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Creation of a Scientific Publication

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Abstract:

This contribution aims to unveil the backstage of preparation, writing and creation of a scientific publication using the example of the book titled *Grey Literature Repositories*, to be published towards the end of 2010. This paper will describe individual phases of coming into existence of a scientific publication, the work of the authors and the editor, but will also emphasize the importance of selecting a reliable publishing house, translator, book designer, etc. The aim of the presentation is to share the experience of producing a scientific publication.

Contribution:

The third year of undertaking the project of the National Repository of Grey Literature (NRGL) meant that the project team was required to publish a scientific work. The objective was to publish a book in the Czech and English language that will present relevant information on grey literature to the academic public and will outline the possible method of building a repository of grey literature. Our aim was to provide a comprehensive perspective on the issue of grey literature and creation of grey literature repositories, primarily based on the knowledge and experience accumulated during work on the NRGL project. Once the objective and mission of the book have been specified, we needed to find an appropriate title, which, upon careful consideration reads *Grey Literature Repositories*.

At the beginning, it was necessary to find out what a scientific publication should look like and what requirements need to be met. The starting point was the Information Register of R&D results (RIV), which collects information on the results, the workplaces where they originate and on their authors for the purposes of evaluation of the results of research, development, and innovation. Basic information was derived from the definition of types of results in line with the RIV rules¹. The needs of the NRGL project team were best addressed by the type of result “scientific book” in category I, which should present original results of research carried out by the author of the book or a work team.

According to RIV, a scientific book means a non-periodical publication with the scope of at least 100 standard pages, i.e. 50 print pages, of text as such excluding appendices containing figures or maps, which is printed or published electronically in

¹ Submitting Details to the Information System of Research, Experimental Development and Innovation - Information Register of R&D results. [cit. 22-12-2010] Available at: <http://www.iach.cz/knav/manual/P2010.pdf>

a publishing house with a scientific editorial board and reviewed by at least one generally recognized reviewer from the field concerned. The publication is concerned with a specifically delimited issue of a particular scientific field and complies with formal attributes required for a scientific book, i.e. references to literature in the body of the text, list of works cited, a summary in at least one world language, notes and bibliography of sources. The book is assigned ISBN code and in case of a Czech publisher, a legal copy is registered in the National Library of the Czech Republic. In more specific terms, a scientific book may, for instance, be represented by a monograph, scientific encyclopedia or lexicon, critical edition of sources, critical commented translation of philosophical, historical or philological texts accompanied by a study, etc., provided they meet the criteria as mentioned above, and, on the other hand, instruction texts, specialized assessments and opinions, yearbooks and annual or scientific periodical reports, yearbooks, annual abstracts of statistics etc.² do not fall under this category. A scientific publication must meet all the conditions as indicated above, in order to be viewed as a scientific result. This information defining scientific publication served to the NRGL team as an instruction manual determining what the result should look like and what not to forget.

It was clear from the very beginning that a book with such a narrowly delimited scientific topic will not be written by a single author, but rather, by a team of authors. Each author was expected to write one chapter for the book, so as to produce a monograph and not proceedings as a result. The definition provided by RIV also includes a provision for this: "The entire book is created by a single group of authors, also in the case when individual chapters of the book have separate authors³. A monograph may thus be also created by a group of authors, but individual chapters must correspond with one another and follow in the same topic, which is the responsibility of the editor of the book to ensure.

In the entire process of creation of a scientific book, from planning to publishing, the editor is of crucial importance. The role of the editor may be taken up by one of the authors, but most importantly it must be a specialist, that is well acquainted with the field in question. In the planning phase, the editor prepares a time schedule with exact dates of individual stages, compiles the table of contents of the book and selects appropriate authors with whom s/he subsequently consults the content of individual chapters. Selection of a reliable publishing house with a scientific editorial board is also very important. The editor keeps in mind fulfillment of the conditions under RIV in all stages of creation of the book and is also bound by what the budget allows. The editor of the book *Grey Literature Repositories* is PhDr. Petra Pejšová.

When selecting the publishing house, it is also important to pay attention to whether it has a scientific editorial board which guarantees scientific character and quality of original scientific publications. The minutes from the meeting of the Evaluation Committee of 15 October 2008 indicate that a *List of publishing houses with a scientific editorial board*⁴ shall be prepared, similarly as in the case of journals, which might provide some guidance for selection of the publishing house. However, the *Methodology of Evaluation of the Results of Research Organizations and*

² Ibid., p. 20 – 21.

³ Submitting Details to the Information System of Research, Experimental Development and Innovation RIV - Information Register of R&D results. [cit. 22-12-2010] Available at: <http://www.iach.cz/knav/manual/P2010.pdf>

⁴ Minutes from the meeting of the Evaluation Committee of 15 October 2008. [cit. 23-12-2010] Available at: <http://www.vyzkum.cz/PrintClanek.aspx?idsekce=513082&jazyk=CZ>

Evaluation of the Results of Completed Programs approved by the Government of the Czech Republic on 4 August 2010 states that the *List of publishing houses with a scientific editorial board* is not being prepared and will not be prepared.⁵ Given the absence of such a list, the editor PhDr. Petra Pejšová proceeded with the selection of a publishing house with a scientific editorial board on the basis of references and with regard to the possibilities of the budget. The VeRBuM publishing house, which specializes in publishing scientific and popular scientific texts, has been selected.⁶

When writing and creating the book, it was necessary to unite the conditions of the publishing house, general principles and own guidelines. The conditions of the publishing house are usually provided in information for authors, but we can also find typographic guidelines, binding rules for writing citations (e.g. citation generator), requirements regarding the quality of picture materials, etc. These rules then must be with the assistance of the publishing house complied with. The publishing house arranges for a review of the texts to be published, ideally by two reviewers that are independent and are not members of the same institution as the author of the publication. The reviewers are appointed by the scientific editorial board, but the appointment can be also made at the proposal of the author. The reviewers in the first place assess whether several basic requirements for a scientific text have been fulfilled, including in particular its up-to-date character, novelty and originality, drawing on relevant sources and referencing to these sources, material and methodological correctness and formal level of the text⁷. Along with the text itself, the reviewers also receive from the publishing house a review form in which they are supposed to fill in their comments to individual chapters of the book and their recommendation on publishing. These comments are subsequently submitted to the authors of the book to integrate them. Grey Literature Repositories has been reviewed by RNDr. Miroslav Bartošek, CSc. and Ing. Petr Žabička.

Among the general principles that have been complied with in writing the book, there is the standard for bibliographic citations ČSN ISO 690 and ČSN ISO 690-2 for electronic documents or their parts. From the three possible methods of reference to citations in a scientific text, the method of altering footnotes and the method of the first element has been selected and applied in the book. These general principles then need to be supplemented with own guidelines that it was necessary to formulate to ensure a unified character of the whole publication. A decision had to be made as to how to write names, abbreviations, how to mark words for the index, whether to create lists of abbreviations, where to place annexes, figures, tables, works cited, sources etc. There are no fixed rules for the majority of these important details and upon review of other scientific books, the conclusion is that it is necessary to choose a particular rule and observe it in the entire book, e.g. use italics or quotation marks for names, etc. It is desirable to agree on these details within the group of authors so that each author uses them in writing their respective chapter.

The emphasis in a scientific publication is placed on the composition of the text. An experienced specialist who wrote and published several publications will not forget about the basic structuring of the text – introduction, main body and conclusion; notes and bibliographic citations are a natural part of the work. For those who are new to writing scientific texts, there are several publications aiming to

⁵ Methodology of Evaluation of the Results of Research Organizations and Evaluation of the Results of Completed Programs of 4 August 2010. [cit. 26-12-2010] Available at:

<http://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx?idsekce=566918>

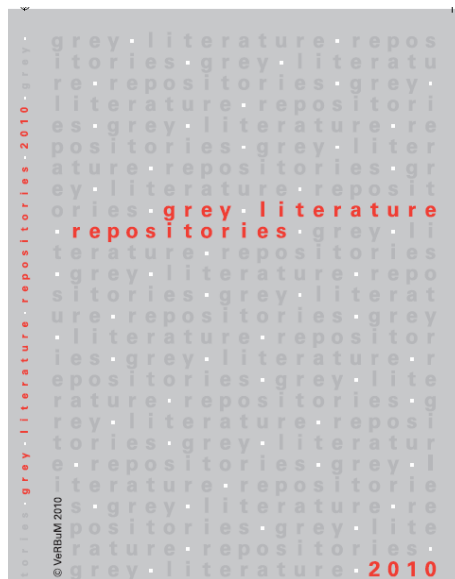
⁶ VeRBuM. [cit. 26-12-2010] Available at: <http://www.verbum.name/>

⁷ VeRBuM. For authors [cit. 26-12-2010] Available: <http://www.verbum.name/pro-autory/>

provide some guidance in this area.⁸ Once the work on the text of the book is finished, it is submitted for proofreading, which is usually secured by the publishing house.

As has been already mentioned in the introduction, the book Grey Literature Repositories had been planned both in the Czech and English language. The group of authors contained 2 foreign authors who wrote their original texts in English. The rest of the authors wrote their chapters in Czech. It was necessary to find a reliable and high-quality translation agency that would translate the first two chapters into Czech and the rest into English, including proofreading, for a reasonable price. Once again, the decision was based on references and budget resources. It is necessary to leave enough time for translation, approximately 1 month. It is also necessary to have the figures, footnotes, tables, abbreviations, works cited and sources, etc. translated.

At this moment, the completed text can be submitted to the publishing house to be printed. One of the more specific conditions under RIV also was that only books with at least 200 published copies will be evaluated, and in the event the book is published in electronic form, it also has to be published in print with the required number of copies.⁹ For this reason, the Czech version of Grey Literature Repositories was published in printed form in 200 copies. The VerBuM publishing house arranged for ISBN 978-80-904273-5-8 to be assigned to the Czech version of the book. It is advisable to have a time reserve for printing and delivery of the books, but the printing usually does not take more than 1 or 2 weeks. The English version of Grey Literature Repositories was also published in printed version with 200 copies. A different ISBN 978-80-904273-6-5 has been assigned to this book. The electronic form of both the Czech and English version of the book created by the publishing house contains active links. The Czech electronic version of Grey Literature Repositories is available at <http://nusl.techlib.cz/index.php/Kniha> and the English version at <http://nrql.techlib.cz/index.php/Book>.



⁸ On creation of a scientific text more in GERŠLOVÁ, Jana. Vademékum vedecké a odborné práce. 1st ed. Prague: Professional Publishing, 2009. ŠANDEROVÁ, J. Jak číst a psát odborný text ve společenských vědách. Prague: SLON, 2005. ČMEJRKOVÁ, S. – DANEŠ, F. – SVĚTLÁ, J. Jak napsat odborný text. Prague: Leda, 1999.

⁹ Submitting Details to the Information System of Research, Experimental Development and Innovation RIV - Information Register of R&D results. [cit. 22-12-2010] Available at: <http://www.iach.cz/knav/manual/P2010.pdf>