The International Nuclear Information System –
A Timely, Comprehensive, and Open Grey Literature Repository

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Grey literature repositories are essential for the advancement of science. They are storehouses of the world's information on various topics, and as is well known, cover literature that would not be otherwise available from conventional sources. In addition, new technologies and the resultant expectations of the users have led many well-known and much used repositories - both conventional and grey - to adopt three main best practices, timeliness, comprehensiveness, and openness. The IAEA's International Nuclear Information System (INIS) is working to adopt these three characteristics as well.

Timely means that a resource is made available as close to the date of publication as possible. With a timely repository, users get the most current information available. A timely repository is updated frequently. Automatic search engines like Google reward frequently updated websites with more traffic. In addition, users visit a more frequently updated resource more often, leading to greater engagement. INIS is increasing its reliance on harvesting and increasing its frequency to make the repository more timely.

Comprehensive means that a repository covers their subject area as completely as possible, both in time and in breadth of subject. A comprehensive repository would cover current non-conventional publications but would also seek to fill in the historical record with records from the past. It would also seek to fill in any subject gaps. To increase comprehensiveness, INIS is adding automated processes, including harvesting, automated indexing, and automated record processing.

Open means that a repository would be open to both human users and automated ones, providing tools for harvesting and inclusion in still other repositories. Such a repository likely harvests records from other places, so it should be open in turn for others. INIS plans to develop an OAI-PMH interface as one way to support openness.

Grey repositories adopting these features would be in line with current best practices and could expect much traffic from users and a great deal of success.