

OpenSIGLE, Home to GreyNet's Research Community and its Grey Literature Collections: Initial Results and a Project Proposal

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Introduction

For the past 16 years, GreyNet has sought to serve researchers and authors in the field of grey literature. To further this end, GreyNet has signed on to the OpenSIGLE repository and in so doing seeks to preserve and make openly available research results originating in the International Conference Series on Grey Literature. GreyNet together with colleagues at INIST-CNRS have designed the format for a metadata record, which encompasses standardized PDF attachments of the authors' conference preprints, PowerPoint presentations, abstracts and biographical notes. In April 2008, the first test batch containing records from the Eighth International Conference on Grey Literature (GL8, 2006) was uploaded. A few minor problems that were encountered and have since been successfully resolved. These metadata records and their corresponding attachments are now available for search and retrieval in OpenSIGLE. Subsequent record entries followed with GL7 (2005) down to GL6 (2004) and GL5 (2003). By December 2008, conference records over the past five years including those from GL9 (2007) will be available in the OpenSIGLE Repository. For this phase of the project, a budget of 2000 Euro was appropriated to cover the costs of formatting, conversion, and technical editing of the 100 plus metadata records and 300 accompanying PDF attachments. Records from the earlier four conferences in the GL Series (1993-1999) will require additional image scanning as well as permission from Emerald (the former MCB University Press). Should this be granted not only would the total number of GreyNet records in OpenSIGLE be nearly doubled but GreyNet's collection would then be comprehensive.

Method of Approach

If OpenSIGLE is indeed the best home for GreyNet, then some measure of empirical results should be able to confirm it. Results that would demonstrate benefits for both the GreyNet Collection as well as OpenSIGLE. For it is here, where the crossroads of more than 25 years of bibliographic information on grey literature intersects with 15 years of research on grey literature. The analysis of usage statistics and local metrics can draw on the standards and definitions of the COUNTER project for journals and databases but must take into account that little has been published so far on usage statistics of documents deposited in open archives, that standards, recommendations and empirical evidence are still missing, and that the software for the export of statistics need to be improved. Approach, methodology and preliminary usage data will be presented with special attention to comparative data when available from INIST and GreyNet websites, and to the potential and real impact of PR campaigns and referencing on usage. This may also lead to the evaluation of the role and impact of OpenSIGLE and GreyNet's Collection on the development and functioning of the international GreyNet community and the creation of community-related tools and functionality (web 2.0). If GreyNet is to factor into the design of the 'Grey Grid' for information society, then not only its place in serving researchers and educators in the field of grey literature must be re/evaluated but also its place in serving practitioners in the field. Such a study would help bring this home.

PART ONE

SIGLE to OpenSIGLE in Five Seconds

SIGLE (System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe) was a unique multidisciplinary database dedicated to grey literature. Up to 15 European partners participated in SIGLE, mostly national libraries or important research libraries. Created in 1980 and produced from 1984 onwards by EAGLE (European Association for Grey Literature Exploitation), the database was last available through STN International and on CD-ROM via Silverplatter/Ovid, until it became dormant in 2005. INIST then decided to make the data publicly available on an open access platform. Details of the migration from SIGLE to OpenSIGLE have been presented at the GL8 Conference held in December 2006 (Schöpfel 2007)¹. The OpenSIGLE website went live in December 2007.

This paper further discusses two aspects of OpenSIGLE: (1) usage statistics covering one year of access to the repository and (2) a cooperative agreement with GreyNet, the Grey Literature Network Service.

OpenSIGLE Traffic Report

Our usage analysis is based on data obtained through *phpMyVisites*, an open source software for website statistics that works with a javascript image call. Only completely uploaded pages are counted and robots