

Use and Influence of Marine Environmental Information: Continued Studies of the Publications of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment

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Abstract

Our research studies the influence of information produced as “grey literature” by the Gulf of Maine Council (GOMC). To date we have assembled a bibliography of GOMC publications and analyzed the literature bibliometrically. GOMC publications are now distributed more efficiently via the Internet than in print and are used and cited in a number of contexts. We are proceeding with an in-depth analysis of use.

Introduction

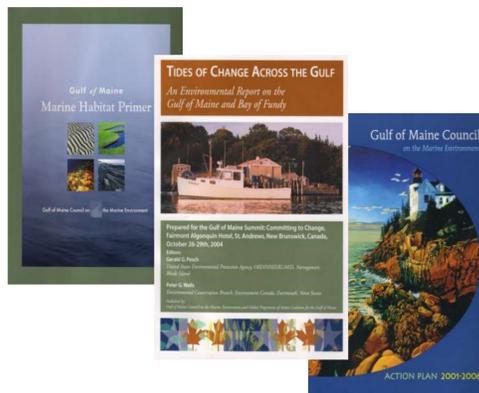
- GOMC is an international, intergovernmental body focused on the marine environment of the Gulf of Maine and the Bay of Fundy. The philosophy underlying the Council's work since 1989 is that activities on land ultimately affect the sea, especially in shallow coastal areas.

- GOMC produces grey literature both in print and online. With over 300 publications, GOMC provides a complex publishing history.
- Awareness of grey literature is problematic, despite powerful search engines and open access.



Guiding Questions

- What has GOMC published, where and how?
- What do citation analysis and interviews show about the distribution and use of GOMC publications?



Methods

- Identifying GOMC publications through various search strategies.
- Locating citations to GOMC documents by searching Web of Science, Scopus, Google, and Google Scholar.
- Analysis of citations.
- Interviewing GOMC personnel to determine their views on publication practices, and the pathways to the flow of GOMC information.

GOMC Publications

- GOMC has produced many types of publications (see Table 1).
- GOMC grants have supported publications produced by other agencies.
- GOMC work has been reported at conferences and in journal articles.

Table 1. Types and numbers of GOMC Publications*

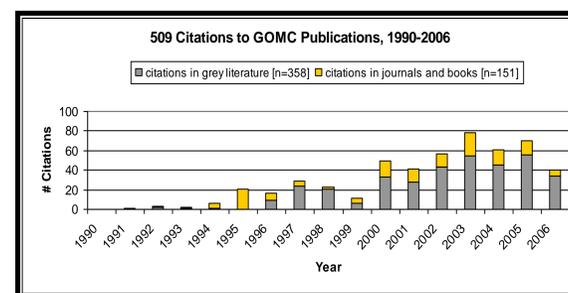
Council Publications	
Reports and fact sheets	132
Background documents	38
Action plans and annual reports	30
Brochures and posters	11
Serials	9
Miscellaneous	9
Council Supported Publications	
Reports and background documents	29
Miscellaneous documents	26
Reprints of Council authored documents	
Conference papers, journal articles and abstracts	40

* As of 30 June 2009

Current Findings

Citation data shows increased use of GOMC reports over time (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Frequency of Citations to GOMC Publications



Initial interviews with key Gulf of Maine Council personnel indicate that barriers to the dissemination of GOMC publications exist. There has been an uneven distribution strategy for print publications (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. GOMC Interview Quotations

...its mandate is to provide a forum for the jurisdictions, the provinces, the states and the federal partners, as well as the non-profit and private members to be able to have a place where they can come together and share information and collaborate. ... I would say that they'd first communicate and then they would cooperate and then eventually collaborate.

Scientific Member (A)

...we were starting to put a process in place where we would keep a record of exactly who we were sending the report to and the problem is you don't always follow that strictly within government agencies. At least in my department, I found it was difficult to maintain those records for every publication.

Scientific Member (B)

The *Gulf of Maine Times*...is another means of promoting awareness of Gulf of Maine Publications because whenever one comes out of course it would be highlighted as a new item.

Scientific Member (B)

Planned Research

Our continuing research includes:

- Interviews of key informants to document dissemination pathways of GOMC's print and online publications.
- Content analysis of public policy documentation to assess the use of GOMC's publications.
- Analysis of GOMC website use and surveys of readers of selected publications such as the *GOM Times*.



Selected References

- R.E. Cordes, B.H. MacDonald & P.G. Wells (2006) Gulf of Maine Council Publications and Their Use
<http://www.gulfofmaine.org/council/publications/GOMCpublications-report-Cordes-2006.pdf>
- B.H. MacDonald, R.E. Cordes & P.G. Wells (2007) Assessing the Diffusion and Impact of Grey Literature Published by International Intergovernmental Scientific Groups: The Case of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment. *Publishing Research Quarterly* 23(1):30-46.
<http://www.gulfofmaine.org/council/publications/Assessing-the-Diffusion-and-Impact-of-Grey-Literature.pdf>

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