Evaluating Grey Literature

The criteria you would use to evaluate grey literature are the same as those used to evaluate any kind of information. Consider:

- **Authorship.** Not all grey literature will have a named author (or authors). If it does, you will want to consider whether the author or authors are knowledgeable in the field and whether they have any affiliations that might bias their views. If no authors are named, you will want to consider closely the source that produced the report.
- **Source of the Report.** This information should be obvious and easy to locate. Check below for more information on evaluating agency and organization Web sites.
- **Transparency of Methods.** It should be clear where data and other types of information came from, how it was analyzed and how the final report was compiled.
- **Currency.** The date a report was issued should be easy to find. If a report is older, try to find a more recent version or an update.

Evaluating Agency and Organization Web Sites (.org)

Although it is often suggested that searches for grey literature be restricted by domain, do not rely on the .org domains when evaluating Web sites. The .org domain no longer only applies to non-profits.

**DO NOT** count on the professional look of a Web page to indicate quality. Some very reputable sources of information can have Web sites that look dated. Some less reliable sources of information, on the other hand, are beautifully designed.

Take a look at this site for RYT Hospital. It looks very professional until you look more closely at the content.

Source: Penn Libraries Grey Literature in the Health Sciences