

Grey Literature: Taxonomies and Structures for Collection Development

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Abstract

Libraries worldwide have not picked up the pace of addressing where Grey Literature fits in collection policies. This remains rather curious due to the skyrocketing prices of traditional books, journals, databases, and other information resources, and trends to serialize and promote access in perpetuity. Most collection development policies only address resources for which payment has been made, where formal acquisitions or licensing practices are observed. Due to more interest and a commitment to Open Access initiatives and electronic publishing, Grey Literature does not appear to have a more stable and comfortable home in libraries, although it has demonstrated increasingly how it is being cited more seriously and frequently. Often, content that is openly available on the Internet and for which there is no required payment finds no bibliographic control or metadata associated with it that begs for description and order. Thus, this paper will examine what kind of alternatives there are for discovering, cataloging and processing the immense grey literature so that additional value and access is guaranteed giving it credibility in a collection development policy.

*Building on the celebrated works of Edward Tufte's, *Envisioning Information* (1990), Davenport and Prusak's, *Information Ecology: Mastering the Information and Knowledge Environment* (1997), and the pioneering work of Bloom and Krathwohl's, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956), the core component of information architecture suggests how taxonomies are a foundation for visual design of information navigation and structurally define relationships of different elements in a cohesive package. Several key examples of Grey Literature in the Social Sciences, Arts and Scientific disciplines and in Digital Libraries will be used to demonstrate how a taxonomy contributes to the outline of most Collection Development policies and establishes relationships by format, organization, finding tools, and access points. Policies are what drive and determine what libraries acquire and license, point to and promote in their catalogs by an increasingly important web presence. Grey Literature needs to share more equal billing in terms of discovery and retention and unless it is included in the formal collection development policies the added value of incorporation is weakened. If information usage patterns are indeed more reflective of information architecture, then the taxonomy structure should encourage collection development policies to entertain more Grey Literature content. This paper will consider how libraries would benefit by such recommendations and become more relevant to its users. Illustrated comparisons of what new roles a library would experience with more Grey Literature referenced and alluded to in its collection policy will enhance the role of bibliographers and invite more widespread global content with less financial demand than other information products.*

Organizing information has been the hallmark and mainstay of libraries for their entire history. In traditional print collections, classification systems were introduced to organize material by subject and the most widely adopted method in large academic or research libraries has been the Library of Congress Classification scheme, or LCSH. This alpha-numeric assignment of subjects is probably the most common worldwide scheme of the modern library because it can be expanded with ease to incorporate greater specificity. The most basic subject outline is this with follow-up breakouts of up to three letters and four numbers to the right of the decimal point:

- A -- GENERAL WORKS
- B -- PHILOSOPHY. PSYCHOLOGY. RELIGION
- C -- AUXILIARY SCIENCES OF HISTORY
- D -- HISTORY (GENERAL) AND HISTORY OF EUROPE
- E -- HISTORY: AMERICA
- F -- HISTORY: AMERICA
- G -- GEOGRAPHY. ANTHROPOLOGY. RECREATION
- H -- SOCIAL SCIENCES
- J -- POLITICAL SCIENCE
- K -- LAW
- L -- EDUCATION
- M -- MUSIC AND BOOKS ON MUSIC
- N -- FINE ARTS
- P -- LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE