

Grey Publishing: An Example of Stretch Management and Knowledge Sharing

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Abstract

GreyNet began more than fifteen years ago as an information network serving the *grey literature community*. Its primary goal was to capture the results of research generated by authors within the *International Conference Series on Grey Literature*. This led to the publication in print and electronic formats of a wide range of document types including program books, conference proceedings, newsletters, conference memoranda, bibliographies, guidebooks, course material, journals, and a host of other web-based resources. GreyNet has adapted to and capitalized on technological innovation as well as policy driven change on the information landscape, namely open access. What makes GreyNet different from other information network services is its grey tech approach to high tech issues. In this presentation, GreyNet provides an example of stretch management and knowledge sharing, where grey publishing is an engine for change.

Introduction [Slide 1](#)

In a trip earlier this year to Slovakia, a strap line in one of the in-flight journals caught my eye. It read, "We take you places we can't even pronounce". Well today, I take this opportunity to explore an area on the information landscape that may or may not be familiar to you. The title of my paper is Grey Publishing, An Example of Stretch Management and Knowledge Sharing. In the first part of my presentation, I situate grey literature in the realm of publishing; and, in the second part, I explain GreyNet's role and approach to knowledge sharing via grey publishing.

PART ONE

1.1 Getting Control of Uncontrolled Terms Slide 2

Knowledge sharing begins with clear, accepted or at least conventional definitions of key terms. Through the years, a number of uncontrolled terms have been used to describe the phenomenon of grey literature. However, this has not really contributed to the understanding, use, and application of grey literature.

1.2 Definitions Now in Place Slide 3

In 1997, the definition of grey literature often referred to as the 'Luxembourg Convention' took a sharp turn – emphasizing for the first time the supply side of grey literature i.e. its production and publication both in print and electronic formats. This break from the previous quarter century, which narrowly focused on the demand side and the problems of bibliographic control, indexing, cataloging and retrieval finally placed grey literature in a fuller perspective. And in 2004, an appendix was added to the definition in order to better distinguish grey from commercial publishing. The definition now reads, "Grey literature is that which is produced and distributed on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing *i.e.* where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body".

The other key term in my presentation that requires definition is "stretch management". A term that came out of industry in the 1990's referring to extraordinary goals not only higher than the previous year, but goals that are sustainable.

1.3 The Supply-side of Grey Literature Slide 4

The rise of electronic publishing has changed the scale and diversity of grey literature facing librarians and other information professionals. With the emergence of new types of grey literature documents and the newfound awareness of organizations producing these documents that they also hold a role as publisher – even though their primary activity is not publishing – grey literature has risen to a level playing field on the information landscape.

The producers of grey literature often referred to as 'corporate authors' – a term found in the ISBD (International Standard Book Description) guidelines also has a tradition in the grey literature community. The term was adopted in the 1980's by

SIGLE, System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe, and became a required field for record entry.

On this slide, domain extensions are used to give some examples of grey publishers in the various sectors of government, academics, business, industry, and other types of organizations.

1.4 Recognizing Grey Document Types Slide 5

It is good to be aware of the fact that there are well over a hundred types of recognized grey literature documents. Most of us are familiar with the traditional types such as reports, theses, and conference proceedings. However, with the rise of internet and electronic publishing, newer types have appeared and continue to do so. In a recent study (Artus, 2004), we see that journals and journal articles are also types of grey literature. In fact these are two of the fastest growing. One of the reasons why journal and journal articles may not have earlier been recognized as grey literature was due to SIGLE's failure to include them on their record template. The further use of domain extensions on this slide offers examples of document types often associated with specific sectors of the grey literature community.

Furthermore, it is the grey publishers or corporate authors, who are responsible for the review process to which grey literature must adhere. And, in this way, they stand as guarantee for the quality of the document, the collection, the database, and/or repository in which the document belongs. Standards used in the review process apply to both the content and format of the documents and these must be made available to the (net)users. This is an important step in knowledge sharing.

PART TWO

2.1 The GL-Conference Series and Knowledge Sharing Slide 6

GreyNet was founded in 1992 just prior to the Call-for-papers issued in line with the First International Conference on Grey Literature. It's primary goal was and still is to capture the results of research generated by authors in the GL-Conference Series - making them further available to the international grey literature community. Without the conference series there would be no GreyNet and this paper contends

that without the infrastructure and work of GreyNet, there would be no international conference series on grey literature.

In its approach to grey literature, GreyNet applies the principle of 'stretch management' linked to knowledge sharing – where goals become incrementally higher than in previous years, but in a network where they are sustained and sustainable over an indefinite period of time both practitioner and researcher alike.

2.2 Primary and Secondary Publications Slide 7

GreyNet as corporate author and grey publisher has a policy in place for its primary publications, namely the conference papers, proceedings, the journal and journal articles – these *de facto* being the full-text documents. However, GreyNet also seeks to capture and publish - according to its means - other factual and documentary information via available publishing channels. These are referred to as secondary publications, some examples of which are biographical notes, bibliographic records, metadata, abstracts, datasets, PowerPoints, etc.

Actually, GreyNet is focused both on primary and secondary publications issuing from the GL-Conference Series. Together, they form the 'enriched publication', which encompasses more than the full-text document. Enriched publication provides a far more reaching demonstration of the value chain in publishing. Here, the principle of stretch management is applied. And, in order to do so, GreyNet has opened and expanded its corporate authorship to include associate members, who stand as guarantee for GreyNet's enriched publications. GreyNet has likewise entered into partnerships and licensing agreements with major players on the information landscape in order to sustain its publishing arm.

2.2 GreyNet Publications in Print and Electronic Formats Slide 8

On this slide, you have an overview of GreyNet's print and electronic publications – all of which are serials – appearing annually, tri-annually, bi-monthly, or upon demand. Further on the slide, you will find a number of web based resources that require periodic editing and updating. These include: the GreySource Index, a Selection of Web-based Resources in Grey Literature; the GreyText Archive, an In-house archive of documents on grey literature, and a WHOIS in Grey Literature.

More recently, GreyNet has become open access compliant via the OpenSIGLE Repository. In 2008, GreyNet's conference preprints from 2003-2007 along with their metadata records and other secondary publications linked to the

preprints were entered in the OpenSIGLE Repository. This project in which GreyNet served as data provider and INIST as service provider met with such success that all future collections of conference preprints will follow suit. Furthermore, GreyNet's earlier collections of conference papers from 1994-2000, which were out of print and under copyright, have since been recovered and are being processed and retrospectively uploaded into OpenSIGLE. It is anticipated that by early 2010 all of GreyNet's conference based collections will be comprehensive and openly accessible via the OpenSIGLE Repository. The bilateral relationship established in that project between GreyNet and INIST has since given cause to explore the capacity required for the OpenSIGLE Repository to further develop in multilateral and international cooperation in support of European research infrastructures committed to the open access of their grey literature collections and other web based resources.

2.2 Grey Publishing, An Engine for Change Slide 9

Over the past 15 years, GreyNet's experience in stretch management and knowledge sharing applied to grey publishing demonstrates an engine for change to other corporate authors of grey literature. To sum up, this slide focuses on principles of best practice recommended by GreyNet:

- The starting point should be a networked service with a sound financial management;
- A community based approach in order to guarantee content;
- Non-exclusive rights agreements for contributing authors;
- An proactive policy for parallel publishing and licensing;
- OAI-compliance;
- And, a sustainable infrastructure in order to meet and match the growth of the networked service.