

ALUMNI AND THE LIBRARY

In a [previous article](#), we discussed using the ResearchGate website to read and print articles from specific authors that have made them available. ResearchGate is available to most people who qualify in any way as “researchers” to store their articles, but you can locate authors and check what they have available. If authors bother to enter their articles, this an excellent place to download them. You can also get copies directly from an author (and it’s a great contact in some cases), but how do you know when you even *want* a printed copy? You need to have a quick look.

Here is an example of a few lines that might convince you to skip a paper :

and mathematical morphology (Chiu et al., 2013). We interpret the forest as a realisation of a germ-grain model of discs $\Xi = \bigcup B(x_i, R_i)$ and consider it in some area of interest $W \subset \mathbb{R}^2$. W is some

I recently read an article that stated that approximately 50% of academic articles are never read by *anyone* (except those involved with writing or approving it). While I am writing drafts for a new book on timber cruising, I tend to check out a number of articles that are behind journal “paywalls”, and many of them cost something like \$30 to read. Would I want to pay \$30 and find one written like the one in the example above ?? One of the advantages of being associated with universities is access to scientific journals at their library – and anyone who walks in off the street can usually make use of journals on the shelves and with on-line searches. In many cases you can email the article to yourself for printing on your home computer. Many universities no longer carry all the printed journals (and some journals are not even *printed* anymore, just available on-line). If you don’t live next door, what can you do?

I found that some universities (the University of British Columbia, for instance), allow anyone who is a former graduate to use their library from a computer connection. Not all science journals are available this way, but some are. After all, you may only want a quick look to see if it might be worth the trouble to acquire in other ways. In the case of UBC, the directions for how to get access (and a library ID) were about as bad as they get – typical with IT departments anywhere, but worse when they are in large organizations. In the UBC case, full journal access required using one of their computers on campus. Perhaps that will change.

Other libraries are not as generous, or are limited by their legal arrangements with the journals, but if you are a university graduate you might check your old school, and perhaps you will get a pleasant surprise.

K.I.