



Using the internet to find research

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Introduction

- **Help with online searching**
- **Planning your search**
- **What resources?**
- **How to get the most out of them**
- **Sorting the wheat from the chaff**

Planning your search (1)

- **What is your research about?**
 - What can be done to improve the teaching and learning of adult employability skills?
- **Different words or phrases to describe it**
 - teaching AND learning
 - basic skills OR adult basic education OR adult employability skills OR adult job skills
 - adult literacy OR adult numeracy
 - apprenticeship OR on the job training

Planning your search (2)

- **Limit your search by age or KS?**
- **What geographic limits?**
- **What date range?**
- **Already know researchers or experts?**

Using search terms

- **Boolean searching**
- **Boolean operators:**
 - AND OR NOT
 - Basic skills AND adult literacy AND on the job training
 - Basic skills OR adult basic skills OR adult job skills
 - Adult basic skills NOT numeracy

Search Resources

- **Web databases**
- **Websites**
- **Search engines**



Tips for running your search

- **Keep notes of what you've searched**
- **Be transparent about your search**
- **Try a new approach if your search doesn't work**
- **Keep a record of items you've found**
 - Copy and paste document or link
 - Bookmark

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the 'Search eep database' website. The address bar shows the URL: <http://www.eep.ac.uk/dnn2/Searcheeep/Searcheeepdatabase/tabid/62/Default.aspx>. The website header features the 'eep educational evidence portal' logo and a navigation menu with links for Home, Search eep, Contact us, About eep, Resource Area, and Links to eep organisations. A search bar is prominently displayed with a 'Search' button. Below the search bar, there are 'Refine' options for Help, Author/Date, Types, Terms, and Phases. A text box explains that the database contents are selected by eep organisations for relevance to practitioners and researchers, and that full-text search is planned for the future. A sidebar on the right lists 'ON THIS SECTION' with links for Search websites, Search eep database, eep Gadget and DeskBar, and Downloads. The footer includes the Microsoft logo, the CfBT Education Trust logo, and copyright information for 2009 eep partner organisations.

BEI Free collections

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the British Education Index website. The address bar shows the URL http://www.leeds.ac.uk/bei/COLN/COLN_default.html. The search bar contains the text "what is grey literature". The website header reads "BRITISH EDUCATION INDEX —".

Search the BEI free collections

The free collections search interface gives access to:

- all of the BEI's records for Education-line full texts
- all of the BEI's records for freely available internet resources
- records for the most recently indexed journal articles not yet included in the full BEI subscription database

Decide on a search strategy that suits your purposes best:

Using thesaurus | **For a word**

This is the best way to start a systematic search of literature in a given field or on a specific topic. A distinctive, new or unusual word in a title, a note or an abstract might help you pin down documents that cannot be found by other means.

By author | **For a phrase**

There are over 100,000 author names in the full BEI database. Using this option lets you see and use names and their variants. Phrase searching is popular - it feels like Google - but it is very specific and searches for exactly what you type in the fields you choose, from title, note and abstract.

By subject term | **Help**

Apart from over 8,000 thesaurus terms, there are organisation names, geographical terms, publication titles, educational levels and other subject terms to use in advanced searches. Links to relevant help can be found on each page.

Left sidebar:

- BEI Home
- Collections Search**
- Using thesaurus
- By author
- By subject term
- For a word
- For a phrase
- Show saved records
- Help
- Advanced search
- Freehand search
- Show session
- Education-line
- Internet resources
- Journal articles
- Apply

Footer: © University of Leeds 2008 | Copyright & Legal | Privacy | Contacting the BEI

Which websites?

- **Three main types of organisation:**
 - Government departments and agencies
 - Non-government organisations (NGOs)
 - Research centres and networks
- **Useful website lists e.g. eep**
- **Researchers recommendations/key texts**
- **Quick look on search engine(s)**

Search engines

- **Only cover a proportion of what's available**
- **No key wording**
- **Only provide a snapshot**
- **Key sources could be missed**
- **Results can be poorly ranked**

Google Example

- <http://www.google.co.uk>
- **Keyword: adult basic skills (7,090,000)**
- **Using advanced search and exact phrase (40,100 hits)**
- **Reduce further with published documents Select file options – pdfs (7,830 hits)**
- **Look for the latest work: select date range past year (323 hits)**
- **Search within a domain - region: .UK (96 hits)**
- **Result! A manageable number of hits!**

Using results

- **Authority**
- **Accuracy**
- **Objectivity**
- **Currency**
- **References**
- **Authors**
- **Organisations**
- **“useful links” on websites**

Conclusion

