

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Bonato S. **Searching the grey literature: a handbook for searching reports, working papers, and other unpublished research.** London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group Inc.; 2018. Softcover: 263 p. ISBN: 978-1-53810-063-9. Price: USD \$45.00. Available from:

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538100646/Searching-the-Grey-Literature-A-Handbook-for-Searching-Reports-Working-Papers-and-Other-Unpublished-Research>

If you provide literature searching services at your health sciences library, then you have probably worked with grey literature. For those who aren't familiar with this term, grey literature is information from different areas of government, universities, organizations, etc., that is not handled by commercial publishers. It includes theses and dissertations, reports, statistics, presentations, and more. Many librarians (myself included) are often overwhelmed at the thought of searching for grey literature because it can seem daunting and limitless. However, with a multitude of information being available outside traditional publication models, it is important that health sciences librarians understand the diversity of grey literature, its value, and how to find it. Enter Sarah Bonato's book "Searching the Grey Literature."

Sarah is an excellent voice on this topic, as she has co-authored a number of systematic reviews that utilize grey literature and she has presented on grey literature searching for various audiences. Working as the team leader for reference, research, and user services at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health in Toronto, Ontario, Bonato has written this book out of the need to share her years of experience working with grey literature. I personally have heard Sarah speak on grey literature during a continuing education session years ago, and her passion for this topic, along with her sense of humour, are evident in this book. While I have not read any other standalone books on grey literature searching, I have consulted various web resources when learning more about grey literature sources. This book, in my opinion, is a comprehensive manual for the current times on how and where to search for grey literature. However, one

thing that is not clear in this book is "when" to search for grey literature; a dedicated section on this would be beneficial to some readers. While it is primarily written with health librarians in mind, those from other disciplines will still find this to be a worthwhile read.

Organized into 11 chapters, Bonato's book begins by outlining what grey literature is and reasons why it is valuable; such as its global perspective, utility in filling in the gaps of published literature, diversity, currency, and low cost. While outlining its value, Bonato alludes to when grey literature should be searched, including times when clients are conducting a systematic review, need health services information, want evidence-based practice publications of varying formats, and more. She continues on to outline databases that hold grey literature, along with sources for specific types of grey literature such as theses and dissertations, unpublished clinical trials, conference papers and presentations, and more. The book also provides helpful checklists, advice on developing a grey literature searching plan, and advice on how to stay current with the latest trends and learning tools. Best of all, there is an entire chapter dedicated to making Google work for your grey literature searches.

Information professionals and library students alike will find the content easy to digest, as Bonato clearly divides each chapter into sections with headings that make it easy to follow along. Every chapter also begins with an overview of the chapter's objectives, and ends with a helpful decision aid tool to help you when searching the resources covered in that chapter. There are helpful diagrams throughout, and a number of these were created by the author herself to demonstrate how she works through her own thought processes.

This book can be read cover to cover or it can be used for reference when needed. The level of detail is exceptional, and in my opinion Bonato has written a resource that answers questions about grey literature searching that the reader probably didn't realize they had. For example, in her chapter on "Google for Grey Literature," Bonato reminds the reader to turn off personalized search results by changing settings when logged in to your Google account. This can have a

great impact on your search outcome because it eliminates the risk that your past searches will impact your current search in Google. Along with providing helpful tips for searching, Bonato instructs the reader on handling client expectations of grey literature searching. We librarians are helpers by nature, and this book provides advice on structured conversations to have with clients (with examples) before you even start searching. Bonato advises the reader to consider having a search agreement with clear parameters of where the search will begin and end. In the chapters discussing specific places to look for grey literature, Bonato provides pages of links with descriptions of the resource's utility. While reading this book, I bookmarked a number of tools in my web browser and I am confident that others will too.

Since reading this book, my professional practice has improved and I feel much more confident discussing grey literature with clients. I recently conducted a literature search where the client directly asked for grey literature to be included, and instead of

feeling overwhelmed I simply put a plan in place, decided where I would look, when I would stop, and completed the search with efficiency. I was also comfortable describing my process to the client, because I felt more sure in my search methods after reading this book.

Bonato has written a wonderful resource that is designed to educate librarians and information professionals, but also empower them. She writes from a lived experience perspective, and while reading this I felt like I was listening to a colleague during an informal chat where funny metaphors are used to help explain ideas. Due to the nature of this topic, this book will inevitably become outdated. However, I sincerely hope that Bonato releases a second edition down the road, as this book is a must-read for any librarian looking to improve their own knowledge and confidence when dealing with grey literature searching.

Statement of Competing Interests

No competing interests declared.

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