Grey Literature LibGuides or LibGuides about Grey Literature: A Two Continent Environmental Scan of Common Themes & Trends

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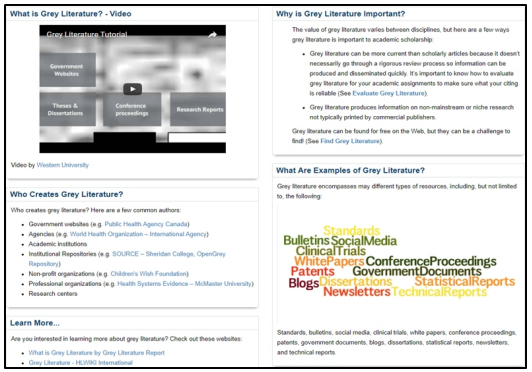
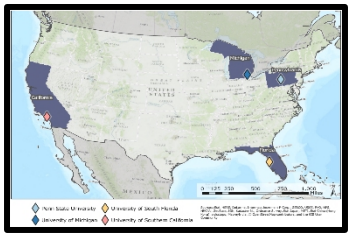
The **definition of Grey Literature** is:

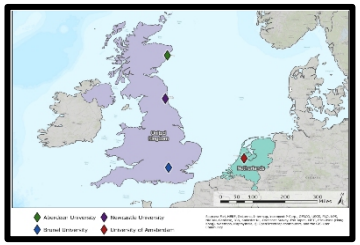
"That which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers." [1]

Importance of LibGuides for Grey Literature

The past decade has seen a continuous and exponential rise in LibGuides, a content management and library knowledge-sharing system well-represented among several disciplines in academic institutions worldwide. As a type of grey literature (officially receiving this distinction from the GreyNet community in 2016), LibGuides certainly exhibit many grey literature traits, including easy online access, providing up-to-date information, promoting self-learning, and containing information that is often overlooked and neglected. According to the LibGuides Community website, 542,190 LibGuides presently exist worldwide, authored by 137,825 librarians from 4,907 institutions in 70 countries.







Best Practices Checklist:

- Grey literature definition
- Document types
- Searching for grey literature
- List of resources
- Value/importance of grey literature
- How to evaluate/appraise grey literature

Arguments for Using Grey Literature [3]

1.Grey literature is an important source of information due to the uniqueness of the content that gets published. Because commercial publishers are looking to make a profit on the materials they publish, they often overlook niche research areas that serve smaller populations. Grey literature is one way to search for information in emerging or less popular research areas.

2. Grey literature can sometimes be more current that commercially published information. It does not go through the potentially time-consuming peer-review process undertaken by commercial publishers, and therefore has a quicker turnaround time for dissemination.

3. The importance of grey literature can vary between disciplines. While the health and medical fields tend to favor traditional publication methods through well-known scholarly publishers, other fields like disaster management tend to prefer the grey literature route.

Methodology

Using the LibGuides Community website as an information portal, an environmental scan was conducted across Canada, the United States, and Europe in the spring of 2017 to locate standalone grey literature LibGuides or subject-specific LibGuides devoting considerable attention to grey material. LibGuides selected for the environmental scan were chosen geographically (to ensure balance across provinces, states, and countries), and were evaluated and critically appraised according to the AACODS checklist.

Discussion/Conclusion

Our poster will thus describe the evidence gathering process undertaken to determine appropriate LibGuides used for analysis, extrapolating common themes and trends universal across all LibGuides.

These include a definition of grey literature, information on how to search for grey literature, grey literature document types, lists of resources, along with any evidence of social media inclusion.

Importance of LibGuides for Grey Literature

LibGuides well-represented in multiple disciplines

LibGuides received designation from GreyNet as a recognized type of grey literature in 2016

Currently, there are 542,190 LibGuides authored by 137,825 librarians from 4,907 institutions in 70 countries

Methodology

- LibGuides Community website as an information portal
- Environmental scan across Canada, the United States, and Europe
- Standalone grey literature LibGuides or subject-specific LibGuides devoting considerable attention to grey material
- Evaluation according to the AACODS checklist
- Several LibGuides, selection of 12 for poster

Sheridan College, Canada: A Sample Best-Practice LibGuide

What is Grey Literature? - Video

Video by Western University

Who Creates Grey Literature?

Who creates grey literature? Here are a few common authors:

- Government websites (e.g. Public Health Agency Canada)
- Agencies (e.g. World Health Organization – International Agency)
- Academic institutions
- Institutional Repositories (e.g. SOURCE – Sheridan College, OpenGrey Repository)
- Non-profit organizations (e.g. Children's Wish Foundation)
- Professional organizations (e.g. Health Systems Evidence – McMaster University)
- Research centers

Learn More...

Are you interested in learning more about grey literature? Check out these websites:

- What is Grey Literature by Grey Literature Report
- Grey Literature - HLWIKI International

Why is Grey Literature Important?

The value of grey literature varies between disciplines, but here are a few ways grey literature is important to academic scholarship:

- Grey literature can be more current than scholarly articles because it doesn't necessarily go through a rigorous review process so information can be produced and disseminated quickly. It's important to know how to evaluate grey literature for your academic assignments to make sure what your citing is reliable (See Evaluate Grey Literature).
- Grey literature produces information on non-mainstream or niche research not typically printed by commercial publishers.

Grey literature can be found for free on the Web, but they can be a challenge to find! (See Find Grey Literature).

What Are Examples of Grey Literature?

Grey literature encompasses may different types of resources, including, but not limited to, the following:

Standards, bulletins, social media, clinical trials, white papers, conference proceedings, patents, government documents, blogs, dissertations, statistical reports, newsletters, and technical reports.

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