GRAY LITERATURE FROM A LIBRARIAN'S VIEWPOINT

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TWO PRIMARY ISSUES ARE OF CONCERN REGARDING GRAY LITERATURE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF A LIBRARIAN

1: WHEN I AM ASSISTING A LIBRARY USER FIND INFORMATION ON A PARTICULAR SUBJECT, WILL WE FIND REFERENCES FOR EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED ON THE SUBJECT?

2: ONCE WE FIND A REFERENCE TO A SEAGRANT PUBLICATION, WILL WE BE ABLE TO LOCATE A COPY EITHER IN OUR LIBRARY OR AT ANOTHER LIBRARY?

1: WHEN I AM ASSISTING A LIBRARY USER FIND INFORMATION ON A PARTICULAR SUBJECT, WILL WE FIND REFERENCES FOR EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED ON THE SUBJECT?

THE EXISTENCE OF INFORMATION ON A PARTICULAR SUBJECT IS DETERMINED TWO WAYS FROM A LIBRARY VIEWPOINT --

FIRST, ONE DETERMINES WHAT IS LOCALLY AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARY BEING USED,

SECOND, ONE USES INDEXES AND ABSTRACTS TO THE LITERATURE TO DETERMINE WHAT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED

The first condition is easily met by Sea Grant programs by

placing publications in local libraries whose clientele you are interested in reaching; these libraries can be located by using the AMERICAN LIBRARY DIRECTORY and also the DIRECTORY OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTERS

The second condition is less easily met -- get your publications indexed in the major abstracts and indexes that most libraries are likely to have, and thus wherein people are likely to look to find information on a particular subject.

The major abstracts and indexes for the fields that Sea Grant covers are several because Sea Grant programs are involved in multi-disciplinary pursuits.

For example, the life sciences are covered by Biological Abstracts with zoology being more comprehensively covered by Zoological Record; marine topics are covered but not in depth by Cambridge Scientific Abstracts company and its abstracting services - Oceanic Abstracts, ASFA Aquaculture Abstracts, and Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts; physical oceanography is covered in depth by Physics Abstracts; education is covered in depth by Current Index to Journals in Education and its companion index Resources in Education; water resources are covered in depth by Water Resources Abstracts; chemistry is covered in depth by Chemical Abstracts; geology is covered in depth by the Bibliography and Index of Geology; engineering is covered in depth by Engineering Index; there are other indexes and abstracts I could mention

The indexes and abstracts that I've mentioned are found primarily in academic libraries or extremely large public libraries. Thus academic library users are able to determine what has been published on a particular topic by using the abstracts and indexes available in their libraries

However the general public usually goes to public libraries, and academic libraries can appear to be a time-consuming and perhaps insurmountable obstacle to them in their quest for information. The indexes that public libraries own are usually the Wilson Company indexes which generally are not

useful for in-depth research on marine topics. Wilson Company produces Readers Guide with which most people are familiar. Wilson Company also produces General Science Index which does not cover marine science journals. Other Wilson indexes like Applied Science and Technology Index and Biological and Agricultural Index do cover a few major marine science journals. The general public will locate only that marine information that is published in the major marine science journals; for everything else, Sea Grant programs should send material or publication notices directly to selected public libraries in your target area.

The indexes and abstracts I've mentioned are also available as databases for anyone to access. Academic, public and specialized libraries have accessed them for several years for their clientele; increasingly people are starting to access these databases directly and not through their library. Access to databases is available through database services. The two major database services in the U.S. that offer access to these databases are Dialog and BRS; together they have given out over 120,000 passwords. This represents access by many more people than 120,000 because libraries do database searches for their library user population. Academic, pulbic and specialized libraries have passwords for searching databases on Dialog and/or BRS.

In addition the databases I've mentioned can be accessed through CompuServe and Western Union's EasyLink service; both of these services have large subscriber bases in the general population. So these databases are accessible to an even larger population than the printed versions of these databases - the abstracts and indexes owned primarily by academic libraries.

Therefore it is important to mainstream your publications into these abstracts and indexes which are available around the country and world in academic libraries and also into the database versions of these abstracts and indexes which are accessible to anyone including non-academic libraries and non-library users.

Contact these abstracting and indexing services and inquire about submitting material; put together a list of candidate abstracting and indexing services in consultation with your librarian or feel free to contact me directly.

The services won't be interested in covering reprints but they may be interested in your other publications.

Abstracting and indexing services have a tough time keeping up with the literature especially gray literature so you should be aggressive in approaching them; they may not know you exist as an information publisher.

Consider getting your publications indexed in additional sources beyond Cambridge's abstracts like Oceanic Abstracts, Aquaculture Abstracts, and Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts. These abstracts are useful in approaching the marine science literature but they do not provide in depth coverage of the marine science literature. In addition, Cambridge's abstracts or databases may not be the first place someone looks for marine biology topics; Biological Abstracts is much better for marine biology and Zoological Record is excellent for marine zoology. Cambridge databases are also a bit more expensive than these two other biology databases and Cambridge's printed abstracts are not as widely owned as the other two publications.
Similarly someone is going to look for marine chemistry in the Chemical Abstracts printed publication and database if they want an in depth look at a topic. They may never look in the printed or database versions of Oceanic Abstracts wherein marine chemistry is covered only if published in marine chemistry journals and not in general chemistry journals.

To enhance retrieval of your documents when they are included in a database, it is important to create descriptive titles for your documents. Descriptive titles contain keywords expressing every aspect of the document's content; searching computer databases involves a heavy reliance on title keywords both for finding relevant references and also for determining if a reference is of interest. Don't simplify titles too much or make them cute for the layman because then you lose the opportunity to create a descriptive title that is easy to locate in a database search. Be sure to also submit an abstract of the publication; if it is a comference proceedings, abstracts of each paper presented are needed. These abstracts become part of the database.

I randomly chose some Sea Grant publications from the Scripps Library collection and then took a quick look in some databases to see if they were included. I chose twelve publications from Hawaii, Washington, Alaska, Texas and Michigan Sea Grant programs; the publications covered topics in biology, fishing and fisheries, aquaculture, ocean

currents, law of the sea, education, resource management, coastal processes, geography, and biochemistry.

Five of them were indexed in Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts; four of them in Oceanic Abstracts; two of them in Water Resources Abstracts; and one each in Biological Abstracts, Virginia's defunct Aquaculture database, British Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux database, NASA's Aerospace database, and ERIC -the education database.

Five of the twelve publications were not indexed in databases where I as a database searcher would logically go looking for information on their respective topics. The remaining seven were picked up by one of more databases; five of them appeared in databases where I would logically go looking for them. Two of them did not appear in databases where I would go looking for them but did appear in second-choice databases.

2: ONCE WE FIND A REFERENCE TO A SEAGRANT PUBLICATION, WILL WE BE ABLE TO LOCATE A COPY?

Even with the Rhode Island National Sea Grant Depository, library users usually want the info now and do not want to wait for the publication to arrive in the U.S. mail; it is important to have copies deposited locally where people would probably go looking e.g. public libraries, academic libraries. I previously mentioned the American Library Directory and the Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers for this purpose.

Libraries usually acquire most of their material through book distributors and journal subscription agents; libraries usually have a harder time acquiring publications that are available outside the usual publication channels; therefore sending notices of the availability of publications to a selected group of libraries you want to reach is a good approach; libraries usually sift through every publication notice received looking for material of interest for their users

Academic libraries may not want reprints because they may duplicate the information in their journal collections; public libraries however may place reprints in their pamphlet file collections

An important sidelight to placing copies of your publications in selected libraries is to place them in libraries that will catalog them on a nationwide shared cataloging system called OCLC. You obviously cannot demand that someone do this but you can verify that it is being done somewhere. The phrase "shared cataloging system" means that subscriber libraries share among themselves their cataloging records; each subscriber library uses these shared catalog records for creating their own card catalogs. One library first creates the cataloging record and then all the other libraries who subsequently obtain that item use that same record and also place a notation on the record that they own that item. Thus this shared cataloging system called OCLC says which academic, public, and specialized libraries in the U.S. own copies of a particular item.

Libraries use this information about copy locations for interlibrary loan purposes. If someone at Scripps wants a Sea Grant publication that Scripps library does not own, then we use OCLC to find out who does own it and then we borrow it from them.

The twelve Sea Grant publications I chose were all cataloged in OCLC and thus available for any subscriber library to locate and borrow for their own clientele. Four items were owned by one-to-three libraries; four items were owned by fine-to-nine libraries; one item was owned by eleven libraries; one item was owned by seventeen libraries; one item was owned by twentysix libraries; and one item was owned by more than fifty libraries (I stopped counting at fifty.)

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I enjoyed talking to your Sea Grant group on Monday regarding libraries and gray literature. I am reporting back on the value and the usefulness of Cataloging in Publication (CIP)

data from the library's point of view.

CIP data is put together by the Library of Congress (LC) when Sea Grant programs submit items to LC. The data is then incorporated into LC's MARC (MAchine Readable Records) database of cataloging records for items recieved by LC. The MARC database is used for cataloging purposes by libraries and networks of libraries around the world; OCLC, the shared library cataloging network that U.S. libraries primarily use, incorporates the MARC database into its own OCLC database. Other shared cataloging networks like RLIN and WLN also use LC's MARC records. If an OCLC-subscribing library can find a MARC cataloging record for a Sea Grant publication on OCLC, then that library does not have to go through extra work to create an original cataloging record. The CIP data thus makes it easier for libraries to catalog Sea Grant materials into their collection. Once a library or libraries catalogs Sea Grant material into their collection, then a library location(s) is noted on OCLC for that item; other non-owning libraries may then ask to borrow the item through interlibrary loan.

So, in my opinion, it is worthwhile for Sea Grant programs to obtain CIP data for their publications. The existence of CIP data for a Sea Grant publication makes a difference in the speed with which a library processes a Sea Grant publication into its collection. It can also make an absolute difference; some libraries may not bother with a publication that they view as "gray" if no MARC cataloging record exists. It takes skilled personnel to do original cataloging; Sea Grant publications may get shoved aside by other cataloging priorities if a library has to do original cataloging on them.

CIP data minimizes the effort for libraries to catalog Sea Grant material into their collections -- if they catalog Sea Grant material into their collection. If no library catalogs Sea Grant material into their collection, then the CIP record is not used. However this rarely occurs based on my sample of twelve Sea Grant publications; all of them were in the OCLC database and thus had been cataloged by one or more libraries into their collections.