

Peering through the Review Process:  
Towards Transparency in Grey Literature

by

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## Purpose of the Study

*Spurred by the IPCC affaire over the use/misuse of grey literature*

The purpose of this study will be to explore the degree to which grey literature is reviewed and to compare similarities and differences with formal peer review carried out in various degrees by commercial publishers. This study will further distinguish the review process implemented by grey publishers from that of mavericks and vanity press, where personal opinion and pure speculation run rampant.

## Method in the Study

*Fundamental Research, Literature Review, Comparative Analysis*

This study looks at the body of literature on peer review and its relatedness to grey literature. Key concepts and elements in peer review form the framework for a comparative analysis, and these are examined in light of guidelines on peer review submitted by publishers. In addition, alternative models for peer review found during the course of study are compared for their relevance to grey literature.

## Literature Review

### *Phase I: Sourcing and Referencing*

- Peer Review In the Grey Literature via OpenSIGLE
- Peer Review Via Search Engines and other Sources
- Peer Review Specific to Publishing
- Peer Review Eureka! A Star Publication\*
- Peer Review Takes New Directions
- Peer Review Oops, Time's Up

## Literature Review

### *Phase II: Mining for Key terms*

- Establish a Vocabulary of Terms
- Compile an Alphabetical Key Term Index
- Include Pagination and Scope Notes

#### **100 PLUS TERMS:**

Certification  
Checklist  
Clear-cut rule  
Competent  
Competitive Wall  
Confidentiality  
Conflict of Interest  
Credibility  
Crowd Sourcing

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Community Sourcing  
Corporate Author

## Literature Review

### *Phase III: Classification of Terms*

1. Criteria **Functions**
2. Roles **Stakeholders**
3. Attributes **Characteristics**
4. Process **Steps**
5. Results **Impact**

## Comparative Analysis

### *Phase I: Across Publishing Channels*

PEER REVIEW :	Commercial	Grey	Self
1.Criteria			
2.Roles			
3.Attributes			
4.Process			
5.Results			

## Comparative Analysis

### *Phase II: Publisher Guidelines*

- **Grey publishers** contacted via GreyNet's Distribution List  
Three responses (Request to 1000 plus Addresses)
- **Commercial publishers** selected from the Questia List  
Four responses (Request to 30 out of 200 plus Addresses)
- **IPCC Task Group** that reviewed the Processes and  
Procedures for IPCC Reports based on findings from the IAC



## Comparative Analysis

### *Phase III: Models for Peer Review*

- **Journal Model** *True to tradition, thorough, geared to the public*  
'Peer review and the acceptance of new scientific ideas' (2004)
- **Open Review Model** *Open vs. Insular, Crowd Sourcing, WWW*  
'Scholars test web alternatives to peer review' (2010)
- **Peer-to-Peer Model** *Reviewer impact, Registered, Automated*  
'Peer-to-Peer review and ranking in open access ...' (2010)

## Some Preliminary Findings

- Grey literature document types far exceed journal articles and require alternative models for peer review ✓
- Community Sourcing lends itself to the review of GL ✓
- GL focuses more on the review process than the end product ✓
- GL is more apt to include negative results in publications ✓
- Commercial and Grey Publishers share more in common with one another than with Self Publishers ✓
- The IPCC affaire exposed grey literature to the wider public and defends its further use ✓
- Guidelines for good practice would serve to inform net users of the value of grey literature ✓

## Concluding Remarks and Discussion

### *Grey tech approaches to high tech issues*

In an attempt to make the review process in grey literature more transparent, our study concludes with recommendations for good practice that will contribute to a set of guidelines published and maintained on GreyNet's website. These guidelines should be drawn-up and formulated by a working group established within the grey literature community and applied to GreyNet's own serial and non-serial publications.

## Acknowledgements

To

Dr. Joachim Schöpfel and Jerry Frantzen

*in the search and retrieval of literature throughout the study*

Dr. Leonid Pavlov, CITIS (RU), Markus Weber, SFOPH (CH),  
Aarhus University Press (DK), Amsterdam University Press (NL),  
Manchester University Press (UK), and the World Bank (USA)

*for submission of peer review guidelines*

Sincere Thanks