

Getting the best out of Google

Further information

There is a vast amount of information on the internet but much is not of a quality suitable for your assignments or dissertations. When you are gathering material for research it is important that you **evaluate what you find** and use only the highest quality, authoritative information.

You are strongly advised to begin your research by searching academic databases containing relevant peer-reviewed journal literature. These can be accessed through Primo at <http://primo.abdn.ac.uk/>

This workshop focuses on Google and Google Scholar and some other ways to find suitable resources on the internet. Use this document in conjunction with the worksheet: **Getting the best out of Google: Information Skills Practical Workshop**

Help on using Google

- Power Searching with Google
www.powersearchingwithgoogle.com/course/ps/course.html
- Advanced Power Searching with Google
www.powersearchingwithgoogle.com/course/aps
- **a Google a day**: for those keen to practice all that you can do with Google, challenges to test your searching ability at <http://agoogleaday.com/>

Other search engines

- Carrot² - <https://search.carrot2.org/>
- DuckDuckGo - <https://duckduckgo.com/>
- Startpage - <https://startpage.com/>

Many others are out there, don't just use Google.

Institutional repositories

- ArXiv - <http://arxiv.org/>
- BASE - www.base-search.net/
- CORE - <https://core.ac.uk/>
- AURA - <http://aura.abdn.ac.uk>
- Dart-Europe - www.dart-europe.eu/basic-search.php
- Science.gov - www.science.gov/ - US government-funded research material

Academic social networks

- ResearchGate - www.researchgate.net/
- Mendeley - www.mendeley.com/
- Academia.edu - www.academia.edu/
- Article discussing Academic Social Networks from August 2014 on the website of *Nature*
www.nature.com/news/online-collaboration-scientists-and-the-social-network-1.15711

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- Europeana: www.europeana.eu/
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- Wellcome Images: <http://wellcomeimages.org/>
- Wikimedia Commons: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
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Further information on searching the internet

The following site contains useful material to help you understand the fundamentals of evaluating resources which you find online. It is no longer maintained and updated but the materials on it and the principles discussed, still apply.

Virtual Training Suite

Free Internet tutorials to help develop Internet research skills, appropriate for your subject area.
www.vtstutorials.co.uk/

Evaluation is vital

Search engines collect information indiscriminately – there is no human intervention in the selection of content. It is essential that information derived from unregulated sites is evaluated using a set of criteria. The following table lists the main ways to evaluate information derived from the Internet.

R	Relevance	Is the content relevant to your info needs?
A	Authority	Who wrote it? Are they respected or well-known? Is content accurate? Are there links to other reliable sites?
D	Date	Up-to-date? If it is undated is it reliable? Is date important?
A	Appearance	Are there spelling errors? Is it professional in appearance? Does it include citations and references? Formal or informal writing
R	Reason for writing	Consider bias. Bias is not always bad but must be aware of it. Is it sponsored by someone?

Mandalios, J (2013). RADAR: An approach for helping students evaluate Internet sources, *Journal of Information Science* 39: 470

Help and advice

Library staff and Information Consultants can help with any difficulties using any library resource
Information Consultant contact details: http://bit.ly/InfoConsultants Subject & Enquiry staff (TSDRL Floors 4-6, Medical and Taylor Libraries help desks) Library web pages www.abdn.ac.uk/library
IT staff are able to help with specific IT-related problems you may be having
IT Service Desk - Log any IT problems at https://myit.abdn.ac.uk Tel: 01224 273636 (24 hour service available); Email: servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk