Preprints in Knowledge Synthesis

A preprint is the version of a research article that is submitted to a journal for publication and that has (typically) not yet undergone peer-review. The sharing of preprints is valuable and popular because:

- Preprints are often more timely than published manuscripts. The sharing of a preprint can happen *at the time of the manuscript's completion* and are not subject to the 12 to 24 month lag common to the formal publishing process. Indeed, in some disciplines, preprints and preprint servers are the norm – by the time an article is actually published, it is out of date.
- It rarely constitutes a violation of the prospective journal's copyright. Preprints can usually be made open access and therefore available to all researchers regardless of their institution's ability to pay for access to the journal in which it is / becomes published.
- Preprints can be one of the few places that negative results and replication studies are made available (as journals tend to have a bias against publishing both). Preprints are also less susceptible to other aspects of publication bias.

Preprints fall under the category of grey literature and are frequently mined in knowledge synthesis projects.

Searching for Preprints

Preprints can be found in many different places, such as author websites, some academic databases, institutional repositories, and services like ResearchGate. Like grey literature, they tend to just be everywhere and anywhere. For this reason, it's not really possible to find all of them, but many can be found by searching dedicated preprint servers, some of the most popular of which are listed in the table below.

Preprint Server	
OSF Preprints (Aggregator)	Preprint aggregator from many community servers
Europe PMC (Aggregator)	Preprint aggregator that includes preprints from 30 different preprint servers, including arXiv, ChemRxiv, bioRxiv, MedRxiv, SciELO preprints, SSRN, PeerJ Preprints, Preprints.org, and Research Square.
Google Scholar (Aggregator)	Preprint aggregator produced by Google. Preprints can be isolated in searching by using the source operator (source:"medrxiv") or (source:"preprints")
Research Square Preprints	Multidisciplinary preprint platform
Preprints.org	Multidisciplinary preprint platform
SSRN	Medical preprint platform
PeerJ Preprints	Multidisciplinary preprint platform
SciELO Preprints	Science preprint platform
MedRxiv	Medical preprint platform
ChemRxiv	Chemistry preprint platform
bioRxiv	Biology preprint platform
arXiv	Science, math, engineering and economics preprint server