Keynote Address

Peter R. Young
Chief Asian Division, Library of Congress

Over much of the past decade, I have worked to understanding the impact of digital networking and Web 2.0 technologies on national and research libraries. This concentration was the focus of my work at the U.S. National Agricultural Library and guides my efforts at the Library of Congress. It is instructive to consider grey literature from the perspective of digital science data and eScience, and to consider the Eleventh International Grey Literature Conference themes[1] in relation to digital age challenges.

1. Grey Literature Challenges

GL consists of content "…produced on all levels of government, academics, business or industry in print and electronic formats, but is *not controlled by commercial publishers*."[2] GL consists of a "…body of materials that *cannot be found easily* through conventional channels such as publishers, but which is frequently original and usually recent." [3] GL in general consists of "…foreign or domestic open source material that usually is *available through specialized channels* and may not enter normal channels or systems of publication, distribution, bibliographic control, or acquisition by booksellers or subscription agents."[4]

With the following characteristics, it is instructive to consider GL challenges:

- GL falls between open and classified/sensitive literature
- GL varies in quality
- GL intended to serve a limited audience
- GL issued in limited quantities
- Most GL is non-proprietary
- Hard-copy GL repositories are scarce & incomplete
- GL lacks outreach/marketing
- GL falls between "black & white"
- "Grey" implies incompleteness
- GL reflects gradations
- GL definitions are fluid

GL challenges form into the following questions:

1. What is needed to make GL more accessible and valuable?
2. Do we need to depend on information professionals to place this large body of valuable content under bibliographic control to enable search engines to provide better access?
3. Are GL content and metadata standards sufficient and universally applied so that GL could be accessible if sufficient resources were available?
4. What would it take for the corpus of current and retrospective GL to be accessible via the Web?
5. How would we decide what GL was going to be more valuable to future generations of scientists and researchers, especially if we do not have sufficient resources to assure access to all GL content?

2. Digital Grey Literature

Digital networking technology is affecting the nature of scientific and research communications. These same forces of change are affecting the nature of grey literature content. In addition, digital networking technology and the trend toward open access are changing the conduct of science and research through the rapid development of the Internet/Web. These same forces are having a profound impact on the distribution of and access to GL content.

> "What has been made public by being published is no longer a black and white issue. There is still plenty of room for judgments and distinctions to be made about the quality, type, and nature of this knowledge*. This growing openness around what is known assists in the very assessment and verification. I, for one, do not see grey skies ahead, but something brighter."*[5]
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> "Since there has been an increase in publication and dissemination of materials from the producers of grey literature and other materials, establishing the means to work directly with users rather than relying on the traditional means of evaluating and collecting becomes necessary." [6]

It is difficult to see how the library and information community could successfully attract sufficient resources to address the growing body of GL content and to comprehensively work to provide consistent and uniform access to an ever-increasing tsunami of print and digital content. In fact, digital machines