

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.

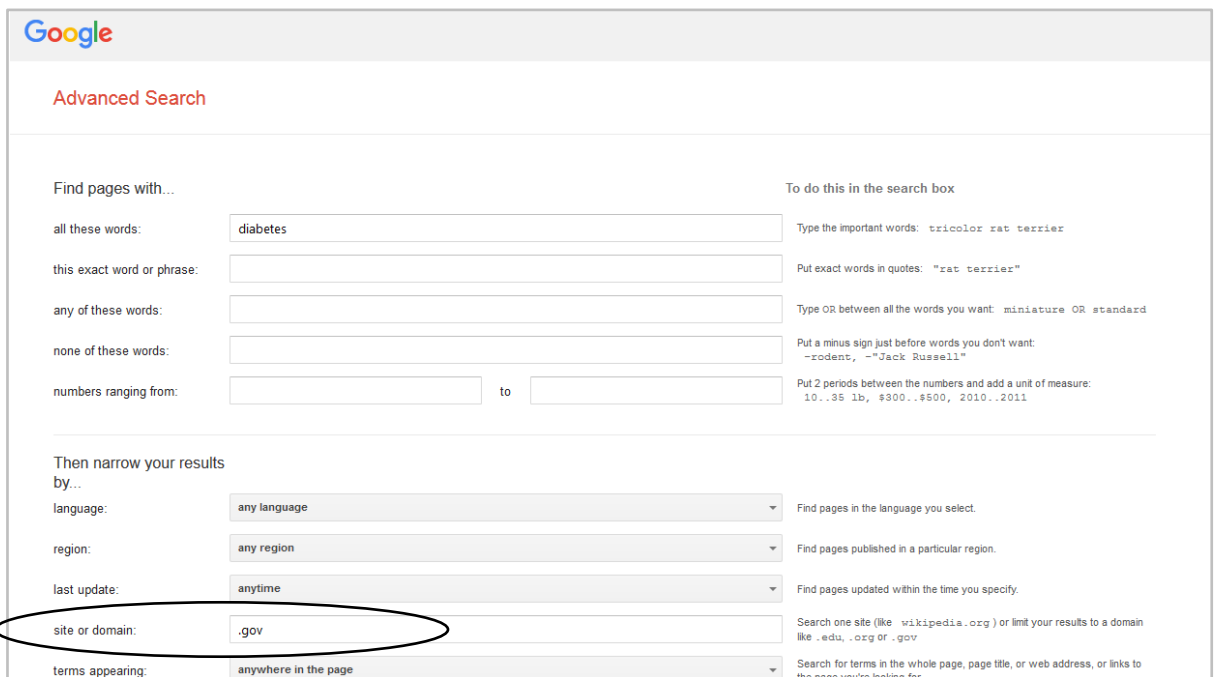
Examples of grey literature can include: government reports, dissertations, conference proceedings, unpublished clinical trials, clinical practice guidelines, patents, issue briefs, fact sheets, newsletters, webinars, blogs, and others.

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.



Google

Advanced Search

Find pages with...

all these words:

this exact word or phrase:

any of these words:

none of these words:

numbers ranging from: to

To do this in the search box

Type the important words: tricolor rat terrier

Put exact words in quotes: "rat terrier"

Type OR between all the words you want: miniature OR standard

Put a minus sign just before words you don't want: -rodent, -"Jack Russell"

Put 2 periods between the numbers and add a unit of measure: 10..35 lb, \$300..\$500, 2010..2011

Then narrow your results by...

language:

region:

last update:

site or domain:

terms appearing:

Find pages in the language you select.

Find pages published in a particular region.

Find pages updated within the time you specify.

Search one site (like wikipedia.org) or limit your results to a domain like .edu, .org or .gov

Search for terms in the whole page, page title, or web address, or links to the page you're looking for.

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.