How do I search GOOGLE effectively? Part II
From University of Washington Libraries

Expert Google Searching Part 2: Using domain limit searching

Audio: How can you make Google work better for you when you’re searching? Here are a few tips and tricks to get you started. Rather than searching the entire web, you can actually tell Google to search ONLY those places where you think you are most likely to find the information you want. Let's say we're reading the UW Common Book, Dreams From My Father, and we want to research the theme of race relations in America. I'll type in "race relations" to get started.

Audio: Notice that we are getting all kinds of results using this search, and some of them we probably wouldn’t want to cite in a paper -- like about.com, or Wikipedia, or Star Online News dot com. Let's narrow our search by asking Google to look for the phrase "race relations" only on government websites. To do this, add to your search the word site, then type a colon, then the 3 letter domain you want to limit to. For example, gov is government, edu is an educational institution, com is a commercial website, and org is an organization.

Audio: Now, rather than a lot of random websites, we are finding results that are hosted on government websites -- but even here, there is a range of the kind of information you will find. To limit even more, you can modify your site search as much as you want up to and including the actual domain. For example, let's say we really want to search the US Commission on Civil Rights. Notice that website is usccr.gov -- so we'll limit to that entire site, not just the gov domain.

Audio: Now we have limited our search only to those results that are at the usccr.gov website. This is a valuable tool because it also works in the opposite direction -- you can tell Google not only where it should look, but also where it should NOT. Remember our first search, when almost all the results were dot com sites? We can easily get rid of those by adding a site limit to our search that removes all dot com sites. Do it the same way as before, except now add a minus sign directly in front of the "site" limit.

Audio: This search told Google that any time it finds a result with the dot com domain, we would like it to be "subtracted" from our search results, because we're not
interested in seeing it. You can experiment with different site searches, and also by combining this limit with more complex keyword searches in Google.

[Image of UW Libraries homepage]

Audio: Remember, if you get stuck or have any questions, contact a UW Librarian by clicking on the "Ask Us" link on the UW Libraries homepage.