

# Transcript: Using Google to find grey literature

Usually, when you are doing a literature review, you are looking for journal articles.

However, sometimes you will be looking for other kinds of literature.

Grey literature usually means things like reports, government policy documents, and documents by charities or non-profit organisations.

These aren't included in databases and one of the best ways to find them is just by using Google.

When I say Google, I mean ordinary Google, like you'd use to find out cinema times or do online shopping, as opposed to Google Scholar.

The problem with Google is that it will almost always give you too many results.

For example, if I run a simple search for bullying, boys, and secondary schools, I get millions of results coming up.

Some of them might be good, but I'll never be able to look at them all, and I probably won't go past the first page or two.

The purpose of this video is to show you some ways to shuffle Google's results so that you have a better chance of finding what you're looking for.

When looking at the results you also have to think about who has written them and why, as there's no guarantee they are all from unbiased sources.

Google ranks its results based on algorithms.

Results that get clicked a lot, or that have lots of other sites linking to them, get ranked highly.

However, the sorts of literature and reports that you are interested in for your research are unlikely to be popular.

Also, Google uses what it knows about you.

If you are on a university network, your IP address will show this, and Google will give you more academic results with less advertising than you would get searching from home or in a café.

Your geographic location will dictate what local results you get, so I will get results centred around Oxford and the UK.

If you are signed into Chrome or Gmail, or using an Android device, Google has access to all that data – your search history, your emails, GPS of where you've been from your phone, and it will use that in ranking your results.

It will even use your contacts and what it knows about their search histories. Quite scary when you stop and think about it!

This means you will never get the same results as your colleagues, even if you run the same search.

One of the quickest ways to limit this personalisation is to sign out of these services and turn on private or incognito browsing.

How to do this varies from browser to browser but it's usually in settings in the top-right, for example here it is in Chrome.

This turns off most of Google's tracking information, but it will still know your IP address – you can never completely unpersonalise your results.

The next thing you can do is turn on a setting called "verbatim" – this is a Latin word which means "as I have said".

This will force Google to only search for what you type into the search bar, without trying to interpret what you mean and searching for extra things as well.

To do this, go to Tools, and then click All results and select Verbatim.

Click Tools again to see the number of search results which has reduced a lot, although it's still very large.

You can also use quotation marks around phrases like secondary schools as you would in a database.

Finally, if you go to settings, there is an Advanced search option.

The two most useful boxes here are site or domain and file type.

Choose a domain or site such as .gov.uk to search UK government websites, .ac.uk for UK universities, or .edu for US universities. .org can also be useful for charities and non-profit organisations, and other country endings like .fr and .de are good if you need specific international research.

You can choose a file type to find only results of that type. Reports and policy documents are most likely to be uploaded as PDFs. If you are looking for conference papers they may be Powerpoints, and data may be available as Excel spreadsheets.

Searching in this way dramatically reduces the number of results and makes it more likely that what you are looking for will appear at the top.

Once you know the syntax of searching like this, you can type it into the search bar yourself.

I hope these tips will help you to tame Google when searching for academic literature. Thank you for watching.