

Search portal - Advanced Use

The EIPPEE search portal uses Bing™ to retrieve and classify search results from a list of pre-selected websites, please see the short portal guide to learn the basic features of the portal.

The search portal can be used like any ordinary search engine; however, in order to get the best out of it, there are plenty of personalisation options that are explained below.

This document will focus on the following concepts: [Sub-Portals](#), how to [limit your search to a subset of sources](#), how to [add your own private sources](#), and how to [submit sources to a portal](#).

Sub-portals

The EIPPEE search portal is specifically designed to support many different sub-portals. Different sub-portals will vary in the kind of sources they include, and therefore are characterised by a different scope. The main (default) EIPPEE sub-portal has a broad scope, as it uses sources that contain research outcomes in the education field, with particular interest for Europe-based studies. Other portals can specialise on a particular topic such as primary education, a particular country or any other form of specialisation. Technologically, there are no topic-restrictions. Therefore it is entirely possible that sub-portals focussed on wider or different scopes will be created.

The list of public portals is accessible through the [portals link](#), this will display the **list of portals**, along with the links that allow users to **access each portal** and (if appropriate) **subscribe**.

Each sub-portal can be configured in several ways: it can be public or private (e.g. not accessible to the general public), it can also accept or forbid suggestions for new sources. In order to be able to suggest a new source, users need to subscribe to the portal, subscriptions may be automatically accepted by the sub-portal or require some kind of supervision. This subscription requirement is mainly an anti-spam mechanism: it enables sub-portal administrators to blacklist users that regularly submit irrelevant or inappropriate sources.

Users can **change sub-portal** at all times: click on the “Portals” button and “Open” the chosen sub-portal. This will affect the list of portal-specific sources, and will have no effect over your own private sources (if present/logged on).

To **subscribe to a sub-portal**: after logging on, click on the “portals” button, and on the appropriate “Subscribe” link. If you have already subscribed, the same link will change to “Unsubscribe”, some portals may not allow subscriptions and the link will be absent or inactive.

Each portal also includes a description of how sources are selected (inclusion criteria/quality control policy), therefore each sub-portal may handle user-generated source submissions in different ways: typically, users will be allowed to suggest new sources for inclusion in the sub-portal, these submissions will then be reviewed by an administrator and included if they comply with the inclusion criteria/quality control policy. Different portals may also be configured to automatically accept all subscriptions (may be appropriate for private portals) or not to accept submissions at all.

Should you have a suggestion for a new sub-portal, you are welcome to get in touch through email (EPPIsupport@ioe.ac.uk), you will need to have a clear idea of the portal scope, of who will manage it (EIPPEE and the EPPI-Centre can't offer to manage additional sub-portals) and of the inclusion criteria/quality control policy. Your suggestion will be evaluated by EIPPEE/EPPI-Centre staff; please

note that we don't offer any guarantee: depending on circumstances, we may be forced to refuse new portals for technical and/or other reasons.

Running a search against a subset of sources

We believe that Sub-Portals will be a very powerful way to enable users to perform finely tuned searches, however, the EIPPEE search portal always allows to further limit the scope of any search by limiting a search to any subset of the currently available sources. To enable this feature, click on "Show/Hide Sources". The checkbox on the left of each source controls what source will be used for the next search. You can use the "Select All" checkbox at any time, to act on all the sources currently listed. When used in combination with the search box, the "Select All" checkbox allows for very fast search customisations. Two examples follow:

Example one, how run a search against all sources except the ones located in the UK.

- Make the list of sources visible: if necessary, click on "show/hide sources".
- Make sure the "Search:" box is empty, select the "Select All" checkbox, this ensures that all sources in the list are selected.
- Type "United Kingdom" in the search box: as you type, the number of sources will gradually decrease.
- Uncheck the "Select All" box. The UK sources listed will all be unchecked (all the other, currently hidden sources will remain unaffected).
- Type your search terms, hit "Search" and browse your results.
- The system will remember your current selection: the next searches will still exclude UK sources until you'll explicitly change your selections or reload the page.

Example two, how run a search against German sources only.

- Make the list of sources visible: click on "show/hide sources" if necessary.
- Make sure the "Search:" box is empty, select and unselect the "Select All" checkbox, this ensures that no sources are selected.
- Type "Germany" in the search box, as you type, the number of sources will decrease.
- Check the "Select All" box. The German sources listed will all be checked (all the other, currently hidden sources will remain unaffected).
- Type your search terms, hit "Search" and browse your results.
- The system will remember your current selection: the next searches will still run against the German sources only until you'll explicitly change your selections or reload the page.

Adding new sources

Registration on the EIPPEE website automatically allows you to personalise the search portal by adding your own preferred sources. When logged on, two lists of sources will be available, your own private list, and the list of the current sub-portal. The personal list is unique to the logged-on user and does not depend on the sub-portal selection. Selecting and unselecting sources is done in the same way as for the portal sources (see above).

Naturally, each new user starts with an empty list of sources, adding a new source is easy (**log on, click "Add new Source" and fill in the new source fields**), but some care should be given when choosing the URL of new sources: an incorrect URL may return no results!

The following paragraphs will explain **how to choose the right URL**, a process that is not always intuitive. The limitations depend on how Bing™ works, which is essentially the same mechanism of the search tools available in Windows computers. When searching for documents stored on a Windows PC, it is customary to perform a search within a folder (and all of its subfolders), URLs have a similar hierarchical structure where the separation between sub-folders is marked by the forward slash “/” and the part after the last slash is the current page; the Bing™ search engine allows for an analogous approach, enabling searches to be performed against a certain branch of a website, while ignoring all the rest. Some limitations exist, and sometimes websites don’t come with a clear-cut structure that allows for such targeted searches.

When adding a new source, the most obvious URL is the root of the website, such as “www.eippee.eu”: adding a new source with a “root” URL will make sure the portal searches the entire website, not limiting the search to a particular website section.

Sometimes it is advisable to restrict the search only to a **site section** (for example, the “Publications” pages of a large University), this is usually possible by selecting a URL like “www.someuniv.org/Publications”; however, the structure of each site may vary, making it sometimes impossible to identify the right URL and/or limit the source to a peculiar site-section.

Bing™ also comes with a limitation: it will only accept to search **subsections of websites that are three levels deep, or less**.

- www.somesite.com/section/sub-section will work, but
- www.somesite.com/sub1/sub2/sub3 is four-levels deep (root, plus sub1, 2 and 3) therefore it will **not work**. The EIPPEE system will refuse to accept this type of URL and display an error in real time.

Another thing to keep in mind is that URLs should never point to a specific page, but rather to the “folder” that contains it; examples of URLs that point to a specific page and would not work are:

- www.site.com/page.html,
- www.site.com/page.php,
- www.site.com/page.aspx,
- www.site.com/page.html?art_ID=12 and
- www.site.com/section/?art_id=1243.

For the first four examples above, the right URL would be www.site.com; for the last one, both www.site.com and www.site.com/section would work.

Websites that can’t be browsed and may only be searched directly: many online resources provide access to their content only through their own internal search facility. In this case, it is unfortunately frequent that most of the contents will be unknown to Bing™: if the only way to reach a given page is to type the “right” terms in a search-box within the site, then it’s likely that Bing™ (and therefore the EIPPEE search portal) will never be able to find what you are looking for.

Finally, for a new source to work well, it is **necessary that Bing™ has already indexed the whole of the website** that the source represents. Bing™ (as all other standard search engines) automatically scans the Internet looking for new pages and following new links. While this automatic web-browsing happens, it reads all the visited pages and stores an index of all their contents. This process is costly, and given the size and change-rate of the Internet, it is never complete. If Bing’s index does

not contain the entire website/section specified by your source, then search results will be incomplete.

To check if Bing™ has a complete index of your source, go to the [Bing search page](#) and type something like: “`site:www.site.com`” in the search box. This asks Bing™ for all known pages within the specified site ([www.site.com](#) in this example) and is a fast way to evaluate how complete is Bing’s index. You can also specify a site section, as in “`site:www.site.com/section`”, bearing in mind the three levels limitation explained above.

If you’ll find that Bing™ knows little or nothing about the source you are inserted in, you can submit one or more URL(s) to Bing’s attention through this page: <https://ssl.bing.com/webmaster/SubmitSitePage.aspx>. If you are the source webmaster, or have some ways to influence the website structure, you could also try to implement or suggest some search engine optimisations.

Submit a new source to sub-portals

Once you have inserted a new source, and verified its usefulness, you may want to submit it to the main EIPPEE portal, or the appropriate sub-portal. This is important, because it is the main mechanism to ensure the public lists of sources are useful and up to date. If you represent a particular organisation and think your organisation’s website should be included, you should follow this procedure as well, the submission mechanism is the fastest way to make sure your website appears in the list of sources available through the EIPPEE search portal.

Before submitting a source, you should check a couple of things:

- 1) The **source should be relevant for the chosen sub-portal**. You can read the sub-portal description and inclusion criteria/quality control policy via the links in the portals list. Irrelevant and inappropriate sources will obviously be rejected, so it is in your interest to check their suitability.
- 2) Make sure the source URL works well and that the description is precise and informative; please also check your language and country selections. **Good quality sources** with clear and accurate descriptions are much more likely to be included.

To submit a source:

- a. Make sure you are using the desired sub-portal and log on.
- b. From the portals list (click on the “Portals” button), make sure you have subscribed to the current portal. The “Subscribe” column reports your status, if the link in that column is “Unsubscribe” then you have already subscribed to the current portal.
- c. If necessary, click “Show/Hide Sources” to see the list of your personal sources.
- d. You can use the “Submit” links to suggest any of your personal sources for inclusion in the current sub-portal. What will happen after clicking submit depends on the sub-portal configuration: most likely nothing will happen immediately. This is because an administrator will need to review your suggestion: if accepted, the source will appear in the portal list without further notifications; if refused, you will receive a short explanation via email.