Google Scholar – Finding Recent Research

The Problem: Google Scholar tends to find older research.

Why?

Google Scholar ranks search results based on a number of factors such as how often the word you search for shows up in the article and whether the word you search for shows up in the title article.

Google Scholar also ranks search results based on the number of times the article or book has been cited by other authors.

The benefit of ranking search results by the number of times an article or book has been cited is that influential research will tend to appear at the top of your search results.

The number of times a work has been cited is a function of both influence and age. A new research article that may one day prove very influential may have few if any citations in the first few months and years after it is published. If the article proves influential, over time the “Cited by” number in Google Scholar will grow and this article will begin to move towards the top of the search results.

Therefore:

1. because new articles will have few citations in the first year or two after they are published,

2. because Google Scholar only returns 1000 or fewer results,

3. and because most Google users rarely look beyond the first few pages of results, new articles are less likely to show up in a Google Scholar search.
The Solution: Use the publication dates or “Custom range...” found on the left column of Google Scholar search results.

Example - Suppose we searched Google Scholar for ... “artificial intelligence” “emotion”

Notice that the first few results are a bit old (or even ancient) with dates of 2007, 1998, 1989, and 1994.
However if you click on the “Since 2016” option the results are now going to be much newer (with few if any citations).

If you wanted to only look at articles published between 2011 and 2013 you can do so by using the “Custom range…”