dashboard will contain summary information, potentially including visualizations. Scroll down to the articles section to view the citation information for individual articles to get an understanding of how each has been cited. Note that each of the counts for citing publications for the first three articles in the screenshot below is much lower than the citation counts displayed in Google scholar ([A survey on bias and fairness in machine learning](#), [Bias in data-driven artificial intelligence systems—An introductory survey](#), [A Comprehensive Review of AI Techniques for Addressing Algorithmic Bias in Job Hiring](#)). This could be because Scite

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uses a smaller database of articles.

Articles (15)							 Export Data
Article Title	Supporting Cites	Contrasting Cites	Mentioning Cites	Citing Publications	Page Size		
<input type="checkbox"/> Title	Year ↴	Authors	 Supporting ↴	 Contrasting ↴	 Mentioning ↴	 Citing Publications ↴	
<input type="checkbox"/> A Survey on Bias and Fairness in Machine Learning	2021	Mehrabi et al.	5	0	1,984	4,052	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bias in data-driven artificial intelligence systems—An introductory survey	2020	Ntoutsi et al.	2	0	373	856	
<input type="checkbox"/> A Comprehensive Review of AI Techniques for Addressing Algorithmic Bias in Job Hiring	2024	Albaroudi et al.	0	0	0	50	

Caption: Dashboard article table

4. After you have performed an initial search with Scite, we recommend performing [additional searches in other databases](#).

Further Resources

- [AI at Northeastern University](#), Northeastern Information Technology Services
- [Education literature review search strategies: AI and Library resources](#), Lindley Homol, Northeastern
- [Communication Studies : AI tools for your research](#), Northeastern University Library
- [Collaborating on Literature Reviews with AI](#), Daniel Serig, Northeastern Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research
- [Data Ethics: Understanding Big Data and Algorithmic Bias](#), Digital Integration Teaching Initiative
- [AI for Literature Reviews](#), Digital Integration Teaching Initiative
- [Help & Tutorials](#), Scite
- [AI Prompt Handbook for Academia](#), Research Solutions