

BASIC LEGAL RESEARCH SERIES

How to Find Gray Literature

What is gray literature?

Gray literature is a rich source of information for scientific, technological, and social science information. Although not conventionally or commercially published, as are books and journal articles, gray literature is produced and distributed by government agencies, academia, business, and industry usually to a targeted audience in either print or electronic formats. Specific examples of gray literature include policy briefs, technical reports, conference papers and proceedings, government reports, theses and dissertations, and working papers.

Why is it helpful to research?

Gray literature can be more current than conventional literature because it is often produced quickly, without peer-review, and disseminated faster. Resources in gray literature may also be more focused and detailed, corroborating important assertions made in other sources.

What research strategies and tools are available to locate gray literature?

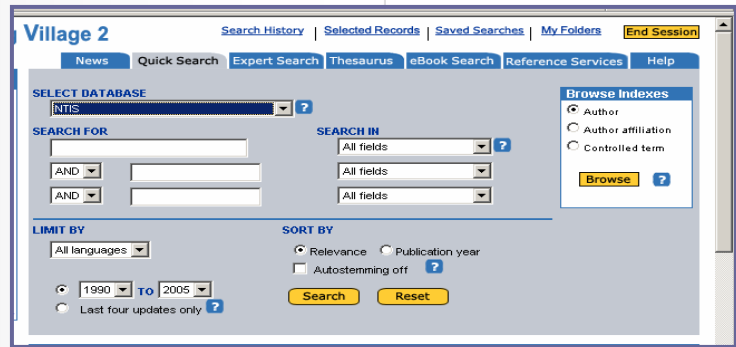
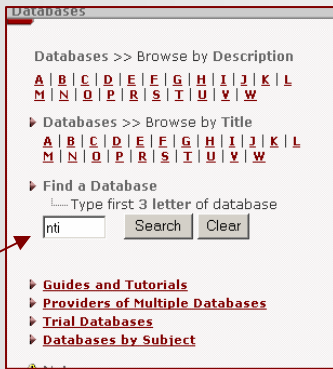
Gray literature can be difficult to locate due to its varied origins and formats. Searching gray literature requires looking in a variety of databases and web sites. Some important tools to consult include: National Technical Information Service (NTIS), Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO), GrayLit Network, Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS), PapersFirst, ProceedingsFirst, and Dissertation Abstracts.

- Search databases that index or include full-text sources of gray literature.
- Search major Internet directories or gateways of gray literature.
- Search corporations or institutions that are likely to produce gray literature.
- Search general or specialty search engines such as Google and AltaVista or Scirus or SOSIG.
- Search PDF files on the Internet.
- Search dissertations or theses as well as conference papers and proceedings.

National Technical Information Service (NTIS)

The National Technical Information Service (**NTIS**) is a comprehensive database for accessing unclassified reports from influential U.S. and international government agencies. Updated weekly, the database provides access to over two million citations from government agencies such as NASA, the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Defense. Some records date back to 1901, but the main coverage starts in 1964.

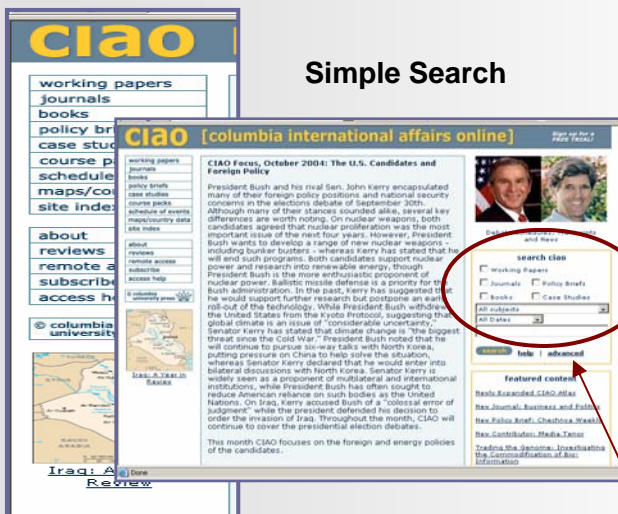
To access: From the FSU Libraries' Databases page (<http://www.lib.fsu.edu/databases.html>), type the first three letters of the database "NTI" in the box underneath "Find a Database" and hit "Search." Select Engineering Village 2 to connect. You are now ready to begin a "quick search."



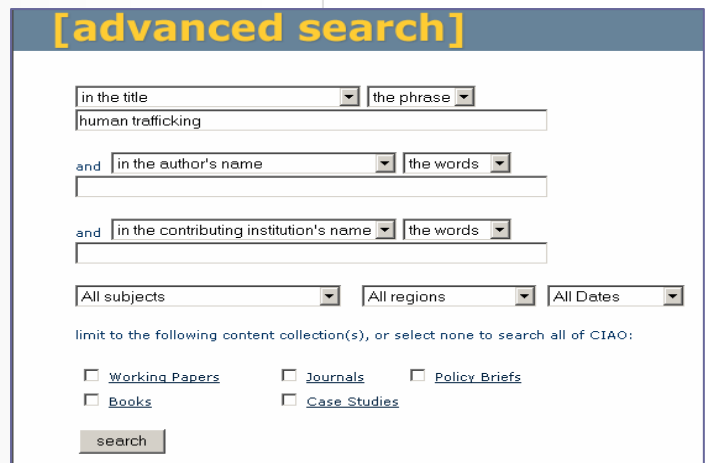
Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO)

This database covers research and theory in international affairs from 1991 to the present. The unique feature of this database is that it provides full text of working papers from research institutes and nongovernmental organizations, conference proceedings, journal articles, and policy briefs.

To access: From the FSU Libraries' Databases page (<http://www.lib.fsu.edu/databases.html>), type the first three letters of the database "CIA" in the box underneath "Find a Database" and hit "Search." Select "Connect Now." A simple and advanced search screen is available.



Click for Advanced Searching



GrayLit Network

GrayLit Network is a portal and search engine for over 100,000 full-text technical reports generated by four U.S. agencies: Department of Energy, Department of Defense, Environmental Protection Agency, and NASA. This site allows users to locate information without first having to know the sponsoring agency.

To access: Go to <http://www.osti.gov/graylit/>. Then select "Search the Literature" and enter search terms. Users may wish to specify one or all five databases from each of the four U.S. agencies to search.

PAIS International

This database provides bibliographic access to materials related to public affairs, law, and social sciences. Specifically it offers access to periodicals, books, hearings, reports, gray literature, government publications, Internet resources, and other publications from 120 countries. Although PAIS is not a full-text database, records found do contain brief, descriptive abstracts.

To access: From the FSU Libraries' Databases page (<http://www.lib.fsu.edu/databases.html>), type the first three letters of the database "PAI" in the box underneath "Find a Database" and hit "Search." Select "Connect Now."

Search Tips: Basic and Advanced search screens are available. Use an asterisk (*) as a truncation indicator.

PapersFirst and ProceedingsFirst (FirstSearch)

PapersFirst database provides an index to individual papers presented at conferences worldwide. Users may order the full-text of papers through Interlibrary Loan. The companion database, ProceedingsFirst, provides tables of contents of papers presented at conferences worldwide. Each record contains a list of the papers presented at each conference. Records in both databases cover 1993 to the present.

To access: From the FSU Libraries' Databases page (<http://www.lib.fsu.edu/databases.html>), type the first three letters of the vendor "FIR" in the text box. Select "Connect to FirstSearch." After selecting the Databases tab, scroll down and check either one or both check boxes for PapersFirst and ProceedingsFirst.

The screenshot shows the 'Databases' tab selected. A search box contains 'PAI' and the 'Search' button is highlighted. Below the search box is a list of databases with checkboxes. The following table represents the data shown in the screenshot:

Database Name	Description	Last Updated
<input type="checkbox"/> MediaRevDigest	Reviews of educational media and entertainment resources	2004-10-14
<input type="checkbox"/> MEDLINE	All areas of medicine, including dentistry and nursing	2004-10-23
<input type="checkbox"/> NewsAbs	Significant items from over 50 U.S. national and regional newspapers	2004-10-20
<input type="checkbox"/> PAISInternational	Database chronicling global public policy and social issues	2004-09-22
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PapersFirst*	OCLC index of papers presented at conferences worldwide	2004-10-23
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proceedings*	An OCLC index of worldwide conference proceedings	2004-10-23
<input type="checkbox"/> UnionLists	List of periodicals held by OCLC member libraries	
<input type="checkbox"/> WorldAlmanac	Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia and four almanacs	
<input type="checkbox"/> WorldCat	OCLC catalog of books and other materials in libraries worldwide	2004-10-25
<input type="checkbox"/> Worldscope	Basic financial information on public companies worldwide	2004-10-25

Digital Dissertations/Dissertations Abstracts (ProQuest)

This database covers every doctoral dissertation completed in the U.S. at accredited institutions 1861. It also includes some master's theses and foreign language dissertations. Citations for dissertations published from 1980 forward also include 350-word abstracts written by the author. Citations for master's theses from 1988 forward include 150-word abstracts. Titles published since 1997 are available in PDF digital form full-text.

To access: From the FSU Libraries' home page www.lib.fsu.edu, select "Dissertations and Theses" from the General E-Resources drop-down menu. Select *Dissertation Abstracts*. Once in Proquest, select "Search" from the top of the page. At the basic search screen, enter your terms and select fields from drop-down menu.

The screenshot shows the Florida State University Libraries website. The 'Dissertations and Theses' section is highlighted in red. Below it, the ProQuest Digital Dissertations search interface is shown. The search interface includes a search box, a dropdown menu for 'Keyword (KEY)', and a 'Search' button. The search results page shows a list of search terms and fields.