

Grey Literature in Slovenia – Traditional is solved, what's next?

Paper presented at

Ninth International Conference on Grey Literature
'Grey Foundations in Information Landscape'
Antwerpen, 2007

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Introduction

Traditional grey (or gray) literature is concerned with physical objects, publications produced and distributed by the individuals or organisations that create them. They were not published commercially and usually not indexed by major database vendors. Librarians and other information specialists have invested lot of time and expertise to make these publications available to their clients and other users.

Grey literature production

Grey literature is produced mostly by government agencies, professional organizations, research institutions, universities and other public institutions whose goal is to disseminate current information to a wide audience. Most of them have also some sort of library or information services.

Differences among nations

Although the grey literature is a worldwide phenomena, each environment, national included, has its' specific situation and peculiarities. The theme of this paper is to show this as case study in one country and in specific type of institutions, **special libraries.**

Special libraries in Slovenia

1970 147 special libraries (two thirds in industry),

Reasons for fast growing:

Mainly socio-political. Libraries, later often renamed as INDOK centres, were seen as the main vehicles toward important goal. The goal was better information of citizens, self-managers, so they can fully fulfill their political role - socialist self-management.

Side-effects

If we leave aside the socialist selfmanagement as an “utopian” system:

1. The system was build from the top, based on the political programme,
2. There were no information professionals.
3. Libraries (INDOK centres) had low status in the organisation.

Development

1985 First professional conference (organized each second year, until today),

- **1993** 186 special libraries (lot of them non-active),

- **2006** 166 special libraries (official figure).

Most of special libraries in industry are either closed or non-active. New were mostly established in governmental bodies.

Where are special libraries?

- ◆ Industry,
- ◆ Culture (mostly museums),
- ◆ Government (ministries and agencies),
- ◆ Science (research institutes),
- ◆ Health and medicine,
- ◆ Others.

Present situation

Mostly small libraries with solo librarian.

- Close cooperation between special and academic libraries.
- Huge differences in:
services, equipment, organization and staff.

COBISS

The development and operation of the COBISS system and services (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services), which represents the core of the library information system in Slovenia for last three decades. Almost all libraries and information services within public institutions are part of the COBISS system and their materials, their internal publications, part of the database.

Methodology

24 special libraries have been chosen and data about grey literature handling within them, collected. A short questionnaire were prepared and the representative (usually the head of the library) were asked to fill it and also to give their opinion about the subject. Different types of special libraries were chosen to give the overall pictures.

Sample

- Two were from industry,
- Four were governmental libraries,
- Ten were special libraries in research institutions,
- Six were health and medicine libraries,
- Two were special libraries inside museums.

Question 1

◆ Do you have any estimation how many documents, that could be labeled as grey literature originated in your institution?

◆ _____

◆ How much are archived in your library?

◆ Yearly _____ .

◆ Together _____

Question 2 and 3

Please describe the type of grey literature, that you either archive or make it available.

How are you cataloguing or documenting these material:

- a) COBISS,
- b) Other cataloguing system
- c) WWW (library is doing this),
- d) WWW (other organisation unit is responsible)
- e) WWW (authors concern)

Question 4 and 5

Lending and supply of the grey literature:

- a) Only to our users
- b) Also to other users but only in the library premises_
- c) Lending with no limitations to all users
- d) Everything is on WWW

Archiving of the grey literature:

- a) On paper in the library
- b) On paper elsewhere
- c) Only in digital form

Question 6

Please give us your opinion about the importance of the grey literature in the field that is covered by your library.



Results

Eight libraries have over 1000 grey literature documents. All of them are libraries within research institutions, with one industry and health medicine libraries, that both also have strong research units. Others stated between 10 and 200 grey literature documents.

Cataloguing Grey literature?

Eighteen libraries (two third), among them all libraries in research institutions, use COBISS for cataloguing system and submit the data about their grey literature in the Union catalogue of Slovenian libraries.

Making the Grey literature available

- ◆ *5 libraries limited the access of the grey literature only to their users. 4 more stated that for the part of their grey literature) industry and some research).*
- ◆ *Majority, 14 libraries, give access to grey literature (or part of it all) only in the library premises.*
- ◆ *Only four libraries said that they lend grey literature without any limitations.*
- ◆ *Availability on the WWW was the case, in only one governmental library.*

Type of the Grey literature

They differ from research reports, internal standards and similar documents, and interestingly quite often dissertations and other works that originated at the university.

Importance of the Grey literature

Different opinions:

Some respondents stated them as extremely important, the others tend to find them less important and even predict their importance diminishing.

Discussion

Results show a rather conservative picture about the special libraries in Slovenia. Their treatment of grey literature is all together, with same exceptions, looks rather classical. This would be a rather superficial conclusion. They are some explanation, which can be derived from the deeper understanding of special libraries work and organization in Slovenia.

Conclusions 1

One is the fact that some of them are rather small one (wo)men libraries also working in rather small institutions. Some of them (government), may also lack tradition. In historical part of the introduction we have already pointed this.

Conclusions 2

The other reason is COBISS cataloguing system, so well rooted in the everyday work and services of the most of the Slovenian libraries and also basis of SICRIS, the system that is the the main database used to evaluate the quality of the scientific research work due to their results, publications, where also grey literature is included.

Conclusions 3

Third reason is our sample. We have decided to choose libraries that would give us representative sample. On the other side having special libraries in industry and in the research institutes that are doing projects for the industry has to have a certain effect on the answers.