

# Collection Development in a Grey World

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GL10 Conference, Amsterdam

December 2008

## Collecting in a digital world

- The British Library and the grey literature collections and collecting.
- The UK landscape and access to content.
- Changes to the British Library collections.
- The future.



## The British Library – some facts

- Is the national library of the United Kingdom
- Receives one copy of every publication produced in the UK and Ireland
- The collection includes over 150 million items in most known languages
- If you saw 5 items pre day it would take over 80,000 years to see the whole collection
- 3 million new items are added very year
- Grows by 12 km every year
- Serves business & industry, researchers, academics and students in the UK and world wide



# British Library grey literature collections

What do we collect?

## Reports

- British research, practice and development reports
- Distributed by US federal agencies
- Distributed by international/intergovernmental agencies
- Official Publications
  - UK – central and local Government and Government Agencies
  - Overseas national governments
- Theses
  - UK doctoral and postdoctoral theses
- Conference material
  - Regular journal issues and special supplements
  - One of monographs
  - Published proceedings
- Websites
  - Websites from the UK web space



## British Library grey literature collecting

How do we collect and the UK landscape.

In the print environment we have 3 main mechanisms for collecting:

- Legal deposit
- Commercially purchased
- Exchange and donation

In a digital environment the options are:

- Connect to content
- Download and archive
- Voluntary deposit
- Commercial services

## Collecting in the digital environment – some options

- Connecting to content and reliance on Internet access – instead of libraries spending time creating, organising and providing access to a physical collection the role of the information professional is to assist researchers in locating material.
- Downloading and archiving of material – there are a number of approaches, information professionals select material for archiving this can be:
  - Website archiving programmes e.g. Web Continuity Project
  - Archiving of individual documents e.g. Voluntary Deposit
  - Establishing an institutional/discipline repository e.g. EThOS.
- Commercial service – some commercial services aggregate and provide access to full text grey literature e.g. PsycExtra or Proquest Dissertation Abstracts.



## How do these approaches affect our collecting?

- Currently looking at how these different approaches affect our collecting through a small case study of report literature relating to dementia.
- Why dementia?
  - Topical subject relevant to researchers in different fields
  - Spans the sciences and social sciences and requires information professionals in the BL to work together from different teams
- What are we doing?
  - Identifying organisations active in this field e.g. Government departments, research institutes and academia
  - Do they publish material and how do they publish it e.g. print only, e-only, print and e
- Identifying relevant material for the collection
  - Checking selections against the BL catalogue to see if already held
  - Selecting the websites for web archiving
  - Prioritising organisations to approach for voluntary deposit

Ongoing but will review the methodology to see if it can be used for other subjects and if it is successful in establishing mechanisms for selecting and acquiring UK grey literature

## The tip of the iceberg



The collection will continue to evolve and develop and collecting practices will adapt to address the changes.

Grey literature has always been difficult to collect and manage and will continue to be so. But collection development in a grey digital world provides opportunities for:

- Creating rich and varied collections
- Developing partnerships and collaborations
- Acquiring new skills
- Enhancing access to the content for researchers

It's the tip of the iceberg there is still much to be explored!



Thank you.

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Selected further information:

- BL website [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)
- UK Web Archiving Consortium  
[www.webarchive.org.uk](http://www.webarchive.org.uk)
- Web Continuity Project  
[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webcontinuity](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webcontinuity)
- EThOS [www.ethos.ac.uk](http://www.ethos.ac.uk)

