Tips & Tricks for Finding (Reliable) Web Content
What we will cover

- Finding Statistics
- Advanced Google Searching
- Wayback Machine
- URL Parsing
Finding Statistics
What we will cover

- Government Sources
- Other Sources
- Things to Remember
Government Statistics
Government Agencies tend to have a lot of statistical information
- The hard part can be figuring out which agency you’re looking for
- Try usa.gov/statistics
Federal Government Data and Statistics

These federal agency programs collect, analyze, and disseminate statistical data and information:

- **Bureau of Economic Analysis** collects information on economic indicators, national and international trade, accounts, and industry.
- **Bureau of Justice Statistics** reports on justice systems, crime, criminal offenders, and victims of crime.
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics** measures labor market activity, working conditions, and price changes in the U.S. economy.
- **Bureau of Transportation Statistics** provides data on airline on-time performance, pirates at sea, transportation safety and availability, motorcycle trends, and more.
- **Census Bureau** is the main source of data about our nation’s people and economy.
- **DAP Public Dashboard** provides a window into how people are interacting with the government online.
- **Data.gov** is the home of the U.S. Government’s open data. Find federal, state, and local data, tools, and resources to conduct research, build apps, design data visualizations, and more.
- **Economic Research Service** informs public and private decision making on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural development.
- **Energy Information Administration** provides data on U.S. use of coal, natural gas, nuclear energy, renewable energy, and more.
- **National Agricultural Statistical Service** researches data on food production and supply, organic sales, chemical use, demographics of U.S. producers, and more. Every five years it conducts the **Census of Agriculture** that provides agricultural data for every county in the United States.
- **National Center for Education Statistics** researches education in the United States. It publishes the **Digest of Education Statistics**, which includes international comparisons of students, and the annual report to Congress, **The Condition of Education**, which reports the progress of American education.

https://www.usa.gov/statistics
Other Sources

- Pew Research Center ([www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org))
  - Nonpartisan “fact tank” that does public opinion polling, demographic research, etc.
- Professional organizations
Things to Remember
Things to Remember

- Look for reports, not raw data
  - It can be useful to have access to the data, but you don’t want to be in a position of having to do data analysis

- Be aware of bias
  - Read the reports critically. Does the conclusion actually follow from the data?
  - Keep track of your sources and do research to find out what kind of slant they might have
Internet Research
Topics

- Advance Google Searching
- Internet Archive
- URL Parsing
Advanced Google Search

- Google has advance search functions
- Easiest way to find it is by searching for “advanced search”
- Or go to google.com/advanced_search
Google Advanced Search

Find pages with...

all those words: [text field]
this exact word or phrase: [text field]
any of these words: [text field]
none of these words: [text field]
numbers ranging from: [text field] to [text field]

To do this in the search box

Type the important words: tricolor rat terrier
Put exact words in quotes: “rat terrier”
Type OR between all the words you want: miniature OR standard
Put a minus sign just before words you don’t want: -rodent, -“Jack Russell”
Put 2 periods between the numbers and add a unit of measure: 10..15, $300..$500, 2010..2011

Then narrow your results by...

language: any language
region: any region
last update: anytime
site or domain: [text field]
terms appearing: anywhere in the page
SafeSearch: Show most relevant results
file type: any format
usage rights: not filtered by license

Find pages in the language you select.
Find pages published in a particular region.
Find pages updated within the time you specify.
Search one site (like wikipedia.org) or limit your results to a domain like .edu, .org or .gov.
Search for terms in the whole page, page title, or web address, or links to the page you’re looking for.
Tell SafeSearch whether to filter sexually explicit content.
Find pages in the format you prefer.
Find pages you are free to use yourself.

Advanced Search
Advanced Google Search

- You can also use the operators in the search bar
  - site: Search within one domain or top level domain (i.e., edu, gov)
  - inurl: URL must contain the search term
  - filetype: Find only a particular format (i.e., pdf)
  - AROUND(X): Proximity search

- And so many more!
  (For a longer list, see https://moz.com/learn/seo/search-operators)
Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine
The Wayback Machine is a service that allows people to visit archived versions of web sites.

Why?
- Trying to find information from a site that no longer exists
- Looking for a report that has been removed from a government website
- Curious to see what USD’s webpage used to look like

https://archive.org/web/
Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) or web addresses, is the location of the website or document

Understanding the way a website is organized can help you bypass a site’s navigation or find orphaned pages and information
How?

- Imagine that you’re looking for an article by professor Floyd Neiderman from volume 20, issue 2 of *Law and Technology*.
- You’ve done some searching but the closest you’ve come is an article from volume 23, issue 3 at this address:


- By editing the URL, we can try and find our way to the article we want.
How?

- Generally, going back through the URL will lead to index pages. So this would show us an index page for all issues and articles within Volume 23:
  
  ![URL Example](http://www.uwec.edu/Admin/Journal/LawTech/2014/Vol_23/)

- What if that fails?

- We can infer the organizational structure from the URL and try manipulating it to find the document we need:
  
  ![URL Example](http://www.uwec.edu/Admin/Journal/LawTech/2011/Vol_20/Issue_2/neiderman.pdf)
And always remember…

🔹 The Reference Librarians are always here to help!