

Identifying resources to support searching for One Health and Planetary Health topics, with a focus on grey literature

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Abstract

We report briefly on the establishment of the Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Systems (GAAFS), a new interdisciplinary research group at the University of Edinburgh and how this required the library to identify and learn about additional search resources on top of those within our usual repertoire. We share examples of some of the resources which were found to be most useful for One Health and Planetary Health.

Key words: *grey literature; One Health; information literacy; information sources.*

Background

In 2016 the University of Edinburgh launched the Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Systems (GAAFS), based within the University's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies. GAAFS launched as an "interdisciplinary hub of researchers, teachers and students; developing new science, curating evidence and learning on the intersection and interdependence of the systems that underpin the health and wellbeing of people and our planet" (1). Its vision is "Healthy people and a healthy planet, through regenerative and ethical food and land use systems" (1).

As GAAFS grew, the number of people involved increased to over 30 staff, and over 40 PhD students. GAAFS staff design and deliver Masters programmes, continuous professional development programmes and a MOOC (massive open online course) in Sustainable Global Food Systems. GAAFS staff have also developed undergraduate interdisciplinary courses, taken by students in other parts of the University of Edinburgh. The academy is multi-disciplinary and has staff with expertise in subject areas such as agricultural systems, land use, climate change, data science, international law, international development, policy and governance, and behaviour change, as well as more familiar areas such as animal science, livestock systems and veterinary public health.

Library support for GAAFS is provided by the Lady Smith of Kelvin Veterinary Library within the University's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies. In supporting GAAFS staff and students Library staff have had to learn about new or less familiar search resources.

Here I would like to share examples of some of the resources which we as Library staff have found to be most useful.

Identifying search resources

Databases

Many of the databases we already used, such as Web of Science, Scopus and MEDLINE are useful for GAAFS staff and students, but we needed to familiarise ourselves with databases covering agricultural and planetary health. We had used CAB Abstracts and CABI Global Health for veterinary topics and knew these to be excellent for agricultural and planetary health also. To identify other suitable databases, we looked at the library subject pages of other universities, which we suspect is something many of us do when looking for information!

Grey literature

There can be different definitions of grey literature, however at the Third International Conference on

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Grey Literature, held in 1997 the following definition was agreed “information produced on all levels of government, academia, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing i.e., where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body” (2).

We were already aware of the importance of grey literature for some aspects of veterinary information and saw this as being valuable for GAAFS staff and students also, especially given the international aspect of their research. In the 1970s, researchers from the University of Edinburgh’s Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine highlighted the importance of dissemination of their research to researchers and extension services in “their own geographic situations” and they did this by providing the information in, for example, booklets provided to extension services, such as in country collaborative advisory organisations (3). More recently, a *Nature* news item in 2021 highlighted a paper which showed that researchers in the global south are under-represented in development research (4, 5).

For researchers who are looking to be as inclusive as possible in their literature searches, and who wish to include more material from the Global South, it is, therefore, recommended to search grey literature databases and search resources as well as the more familiar bibliographic databases (6-8). Doing so should assist them to discover more research reports and policy documents, for example, which other bibliographic databases may not include. Many current systematic reviews in Planetary Health include grey literature in their protocols (9).

We were aware that CAB Abstracts and CABI Global Health indexed grey literature, however, we recognised that there would be other resources which we should use.

In March 2023 John Barbrook, Faculty Librarian for Science and Technology, Health and Medicine at Lancaster University gave a talk on “Decolonising Grey Literature”, as part of their “Systematic Review Conversations”. He spoke about Overton and Policy Commons as excellent resources for searching international grey literature (10). These are resources which several of our researchers have found very useful.

Other relevant resources were identified during discussions with the researchers. Researchers are often already familiar with many of the organisational and institutional websites and repositories in their area of

expertise. As we learned more about the research topics of the GAAFS researchers, we continued to learn about new search resources also.

Some suggested search resources

These are some of the resources which we have found useful. While this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, it may be a useful starting point to others new to Planetary Health and One Health.

AgEcon Search

(<https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: “AgEcon Search: Research in Agricultural and Applied Economics” is a subject repository which collects and indexes research in agricultural and applied economics, including sub-disciplines such as agribusiness, food security and supply, energy and natural resource economics, environmental economics, policy issues, international trade, and economic development. Content includes conference presentations, working papers, journal articles, government documents, and theses and dissertations.

AgriKnowledge

(<https://gatesopenresearch.org/gateways/agriknowledge>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: AgriKnowledge provides access to key information for agricultural development. These documents have been produced in conjunction with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, and the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency.

agriRxiv

(<https://agrxiv.org/>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: open access, searchable, full-text repository of author-submitted unpublished preprints across the agricultural sciences, including agribusiness, aquaculture, crop science, environmental science, forestry, plant science, livestock science, soil science.

AGRIS

(<https://agris.fao.org/>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: the International System for Agricultural Science and Technology (AGRIS) is produced by the

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). AGRIS is one of the most comprehensive search engines in food and agricultural scientific literature providing free access to millions of bibliographic records in 90 different languages. AGRIS indexes books, journal articles, monographs, book chapters, datasets and grey literature – including unpublished scientific and technical reports, theses, dissertations and conference papers in the area of food and agriculture.

CAB Abstracts

(various platforms including CABI Digital Library: <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/product/ca>)

Access information: subscription.

Description: agriculture database, with excellent veterinary coverage. Indexes journal articles, books and book chapters, conferences, reports and grey literature. Includes over 670,000 full text articles, 80% of which are not available online elsewhere. Covers research and development literature in the fields of animal and crop husbandry, animal and plant breeding, plant protection, genetics, forestry, veterinary medicine, aspects of human health, human nutrition, rural development, leisure and tourism and management and conservation of natural resources.

CGSpace

(<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/home>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: CGSpace is a repository of CGIAR and partner research outputs and knowledge products. The repository has information on reports, articles, press releases, presentations, videos, policy briefs, datasets, infographics and more. CGIAR was formerly the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research. It includes organisations such as the International Food Policy Research Institute, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and the International Livestock Research Institute.

EMBRAPA - The Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation

(<https://www.embrapa.br/en/library>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) is a large agricultural research organisation, working on innovation, efficiency, sustainability and social inclusion.

EMPRES-I

(<https://empres-i.apps.fao.org/general>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: EMPRES Global Animal Disease Information System (EMPRES-i) is a web-based application that has been designed to support veterinary services by facilitating the organisation and access to regional and global disease information. Includes emergent zoonoses, and supports prevention, improved management and progressive approach to control.

FAO Knowledge Repository

(<https://openknowledge.fao.org/home>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: the FAO Knowledge Repository is FAO's official open repository, providing access to all of its publications. Through its open access policy, FAO seeks to increase the dissemination of its knowledge and to contribute to the scientific and technical impact of the Organization. The FAO Knowledge Repository contains tens of thousands of publications; annual reports; technical papers; policy briefs; advocacy documents; project reports; meeting documents; grey literature; and other information and communication material. It is worth noting that the FAO resource Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA) provides access to journals, e-books, and other information resources covering agriculture and related topics to public institutions in low-income countries <https://www.fao.org/agora/>.

FAOLEX Database

(<https://www.fao.org/faolex/en/>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: FAOLEX is a database of national legislation, policies and bilateral agreements on food, agriculture and natural resources management. It contains legal and policy documents drawn from more than 200 countries, territories and regional economic integration organisations in over 40 languages.

Overton

(<https://www.overton.io/>)

Access information: subscription.

Description: Overton is a large searchable index of policy documents, guidelines, think tank publications and working papers from sources that are typically difficult to find in one place. Documents are parsed to find ref-

ferences, people and key concepts in relevant news stories, academic research, think tank output and other policy literature. Full-text indexing can lead to discovery of additional citations. Overton includes over 18 million full-text policy documents and grey literature from 44,000 organisations in 188 countries.

Policy Commons

(<https://policycommons.net>)

Access information: subscription, with some content freely available.

Description: Policy Commons provides access to over 17 million books, articles, working papers, reports, policy briefs, data sets, tables, charts, media, case studies, and statistical publications from over 40,000 organisations. The search interface enables searching for tables within reports.

World Organisation for Animal Health, OIE

(<https://doc.woah.org/>)

Access information: freely available.

Description: institutional repository of publications, communications and work produced by WOA. Most is open access.

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