

Accessing Grey Literature in Public Health: New York Academy of Medicine's Grey Literature Report

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The New York Academy of Medicine's Grey Literature Report was first published in 1999 when it began as a way to serve the needs of the Academy's internal researchers for material published via non-traditional publication channels. Over the years, however, the popularity of the Report has led to the establishment of a subscriber list of over 200 readers who receive the Report via e-mail. The Report is currently published quarterly in an electronic format. The subject areas of The Grey Literature Report include public health, health and science policy, and health of minorities and special populations, including children, women, and the elderly.

Two Academy librarians scan publications pages of organizations to locate and evaluate recent output in the form of case studies, conference proceedings, discussion papers, fact sheets, issue briefs, government documents, research reports, and white papers. Organizations are identified through current awareness sites, staff referrals, and serendipitous reading. Scanned organizations include government agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities, research centers, and some international organizations. The Report includes only English language material.

The final task in the production process of the report is to add the bibliographic information including the web address of each document to the Academy's content management system which produces the web version of the Report. This data entry is performed in our Technical Services department.

Grey literature items are cataloged into the library's online catalog, OCLC and some to the National Library of Medicine's LocatorPlus system as well as PubMed. Over 65% of the grey literature items added to OCLC are unique according to 2003 data. Currently, two catalogers and two technical services assistants input bibliographical information (title, author, organization, etc.) and assign subject headings to each record. In addition, the electronic link and the full table of contents, when available, are added.

In this paper we delve more deeply into the production of the Grey Literature Report, including the contract that the New York Academy of Medicine Library has with the National Library of Medicine. We will discuss the problems encountered with the current system of production, such as lack of persistent URLs and the possible ways of solving these. In the fall of 2003 the library conducted a survey of the 200 plus subscribers to the quarterly report. We will discuss the results of the survey and also look to the future in order to identify new directions for the Report.

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