

## Access to Grey Content: An Analysis of Grey Literature based on Citation and Survey Data: A Follow-up Study

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### Introduction

Grey literature, an area of interest to special librarians and information professionals, can be traced back a half-century. However, grey literature as a specialized field in information studies is less than a decade old. At GL'97 in Luxembourg, grey literature was redefined "as information produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishers (i.e. where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body)." The subject area was broadened and the need for continuing research and instruction pursued. The results of an online survey carried out in 2004 compared with survey results a decade prior indicate two changes: (1) a move to more specialization in the field of grey literature and (2) a move to more balance in activities related to research and teaching as compared with the processing and distribution of grey literature. It is not that the activities of processing and distribution are today of less concern, but technological advances and the Internet may have made them less labour intensive. The burden that grey literature posed to human resources and budgets appears to have been reduced enough that the benefits of its content is discovered. And this discovery of a wealth of knowledge and information is the onset to further research and instruction in the field.

### Research Goal

The idea behind this study is that - by using the same pool of authors - survey data linked to citation data will allow for a clearer demonstration of the impact of their research, where only part of the impact is covered by citation analysis alone. Hopefully, the new combined results will provide a better profile of these meta-authors, who are also the source of GreyNet's knowledge and information base. This could lead to the subsequent development of information policies and services that are more in line with the needs of authors and researchers, whereby their results would become even more accessible well beyond the grey circuit.

### Research Plan

This research is a follow-up to two projects carried out in 2004. One was a citation analysis based on the published papers in the GL Conference Proceedings and the other was a general survey, which dealt with the response of information professionals to key issues and topics in the field of grey literature. In this study, we seek not only to update and integrate the data from the citation analysis but at the same time to introduce the instrument of an author survey in order to better assess the work and expectations of those who are actually doing research and authoring papers on the topic of grey literature. These are referred to as the meta-authors of grey literature.