

OpenSIGLE - Crossroads for Libraries, Research and Educational Institutions in the field of Grey Literature

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Abstract

This work is based on a paper¹ presented at the Tenth International Conference on Grey Literature (GL10) in which GreyNet's collections of conference preprints were made accessible via the OpenSIGLE Repository. OpenSIGLE offers a unique distribution channel for European grey literature with roots dating back a quarter century. In the first part of this paper, the experience of INIST as service provider and GreyNet as data provider will be discussed including recent developments.

Later in this paper, the draft of a project proposal called for in the final session of that conference will be elaborated. The proposal seeks to explore the capacity required for the OpenSIGLE Repository to develop in multilateral and international cooperation in support of European research infrastructures committed to the open access of grey literature collections and resources. Emphasis is placed on the involvement of libraries, research centers, and institutions of higher education, as well as, requirements for a grey literature network service to sustain further development, exploitation, and promotion of the OpenSIGLE Repository.

From SIGLE to OpenSIGLE: A Progress Report

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 libraries aligned to well-known research institutes. Their principal goals were the centralized collection of scientific and technical reports, theses and other grey material and to facilitate access to these documents through an engagement for document delivery or loan. 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 Conference² held in December 2006 (Schöpfel 2007). And in December 2007, the OpenSIGLE website³ went live. This paper further discusses three related issues dealing with OpenSIGLE: (1) usage statistics covering two years of access to the repository, (2) a bilateral cooperative agreement with GreyNet, the Grey Literature Network Service, and (3) a project proposal exploring the capacity required for the OpenSIGLE Repository to develop in multilateral and international cooperation.

OpenSIGLE Traffic Report

Usage information for a database is at all times interesting for the producer of the information. In this case an additional incentive was the fact that OpenSIGLE records, which migrated from the SIGLE database, had not been updated since 2005. Would then the move to an open access environment be at all "useful" for the grey literature community?

The 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 are excluded. The following data provide only a part of the information that can be obtained through phpMyVisites. Other statistics based on server logs might however provide even higher figures.

The first figure shows that the number of visits as well as the number of page views has increased steadily since the opening of the website in 2007. A first peak was reached in July 2008 following a press campaign in the middle of the French holidays. The result is both surprising and rewarding since visits usually decrease during summer months.

The usage of OpenSIGLE continues to increase and has more than tripled between August 2008 and August 2009 in terms of page views and number of visits, where the average duration of a visit is 100 seconds. Visits where only a single page is viewed represent a stable 50% average of the traffic to the site. These users accessed the database after searching via Google or Google Scholar. While in other cases, users may carry out extensive searches and view hundreds of web pages.