Comprehensive Searching – Searching the Grey Literature

http://www.alverno.edu/media/alvernocollege/library/pdfs/grey.pdf

The Fourth International Conference on Grey Literature (1999) defines grey literature as: "That which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers." It is typically found outside of traditional bibliographic databases like CINAHL or PubMed.
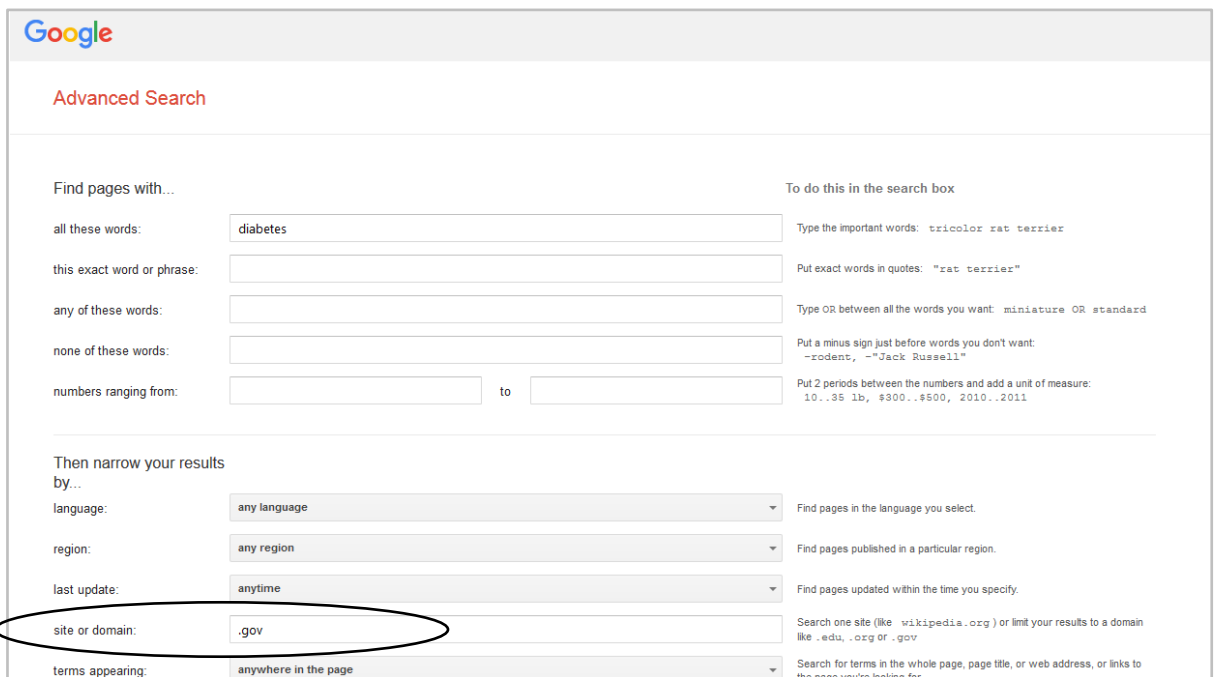
Examples of grey literature can include: government reports, dissertations, conference proceedings, unpublished clinical trials, clinical practice guidelines, patents, issue briefs, fact sheets, newsletters, webinars, blogs, and others.

Grey literature can be found using Google. In order to "tame" a Google search, students may wish to use Google's Advanced Search feature and limit to a trusted organization's website or a specific domain (.gov, .edu, .org, .net...).

Limiting to .gov will restrict your search to websites of government bodies or government owned organizations.

Limiting to .edu will restrict your search to websites of accredited post-secondary institutions.

Limiting to a specific site will restrict your search to *that site only*. For example, limiting to **ahrq.gov** will retrieve information from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality website only.

Use this field to limit by site or domain.

Unlike what you typically find in a scholarly database, grey literature is often produced without clear publishing guidelines or standards. So, you may need to evaluate it for credibility. Important things to keep in mind include the extent to which the content is edited and whether or not the authority of the producer can be determined.

Reference:
Fourth International Conference on Grey Literature: New Frontiers in Grey Literature. GreyNet, Grey Literature Network Service, Washington D. C., USA, 4-5 October 1999.