



# Greying of the white – Changes in output and access

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Access to knowledge and information is necessary for the function of democracy, as well as for various kinds of research and recreation. The advent of electronic publishing was seen as a development that would make dissemination of various kinds of non-commercial publications (grey literature), which was difficult to get a hold of during the paper era, easier. This poster presents developments in publishing output in Iceland as documented in the *Icelandic national bibliography* during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Changes in the output of kinds of material are obvious. In all categories fewer units were issued in 2011 than in 2001, the decrease in total output is over 12%.

## Kinds of units in the Icelandic National bibliography

	2001	2010	2011
•Books, phamplets	1539	1524	1465
•Sound recordings music	228	233	196
•New journals/newsletters	<b>187</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>
•Maps	30	16	5
•Total	1982	1845	1738

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2003, an amended Legal Deposit Act, no. 20/2002 took force, covering various kinds of media, amongst them e-publications, which then should be catalogued in the *Icelandic national bibliography*.

The difference is particularly striking in the numbers of new journals/newsletters (founded in this period), which decreased by almost 62%. This was during a time when foundation of new institutions, organizations and associations, which traditionally established newsletters to disseminate knowledge and information to members and to introduce their operations to non-members, was ongoing. The reason could only be that some other media and/or unit of communication than the journal or newsletter were being used for the above named purposes. In other words it looks like the units of publication have changed with the advent of e-publishing. This raises the question whether this development will affect public accessibility to the material being disseminated?

To give an indication of possible future developments the case of the Newsletter of IRMA (Icelandic Records Management Association) was investigated. IRMA was founded in December 1988, it started publishing the *Newsletter of IRMA (Fréttabréf Félags um skjalastjórn)* on paper in 1989. According to the *Legal Deposit Act no. 43/1977* The Newsletter was delivered to the National Library (later the National and University Library of Iceland (NULI)), and catalogued there in accordance with the Act on the National Library of Iceland no. 38/1969 and later the Act on the National and University Library of Iceland no. 71/1994. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the publication of IRMA's Newsletter changed to an e-publication accessible to members on IRMA's homepage, which is closed to non-members. Thereby it was no longer deliverable to NULI, because the *Legal Deposit Act no. 20/2002*, only stipulates deliveries of internet publications, not those on closed nets. These developments led to a situation where information on and knowledge about the development of IRMA, which used to be white turned grey.

Subsequently the publication of IRMA's Newsletter was discontinued and the items which used to be published there have since been published directly on IRMA's homepage under headings such as News, Interviews, Events and others of that kind. Thereby, IRMA's Newsletter no longer exists as a unit of publication, neither on paper nor electronically. The publication units are not the same as they were in the paper era.

Although homepages can be harnesses by NULI, according to the *Legal Deposit Act no. 20/2002* links to other homepages, which for example describe an Event noted on IRMA's homepage do not function. Therefore the accessible information will not be comparable to what it was when the event was described in IRMA's Newsletter.

These kinds of developments call for a new kind of thinking when amending legal deposit acts to ensure that access to the kind of knowledge and information deemed valuable at present and to posterity will be available.

