Transcript: Google for academic research – More search techniques

Google doesn't always know best

If you want to stop Google being so clever with its synonym, plural, and alternative terms searching, use the **intext:** command

Intext: will work with phrases.

Unlike in a library database, you cannot be 100% sure that Google is paying attention to your request for an exact phrase search and your efforts to narrow your search. Google thinks it knows best, and is always keen to bring you back as many results as it possibly can. So, if it doesn't think there are enough results coming from what you've typed in, it will start ignoring quotations marks and dropping some of your search terms (sometimes shows you this underneath, not always), seemingly at random and you won't always realise its doing this. It sometimes also searches for variations of words within your quotation marks. If you have gone to the time and trouble of developing a good search strategy, you will also want to make sure that Google is actually paying attention to this.

To ensure that only your search string is being using to generate results turn 'verbatim' on.

You can find this by looking underneath Google's search box for:

Tools – all results – verbatim.

NB. With verbatim on, to see amount of results simply click on 'search tools' –this toggles the amount on and off.

Verbatim is not completely reliable – it sometimes still tries to search for alternative spellings or remove search terms if there aren't enough results.

Google does not recognise **NOT**, which is a piece of search logic you may have used successfully in library literature database, but you can use the **minus** sign to exclude terms.

Simply place the minus sign directly at the start of the word you wish to exclude.

It can be really useful to get Google to show you only PDFs or only PowerPoint presentations as results. If you think about it, many of the academically relevant literature you will find useful for your research may very well be in a PDF format, or shared at conference as a PowerPoint perhaps.

You can find this option in the advanced search, or simply add file type colon (**file type:**) directly before your search terms.

For searching large websites, or groups of sites by type, for example, government, NHS, or university websites, use the '**site:**' command.

You can also exclude sites using a **minus** sign.

N.B. **site:** does not work with web archives such as http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/.

These are part of the deeper web as the contents sit behind a search.

There are a couple of options for date searching. The first is to look in Tools and to use the **Anytime** menu to restrict your results to information that has published within the last hour, day, week, month, year; or you can also set your own custom date range.

This technique does NOT work with verbatim switched on, you have to choose one or the other.

The second date search option is another command which you can include in the search box. This DOES work with verbatim.