

Grey literature in French Digital Repositories: A Survey

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Abstract

The impact of open archives on the availability and selection of scientific and technical information is growing. Yet, there is little empirical evidence on the deposit and processing of grey literature in digital repositories.

The purpose of this communication is to provide a survey on grey literature in French open archives, e.g. institutional and subject-based digital repositories.

The survey is based on a selection of 56 representative French digital repositories. The different archives are selected through national and international registries of OAI repositories, following a defined set of criteria. The repositories are shortly described (type of repository, scientific domain, software, size, language, institution).

Five aspects are analysed for each digital repository:

1. Typology of grey documents (in particular, theses and dissertations, reports, conference proceedings, working papers, courseware).
2. Part of grey literature in the whole archive (in %).
3. Specific metadata related to grey literature.
4. Quality control and policies (evaluation, validation).
5. Conditions of access to the full text.

These information and data are linked to the characteristics of the repositories mentioned above, and specific features of grey literature are discussed.

Furthermore, the question if the New York definition of grey literature applies to the content of digital repositories is discussed.

The communication provides an overview of the preservation and dissemination of grey literature in French digital repositories, contributes to the discovery of French grey literature and open archives, and moves forward the debate on the future of grey literature in the environment of digital repositories.

1. Introduction

"New possibilities of knowledge dissemination (...) through the open access paradigm via the Internet have to be supported. (...) A complete version of the work (...) is deposited (and thus published) in at least one online repository using suitable technical standards (such as the Open Archive definitions) that is supported and maintained by an academic institution, scholarly society, government agency, or other well-established organization."

On 22 October 2003, five years ago, 19 major European scientific organizations signed this *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities*. In January 2006 the European Commission published the *Study on the Economic and Technical Evolution of the Scientific Publication Markets of Europe* with policy recommendations in favour of open repositories ("Research funding agencies ... should promote and support the archiving of publications in open repositories", cf. Dewatripont et al. 2006).

In December 2006, the European Research Advisory Board released a report on scientific publication and policy on open access² and recommends, "that the Commission should consider mandating all researchers funded under FP7 to lodge their publications resulting from EC-funded research in an open access repository". A petition for guaranteed public access to publicly-funded research results launched in early 2007 was signed by more than 27,000 scientists and several hundreds organizations³.

In France 17 scientific and academic institutions support the Berlin Declaration. French universities and research organizations signed in July 2006 an agreement on the development of a common infrastructure of open repositories. Central parts of the French "jigsaw puzzle" (André et al. 2007) are the CNRS Center for Direct Scientific Communication⁴ at Lyon and, since November 2008, the institutional repository portal⁵ launched by the French academic consortium COUPERIN.

Last year, the European DRIVER study evaluated France as an advanced country in the open archives landscape (see Van de Graaf & Van Eijndhoven 2007).