Creating and Using a Google Custom Search Engine in Your Library Pathfinders

Google Custom Search Engine:
The Basics

Creating a Google Custom Search Engine

T he Google Custom Search feature allows you to create a service that searches through only the sites you specify, versus the general open Web. This makes it an excellent addition to traditional library pathfinders. With a Google Custom Search Engine (CSE), you can direct your library users to high-quality, authoritative information resources for school projects and business research.

Prerequisites and Pre-work

- A Google account is required to use the CSE feature.

- If you have an account through your company or organization, check with your system administrator to make sure that CSE is enabled for your account.

- Pre-work: While sites can be added to the CSE one at a time, it is advisable to prepare a list of URLs in advance. The list should be unnumbered and un-bulleted, with a single URL on each line.
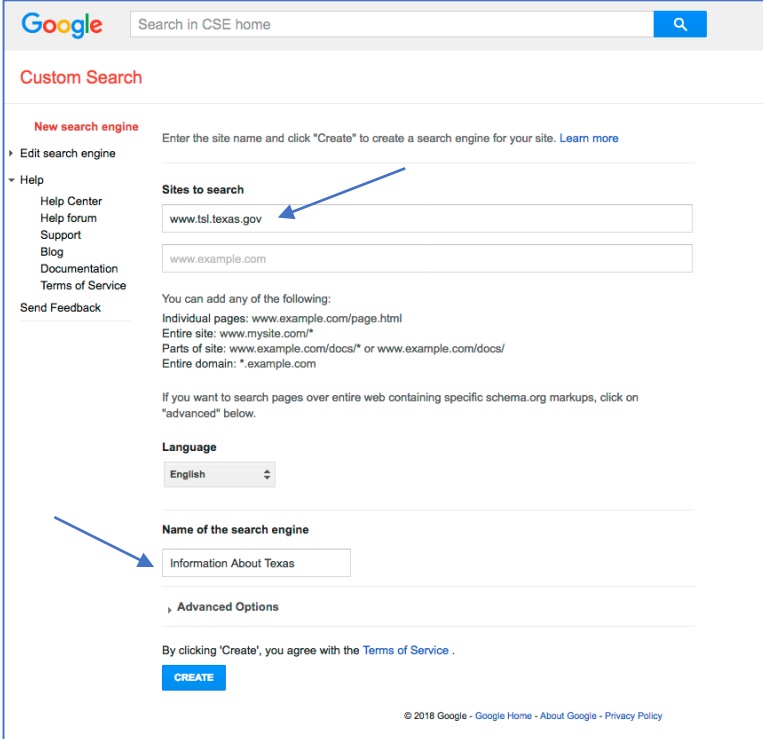
URLS for Google Custom Search Engine

http://www.bidc.state.tx.us
http://governor.state.tx.us/ecodev/business_research/texas_economy
http://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/index.shtml
http://www.tracer2.com
http://www.twc.state.tx.us/customers/bemp/bempsub9.html
http://www.texasonline.com/portal/tol/en/gov/9
http://www.cpa.state.tx.us/m23taxes.html
http://www.statelocalgov.net/state-tx.cfm
http://www.county.org/about-texas-counties/county-websites/Pages/default.aspx
http://www.cdcatexas.com/Directory/Clerks
http://window.state.tx.us/propertytax/references/directory/tac
http://www.tsl.texas.gov/ref/abouttx/countieshonoringdisabled.html
http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/
http://www.traveltex.com
http://governor.state.tx.us/ecodev/business_research/texas_economy
http://www.capitol.state.tx.us
http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us
http://www.governor.state.tx.us
http://www.governor.state.tx.us/contact
http://www.texasalmanac.com
http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net
http://www.texasheritageonline.org
http://www.txindependence.org

Creating a Topic-Specific CSE

To create your Google Custom Search Engine:

1. Go to the CSE Control Panel at https://cse.google.com/cse and sign in to your account.

2. Click on "New Search Engine" on the left side menu bar.

3. Enter at least one initial URL to start your site and then enter the name of your search engine. Choose something descriptive. This is the name that will appear on the search page.

4. Click the "Create" button, and then you will see a "Congratulations" message at the next screen. You have successfully created your Custom Search Engine and will now need to populate it with sites to be searched.

Adding Sites to Your CSE

To create your Google Custom Search Engine:

1. From the "Congratulations" screen, click on the "Control Panel" button. This will bring you to the main interface for managing and editing your CSE.

Please note that there are several advanced features of CSE that can be accessed from the Control Panel, but these are outside of the scope of this particular training.

2. In the "Sites to Search" section toward the bottom of the screen, click on "Add."

3. A pop-up window will open that gives you the choice to add sites individually or to include sites in bulk. If you have already prepared your list of URLs you can choose the Include sites in bulk option.

4. Copy the URLs from your list and paste them into the text window. Be sure that only one site is listed per line.

5. You will also choose whether to include all pages at the sites in your searches or just the particular page at each specific URL.

6. Click "Save." You will be returned to the Control Panel and will now see all of the URLs you added in the "Sites to search" section.

Your Custom Search Engine is now ready for use!

Accessing and Using Your CSE

There are two options for accessing and using your Custom Search Engine:

1. Accessing the CSE through the Google-hosted homepage—

    a. Locate the "Details" section of the Basics tab on the CSE Control Panel. Click on the "Public URL" button.

    b. In the pop-up window, verify that the "Enable Public URL" is turned on. Then click on the hyperlink that is provided. This will open your new CSE in a new browser tab.

        When you enter search terms and click the search button on this page, Google will search the sites that you added to your CSE. (Please note that this is an ad-supported service, so sponsored listings will appear at the top of the results list.)

    c. To make the new CSE available to your users, simply add the Public URL to your pathfinder Web Pages, PDFs, printouts, brochures, etc.

I'm a Pathfinder!
Doing a Report on Texas

To do an online search of these sources, go to the Custom Search Engine at:

https://cse.google.com/cse/publicurl?cx=006202260242204103545:scyeginfp_w

- Handbook of Texas Online
  https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online
  Encyclopedia of Texas information! Articles on people, places, events and trends in Texas history

- TravelTex
  https://www.traveltexas.com
  Travel information, Texas electronic postcards, screensavers and the Texas State Travel Guide

- Texas economy
  https://gov.texas.gov/organization/ecodev
  All about the Texas economy

- Texas Legislature Online
  http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/
  Learn how Texas Government works! Look here for information on laws, the Constitution and members of the Legislature

- Texas Parks and Wildlife
  https://tpwd.texas.gov
  Information about animals, plants, fishing, hunting, boating and state parks

        Your users now have the ability to not only browse through the high-quality sources you have curated for them but also actively search through them with the familiar, simple, user-friendly Google search interface!

2. Advanced option: Accessing the CSE through code for an embedded search box—

    a. In the "Details" section on the Control Panel, click the "Get code" button. This will bring you to a page with the code that will need to be pasted into your HTML.

PLEASE NOTE: This is a more advanced option and you will need to be comfortable with HTML and CSS. Please work with your organization's Web master or Web developer.