

From “Grey Literature” to “Specialized Resources”: Rethinking Terminology to Enhance Grey Literature Access and Use

David Baxter, MI¹; Margo Hilbrecht, PhD^{1,2} ¹Gambling Research Exchange (GREGO),
²Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo

What are GREGO and the Evidence Centre?

GREGO is an independent **Knowledge Translation and Exchange (KTE)** organization that aims to reduce harm from gambling. GREGO both produces and manages grey literature to meet this aim.

Knowledge Translation (KT) is the process of customizing credible research so that it is accessible to audiences who will use it for evidence-based decision making. **Knowledge Exchange (KE)** is when researchers and other knowledge users collaborate to use the translated research to effect change.

The **Evidence Centre (EC)** is a digital library of freely accessible research evidence, primarily grey literature, on gambling and its related harms. The Evidence Centre provides timely and relevant evidence to diverse audiences in formats most useful to them. The information is used to inform decision making, research, treatment, and policy direction.

Goal: Enhance Grey Literature Use

There is a wealth of high-quality gambling research found only in the grey literature, such as government reports.

Goal: To promote gambling grey literature so that decision makers have access to the full body of relevant evidence. This supports the Open Science value of democratizing access to free scientific knowledge.^{1, 2}

Problem: Many stakeholders are confused about the concept of grey literature. Some believe grey literature is never peer-reviewed, or that it consists only of news and popular media. Researchers who publish grey literature would like greater uptake of their work.

Our grey literature collection was a missed opportunity to educate about the manifold credible resources available in the grey literature.

Proposed Solution: Use KT principles on the Evidence Centre interface so users can understand the range of resources available, and select formats that best meet their needs.

Creating a Global Evidence Centre

Our library, originally named the **Knowledge Repository**, contained:

1. Research reports funded by GREGO and its predecessor;
2. Plain-language summaries of research articles; and
3. Research datasets.

As such, it had limited scope in subject matter and document types, and had a strong focus on Ontario, Canada.

In 2017, the collection expanded to become a catalogue of gambling grey literature published throughout the world.

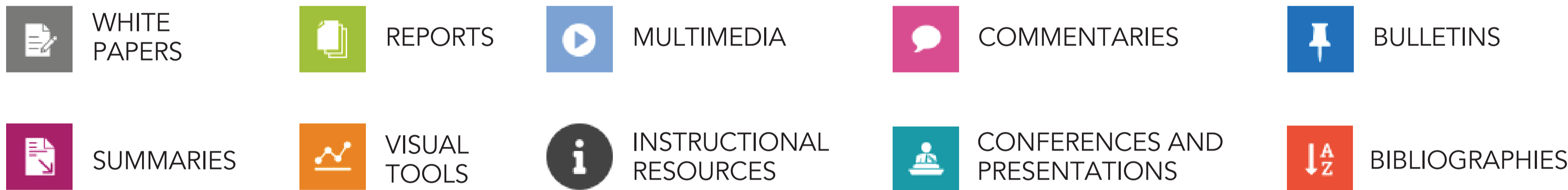
The new name, the **Evidence Centre**, is more meaningful and accessible to non-academic audiences, better represents the range of content, and reflects the liveliness of the collection.

Moving from “Grey Literature” to “Specialized Resources”

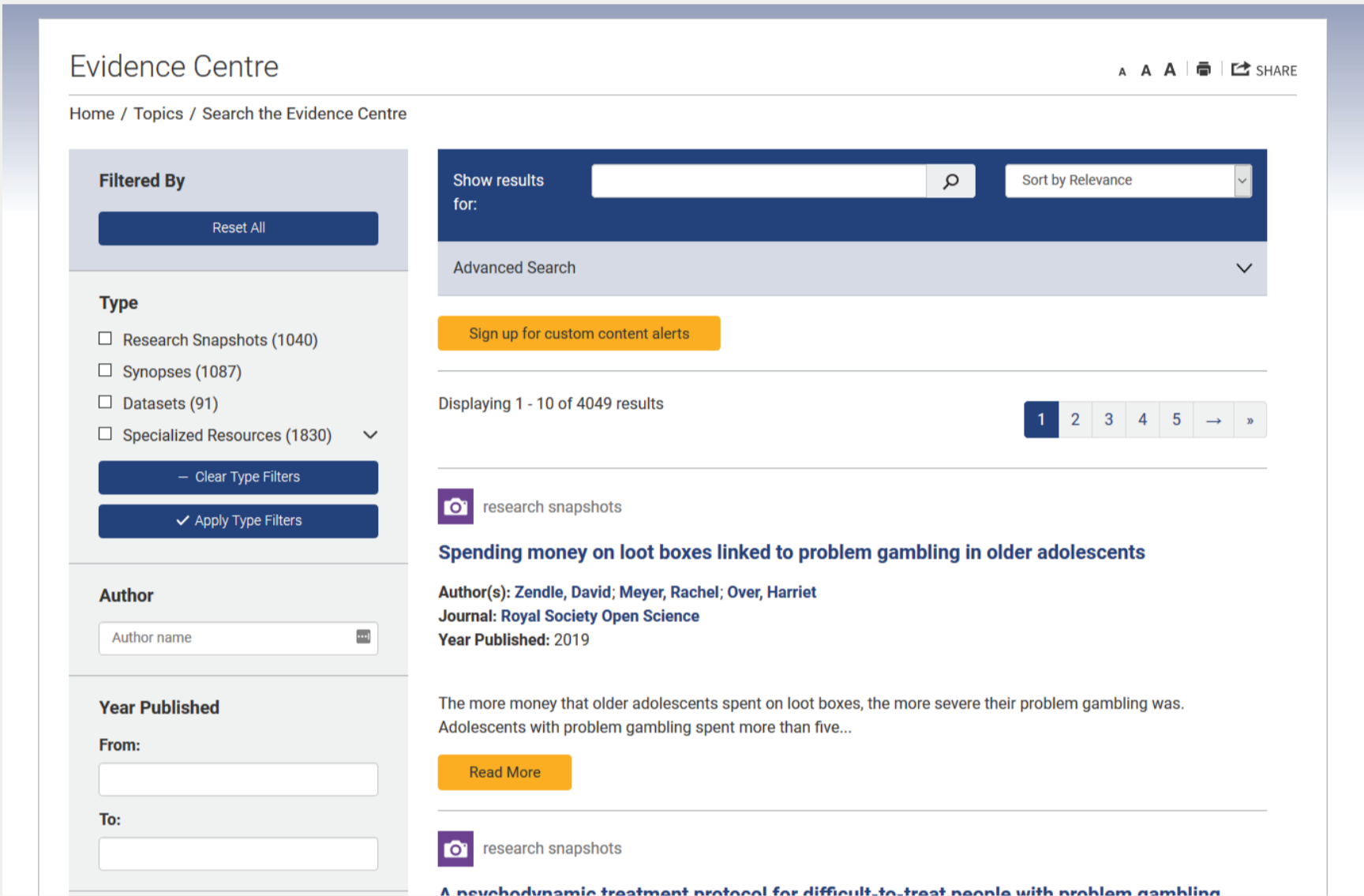
Our gambling grey literature quickly grew to be the largest collection in the library. We received user feedback that the “grey literature” category was too much to sift through, and the term “grey literature” itself was confusing or even off-putting. Our icon for “grey literature” was very plain and did not show the diversity of the collection.



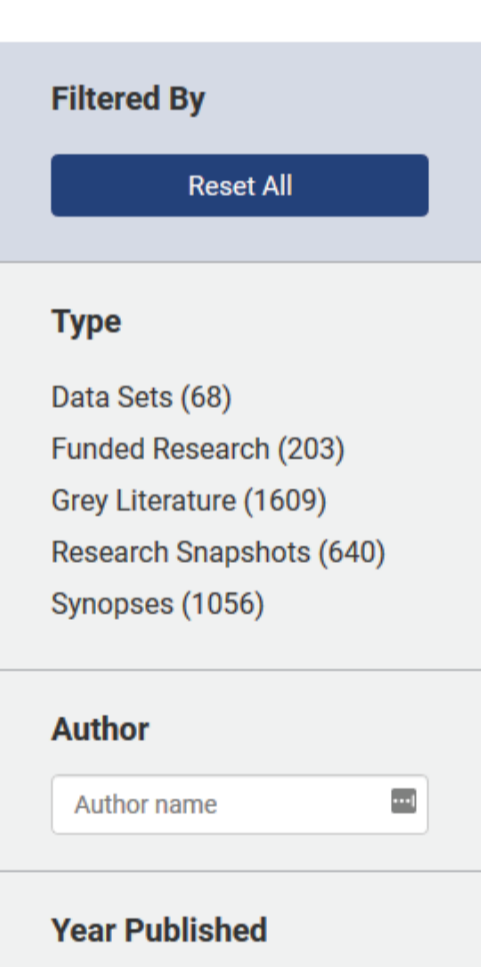
We organized 46 grey literature document types into 10 categories and gave them more attractive icons.



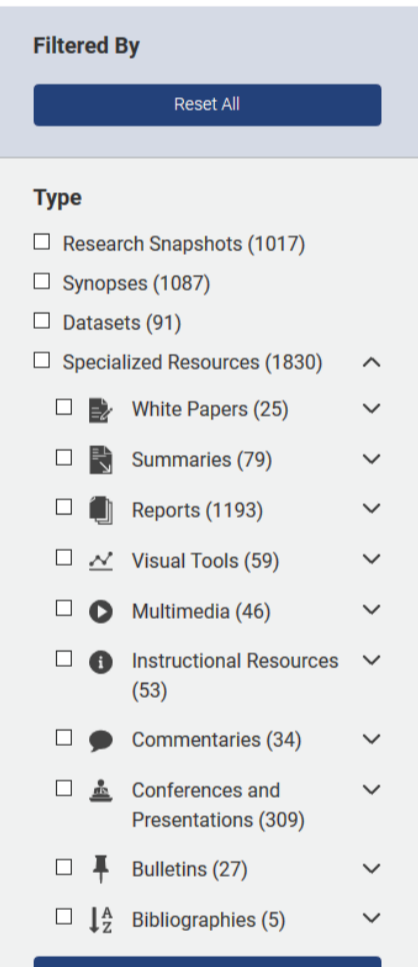
We updated the search interface so users can search by these categories and by individual document types. We also renamed the collection “Specialized Resources” everywhere in the user interface.



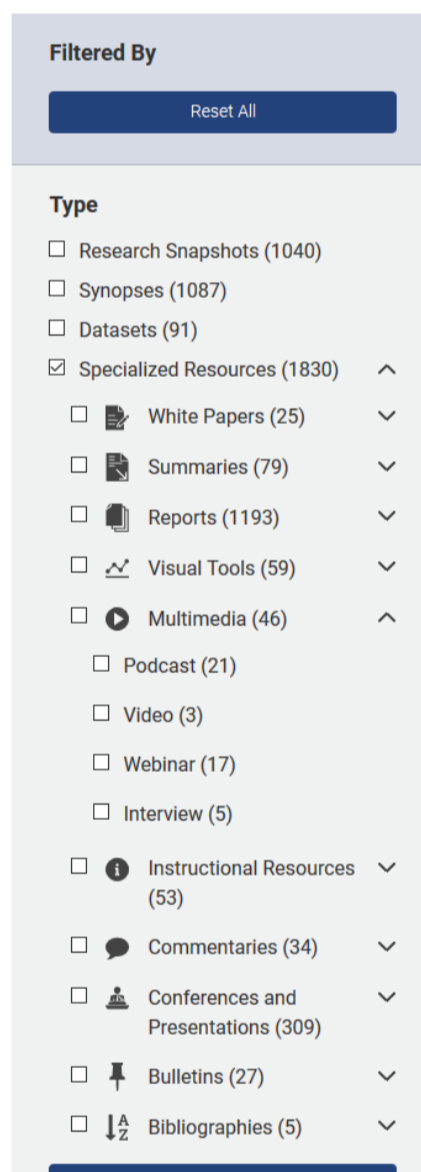
Evidence Centre



Old Evidence Centre, with one big “Grey Literature” category



New Evidence Centre, with ten “Specialized Resources” categories



New Evidence Centre, showing individual document types

Policy-focused collection development

Collection development is guided by:

- GREGO’s *Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling*³
- Current events and issues in gambling studies
- Specific client needs

We are currently focusing on gambling-related harm in Great Britain in support of their Gambling Commission’s *National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms*.⁴ The Gambling Commission’s priorities include:

- British grey literature on gambling and related harms
- International grey literature on priority topics
- Their own publications, to enhance transparency

High-quality resources in an array of formats ensures that we “get the right information to the right people at the right time in the right format so as to influence decision making”.⁵, para 3

Example: Credit Cards and Gambling

The British Gambling Commission is currently engaged in a large-scale consultation on the use of credit cards for gambling with potential to ban or restrict use.

In response, we are gathering and reviewing grey literature on gambling and credit cards to inform this consultation and add to the Evidence Centre.

By bringing credible grey literature to this consultation, we are building the case that grey literature is an important source of information for policy making, and building a world-class library at the same time.

In our consultation report, we will use the term “grey literature” and not “specialized resources”, as it is meaningful for that audience in that context.

Why Terminology Matters

- Knowledge Translation (KT) supports the Open Science movement by ensuring that grey literature and research evidence are more accessible and better understood by multiple audiences.
- Plain language removes the confusion of discipline-specific language in a multidisciplinary field like gambling studies, creating shared meaning for all knowledge users.
- Changing the title from “Grey Literature” to “Specialized Resources” is more meaningful to our audiences and generates more interest.
- The collection is easier for new users to approach when it is divided into smaller, recognizable categories. This helps manage the complexity of an information source which includes many traditional and emerging document types that change over time.
- User-centred interface design improves information uptake and dissemination. This is one of the most important contributions of the Evidence Centre to the gambling studies community.

Contact

David Baxter and Margo Hilbrecht
Gambling Research Exchange (GREGO), Canada
Email: david@greo.ca, margo@greo.ca
Website: www.greo.ca
Phone: +1-519-763-8049



References

1. Bonato S. The value of grey literature. In: Searching the Grey Literature. London: Rowman & Littlefield; 2018. p. 33-56.
2. Spedding S. Open Access publishing of health research: Does Open Access publishing facilitate the translation of research into health policy and practice? Publications. 2016;4(1).
3. Abbott M, Binde P, Clark L, Hodgins D, Johnson MA, Manitowabi D, et al. Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling: An international collaboration, third edition. Guelph, CA: Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREGO); 2018. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.33684/CFHG3.en>.
4. Gambling Commission. National strategy to reduce gambling harms. Birmingham, UK; 2019. Available from: <http://www.reducinggamblingharm.org/asset-library/national-strategy-to-reduce-gambling-harms.pdf>.
5. Rock D. Knowledge mobilization works [Web page] 2009. [cited 2019]. Available from: <http://knowledge-mobilization-works.blogspot.com/2009/12/knowledge-broker-stories-defining.html>.