Transcript: Reports

Searching for reports can be quite challenging. They are available from a multitude of different places and it's difficult to encompass all the places when searching. The most you can do is choose to cover off on a number of different search engines and organisation websites in terms of looking for appropriate reports. You then report what you have done in your research methodology.

There are a variety of tools you can use that specialise in reports and probably the major one that you will be using will be Google or Google Scholar. One of the things you can do with Google when you are looking for particular organisations materials is to use the site search. This involves just putting the address of the website that you are looking for after the words site and a colon (e.g. site:health.vic.gov) It is a very effective way of limiting your Google search to particular organisations and being able to say you have searched across their websites. Be aware that not all website pages are indexed by Google and you will not retrieve items that are stored in separate databases with a website address. For example, library catalogue records can not all be retrieved with a Google site search.

Other major repositories for reports primarily for Australian material include the Analysis & Policy Observatory. They actively collect Australian policy documents and the search engine is a free website. Also for Australian and international material an excellent place to look is the Trove database of the National Library of Australia. Trove records holdings of a couple of thousand Australian libraries and records for items from international national libraries such as the US, UK and New Zealand libraries. It includes archives of a huge variety of government and organisation websites from Australia.

Also, we recommend using the Capital Monitor database for Australian government reports. Capital Monitor is a database produced by the Lexis company, well known for legal materials, which is built for Commonwealth and state governments to act as a repository for materials that support government decision making. This includes the Hansards of the various governments, legislation and a huge range of reports produced by government organisations and by organisations that try and persuade government on all sorts of issues, lobby groups for government action. It is not the easiest of things to search across but it is a treasure trove of material for Australian government policy in various areas.

Looking for international reports, places to consider include the World Health Organisation’s IRIS site for health related reports, United Nations sites and there are a variety of clearinghouses for reports in different subject areas. Various research guides available from the library list these sites for different disciplines and the Grey Literature in Health Sciences guide can be a source for the health and medical disciplines.