Essential tips for searching Google

In this video we’re going to sharing our top tips on searching Google for sources for your academic work.

Whilst Google isn’t the best place to look for academic sources, it can be a good place to find information from **government departments** and organisationssuch as **charities** and **universities**

So here are some tips to help you get the best out of Google.

Firstly we’ll look at some ways you can get more focused results from your search using the topic of dementia treatment. We’ll start with a basic search for the term **dementia**.

But as you would expect, this brings back millions of results on a whole range of topics. So to make our search more specific, we add a more focused search term [on screen the word **treatment** is added to the search bar].

This again retrieves too many results to be helpful to us. So, we’re going to add **double quotation** marks around the terms, to search for them as an exact phrase. [On screen the search now displays as **“dementia treatment”**]. This makes a big difference to our search results. We still have a lot but these should all be on the topic of dementia treatments.

To get even more focused results we can exclude topics we’re not interested in by entering a minus symbol before the search term. [On screen a **minus symbol** followed by the term **Parkinson’s** is added to the search bar]. In this case we are removing results which mention the treatment of parkinson’s related dementia.

We can also ask Google to search for results on particular types of web sites, such as the UK government. Just type *site colon* followed by the type of web site domain into the search bar.

[The term site:gov.uk is added to the search bar]. In this case we are looking for UK Government web sites. Here are some other types of web site domain you could also use:

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| --- | --- |
| **Domain** | **Type of site** |
| .ac.uk | Academic (UK) |
| .edu | Academic (US) |
| .gov | Government |
| .nhs.uk | National Health Service |
| .org | Non-profit organisations |

You can also limit your search results to specific types of files such as PDFs. Just type the command *filetype colon* into the search bar followed by the type of file you need. [On screen **site:pdf** is typed into the search bar instead of **site:gov.uk**].

Another way to focus your results is to search only within page titles. Just add the term *intitle colon* to the search bar. [On screen the term **site:pdf** is removed from the search and the term **intitle:** is added at the front of the search. The search bar now shows **intitle:“dementia treatment” -parkinson’s**]. Now the results only show pages that contain our search terms in the title of the page.

To find pages based on when they were published, you can use the **date range** options available in the **Tools**.

Select the date range you require in the **Any time** menu. [On screen the **Any time** menu is opened and **Date Range** is selected. 2018 is typed into the From: box and 2021 into the To: box]. Click **Go**. Now the results only show pages published between your selected dates

If this all seems too much, there’s another way that you can apply all these different limits to your search. In the **Settings** menu, just choose the **Advanced Search**. Then enter your search terms into the top part of the form. Now you can narrow your search by selecting from the options underneath.

We hope you found some of these tips useful for your searching. If you’d like any more help, please just ask the library or contact your subject librarian.