



QUALITY OF GREY LITERATURE IN THE OPEN ACCESS ERA: PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY



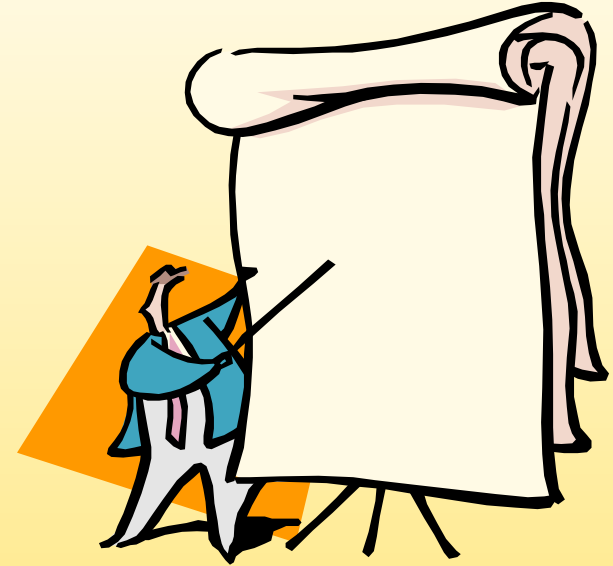
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***Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome
(Italy)***

GL5 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, Amsterdam 4-5 December 2003

I will talk about...

- **The grey nuances:
from past to present**
- **The Internet “sea change”:
where is the privilege?**
- **The Internet challenge:
where does the responsibility lay?**
- **Why does editorial quality become so relevant
in the open access era?**
- **The experience of the Istituto Superiore di
Sanità**



THE GREY NUANCES...

Old or new scenarios?



1

OLD CHARACTERISTICS

- **issuing**
- **organizations**
- **documents types**
- **value vs costs**
- **presentation**
- **no referee process**

THE GREY NUANCES...

Old or new scenarios?

2

NEW CHARACTERISTICS

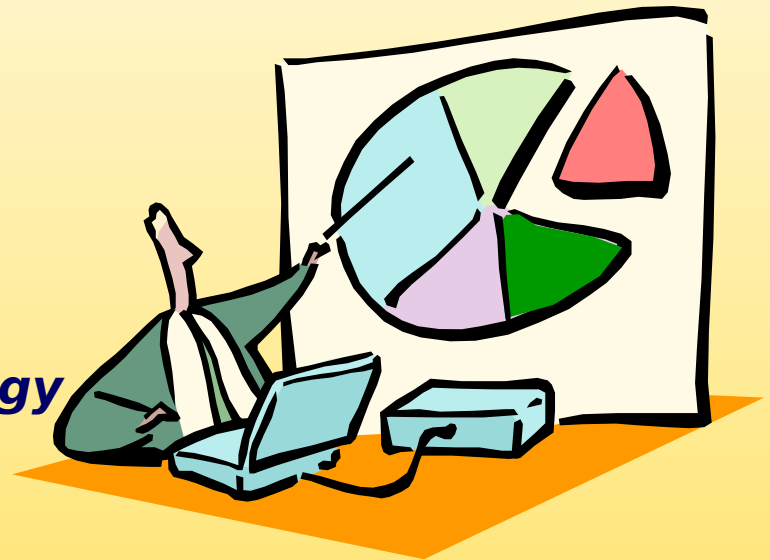
- information retrieval
- document availability
- awareness
- document types...



NEW TYPES OF GL...

in the Internet

- E-prints
- FAQs
- Power Point Presentations:
 - BMJ topics ("Talks")*
 - Supercourse in epidemiology*
- etc.



**NEW TYPES
OF OPEN LITERATURE?**

DEATH OR METAMORPHOSIS *of biomedical journals?*

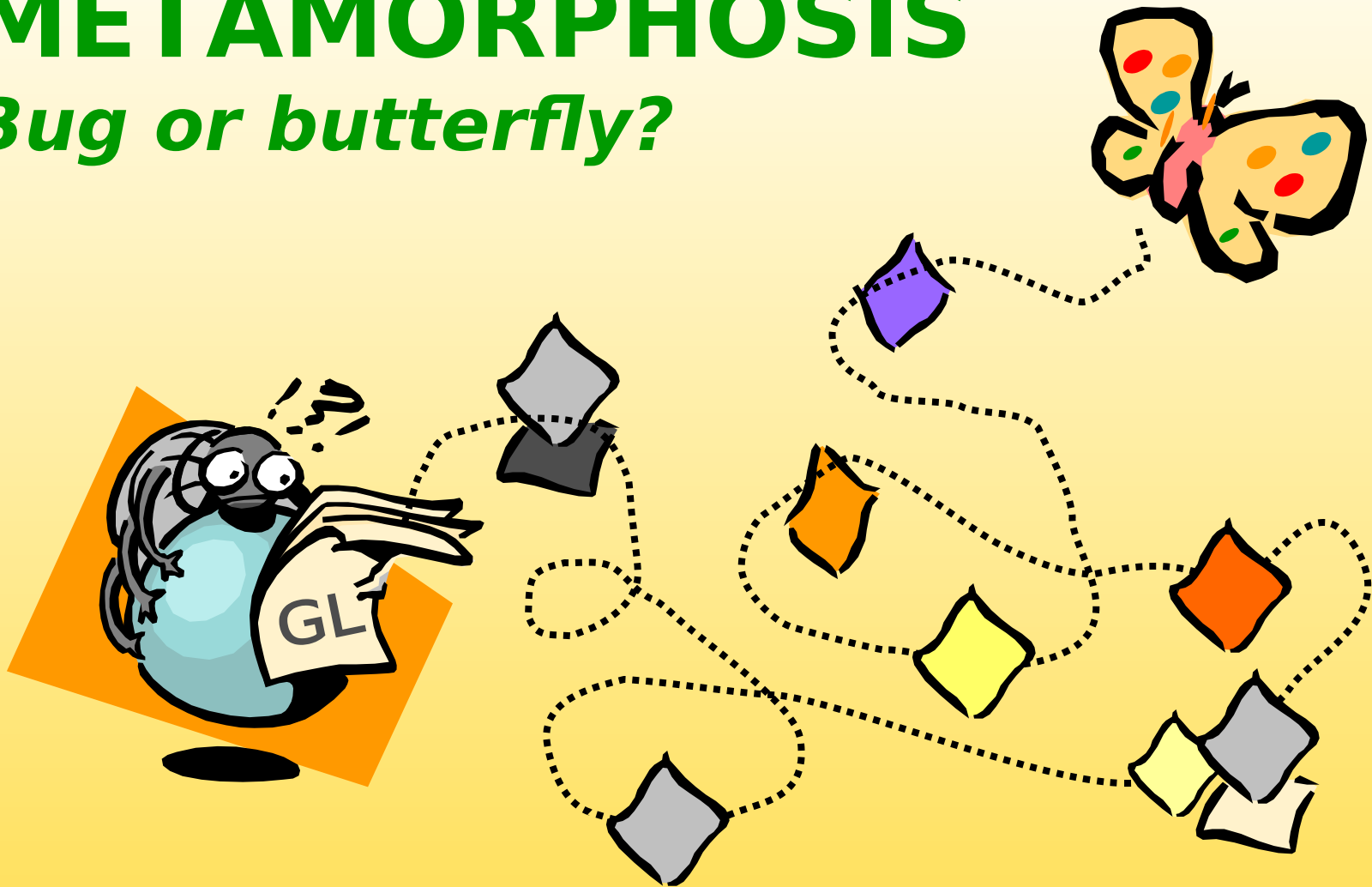


Ronald La Porte. *BMJ* 1995, 2002



GL METAMORPHOSIS

Bug or butterfly?



THE INTERNET “SEA CHANGE”

in the information market

INFORMATION AVAILABILITY

- Increasing responsibility for producers and users
- Reaching unpredictable targets



ADDING CONFUSION?



THE INTERNET

Where is the privilege?

Different areas of privileges regard:



- **Users**
- **Producers**
- **Scientific community**
- **Progress**

THE INTERNET

Where is the privilege?

PRODUCERS

- **Duplication costs**
- **Shipping charges**
- **Immediate availability**
- **Publication run**
- **No photocopies**
- **Deposit spaces**
- **Hyperlinks**
- **Unexpected dissemination**





THE INTERNET

Where is the privilege?

USERS

- Online availability
- Increase in information offer
- Hyperlinks
- Immediate feedback

THE INTERNET *illusion*

➤ **Puzzling users**

➤ **Misleading potential readers**



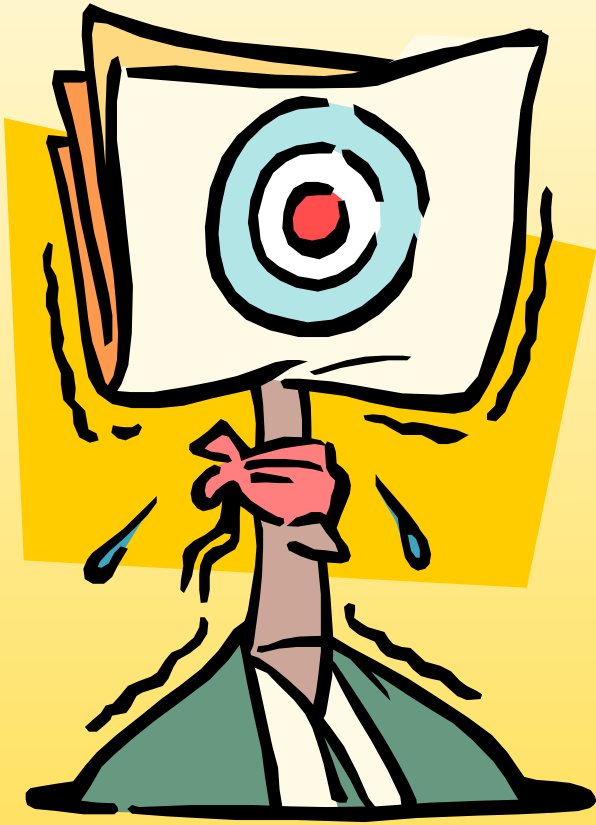
**WHEN
?**

source and target are not identified

URLs change

THE INTERNET CHALLENGE

Where does the responsibility lay?



WHO

WHAT

WHY

WHO *is responsible?*

WHO

WHAT

WHY

- **Authors**
- **Issuing organizations**



WHAT *responsibility?*



WHO

WHAT

WHY

➤ **Content**



revision

➤ **Presentation**



technical editing

readability
retrieval

➤ **Usability**



position on the web

WHY

does the responsibility increase?

WHO

WHAT

WHY

- Target no more limited
- Misinterpretation

**Issue and select correct
and appropriate information**



RELEVANCE

of editorial support

It guarantees quality and retrieval



STANDARDS

for GL presentation: which role?

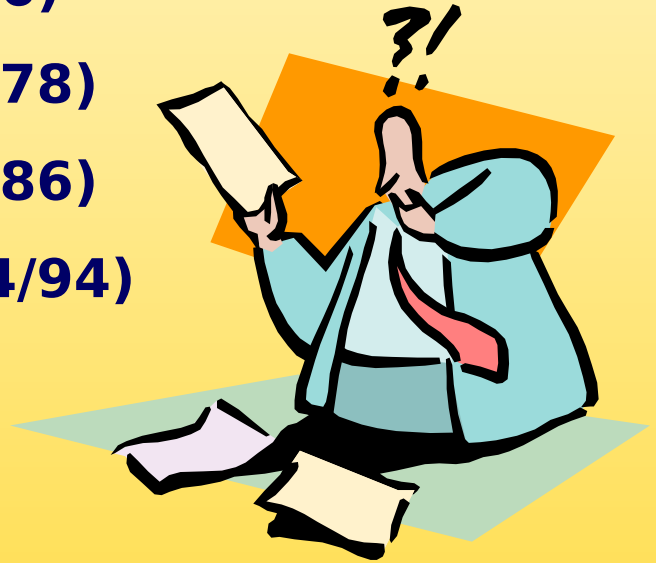
- Improvement of editorial quality
- Better understanding
- Easy readability
- Guarantee of retrieval



STANDARDS

for GL presentation: past milestones?

- **Technical reports** (ISO 5966/82)
- **Thesis** (ISO 7144/86)
- **Abstract** (ISO 214/76)
- **ISBN** (ISO 2108/78)
- **ISSN** (ISO 3297/86)
- **ISRN** (ISO 10444/94)



ISO 5966/82

Is it out-dated?

The standard was withdrawn, in fact...

“

The presentation of mathematics shall follow conventional practices. It is, therefore, often preferable to use **CAREFUL HANDWRITING** rather than to attempt to reproduce mathematical notations on a conventional **TYPEWRITER**. However, when special printing, typewriting, or drafting facilities are available for the preparation of mathematical notations, these should always be used.

”

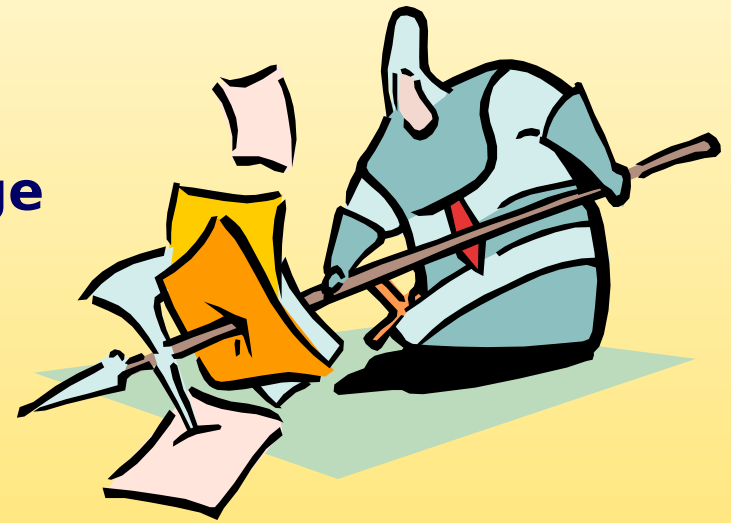


but...

ISO 5966/82

A useful lesson from the past

- Elements of the first page
- Abstract
- Document structure
- Indexes
- Report numbering
- Quantities, units and symbols
- etc.





TECHNOLOGIES

help, but ...

Authors should learn how to use them properly for:

- **Definition of hierarchical levels**
use of styles
creation of TOC or index
- **Orthographic control**
- **Automatic translation**

STRATEGIES

for a better GL quality

GOAL

- Appropriate dissemination and use of information

HOW

- Training courses on scientific writing
- Self-learning facilities
- Tutorial assistance



**EMPOWERMENT
OF AUTHORS**

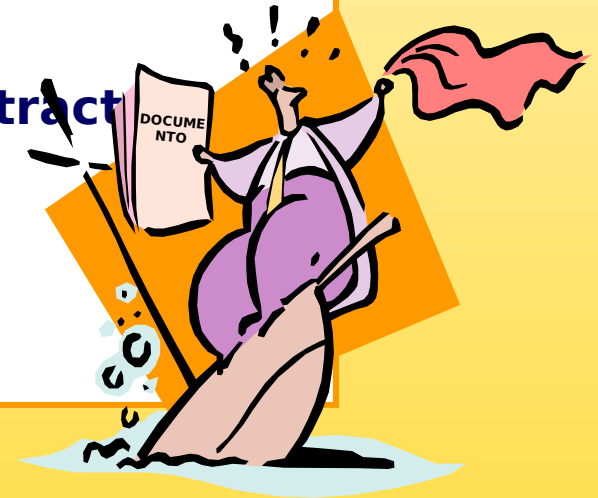


SCIENTIFIC WRITING

Example of a basic training course

PROGRAMME

- Editorial channels and document types
- Evaluation parameters of the editorial products
- Actors of the editorial process
- How to organize information in a document
- Editing tables and graphs
- Bibliographic references
- Tables of contents, indexes and abstracts
- Levels of technical editing
- Copyright issues
- Useful “editorial” Internet sites



TECHNICAL EDITING

Whose responsibility?

Responsibility is shared by authors and issuing organization.

MAIN GOALS

- Check:**
- **policy**
 - **consistency**
 - **completeness**
 - **accuracy**
 - **integrity**
 - **understanding**



TECHNICAL EDITING

Three levels

According to the CSE:

1. **RUSH** edit
2. **STANDARD** edit
3. **REVISION** edit

They all consider:

- technical content
- typical aspects of revision editing
(*language, grammar, format and style*)



**BUT at each level
ATTENTION
increases**

TECHNICAL EDITING

Which level?

The choice depends on:

- document type
- target
- times
- budget



RUSH EDIT

What to check

It has three areas
of focus:

- Policy
- Technical content
- Copyediting



STANDARD EDIT

Deeper attention

- Organization of figures and tables, readability of captions
- Capital letters
- References
- Syntax, grammar



REVISION EDIT

Further attention

- **Hierarchical levels**
- **Balance**
- **Unnecessary material**
- **Coherence in style**
- **Fluent and concise language**



TECHNICAL EDITING

Where is the difference in GL?

Open literature

- Peer-review
- Editorial revision

Grey literature

- No peer-review
- Internal/personal revision only



ISTITUTO SUPERIORE DI SANITÀ



**TECHNICAL SCIENTIFIC BODY
of the National Health Service in
Italy**

ISTITUTO SUPERIORE DI SANITÀ

Mission

- Research
- Trials and controls
- Technical advice
- Information, documentation and training



in PUBLIC HEALTH



ISS PUBLICATIONS

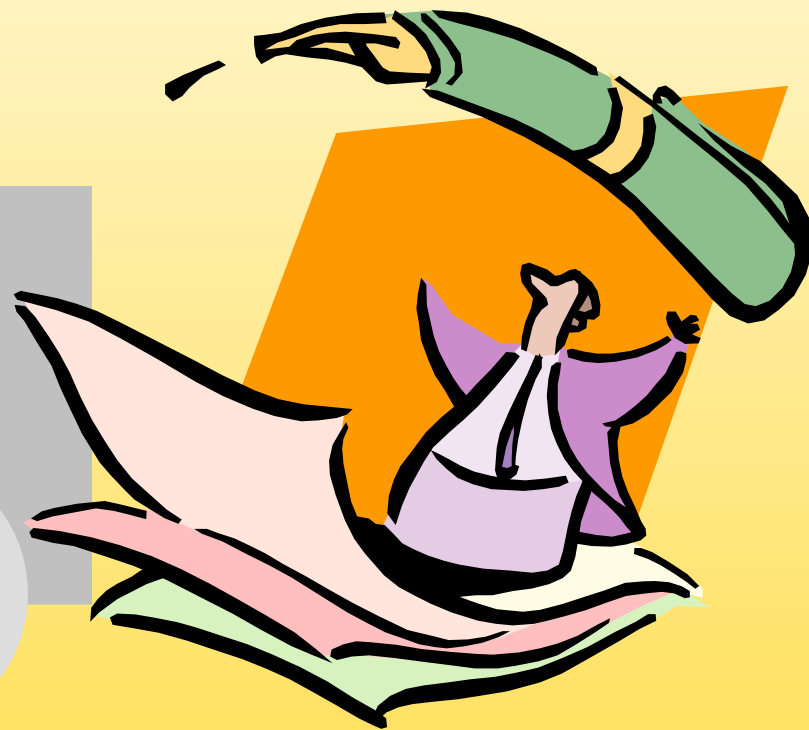
Today

► **Annali
dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità**

► **Notiziario
dell'Istituto Superiore di
Sanità**

► **Rapporti ISTISAN**

► **ISTISAN Congressi**



ANNALI *dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità*



**Online since
2001**

**Official REFEREED journal
since 1938.**

**It publishes in Italian and
English:**

- **original articles**
- **reviews**
- **monographs**
- **short notes**

in different fields of public health.

**It is included in MEDLINE,
Chemabs, Excerpta Medica, etc.**

It is distributed by ISS and IPZS.

NOTIZIARIO *dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità*



**Online since 1996,
distributed by ISS**

**NEWSLETTER, born in 1988
recently re-organized in 2003.**

**It includes
*Italian Epidemiological Bulletin.***

Authors are mainly ISS researchers.



RAPPORTI ISTISAN

and ISTISAN Congressi



**Online since 2001,
distributed by ISS**

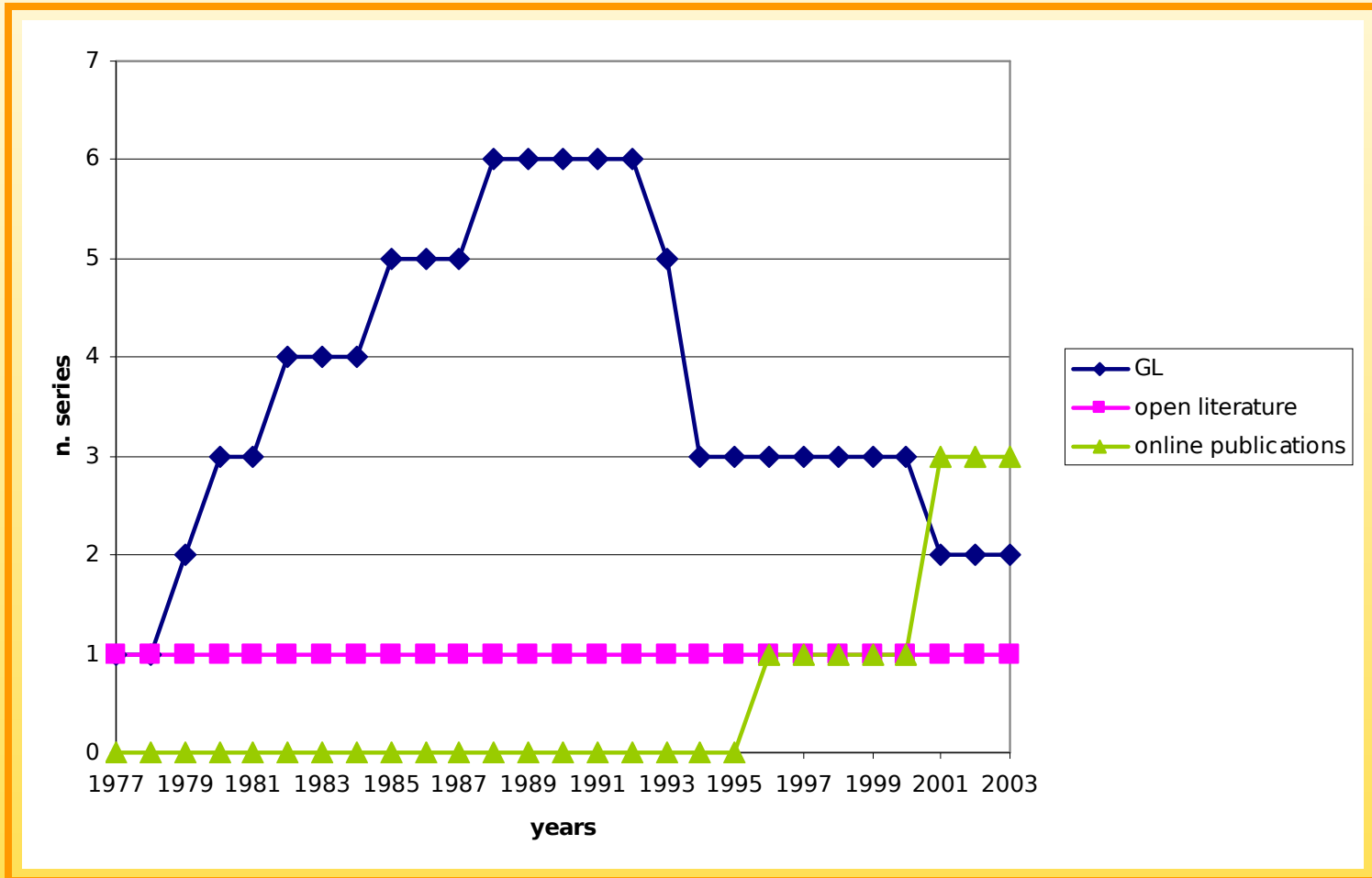
**Technical and research reports
produced since 1977.**

**Authors are mainly ISS
researchers.**



ISS PUBLICATIONS

GL vs open literature and online publications



EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE *at the ISS*

➤ PUBLICATION PRODUCTION

- **Paper copy**
traditional distribution channels
- **Internet availability**
PDF – HTML (few links)

➤ PUBLICATION DISSEMINATION

mailing lists
inclusion in databases

➤ COURSES ON SCIENTIFIC WRITING

improvement of quality in publication
simplification of editorial work
empowerment of authors



INTERNET DATABASES

containing ISS report production



SPECIALIZED DATABASES

SIGLE
NTIS
CAS
etc.

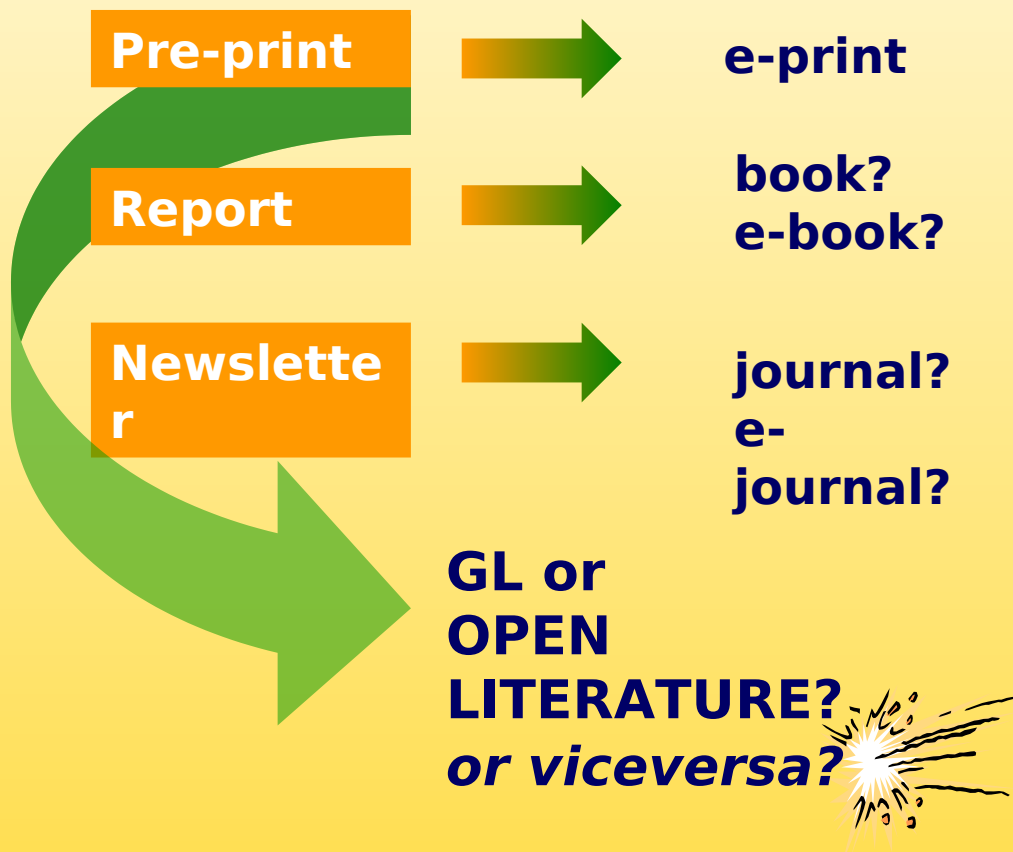
ONLINE CATALOGUES

Locator plus of NLM
British Library
etc.

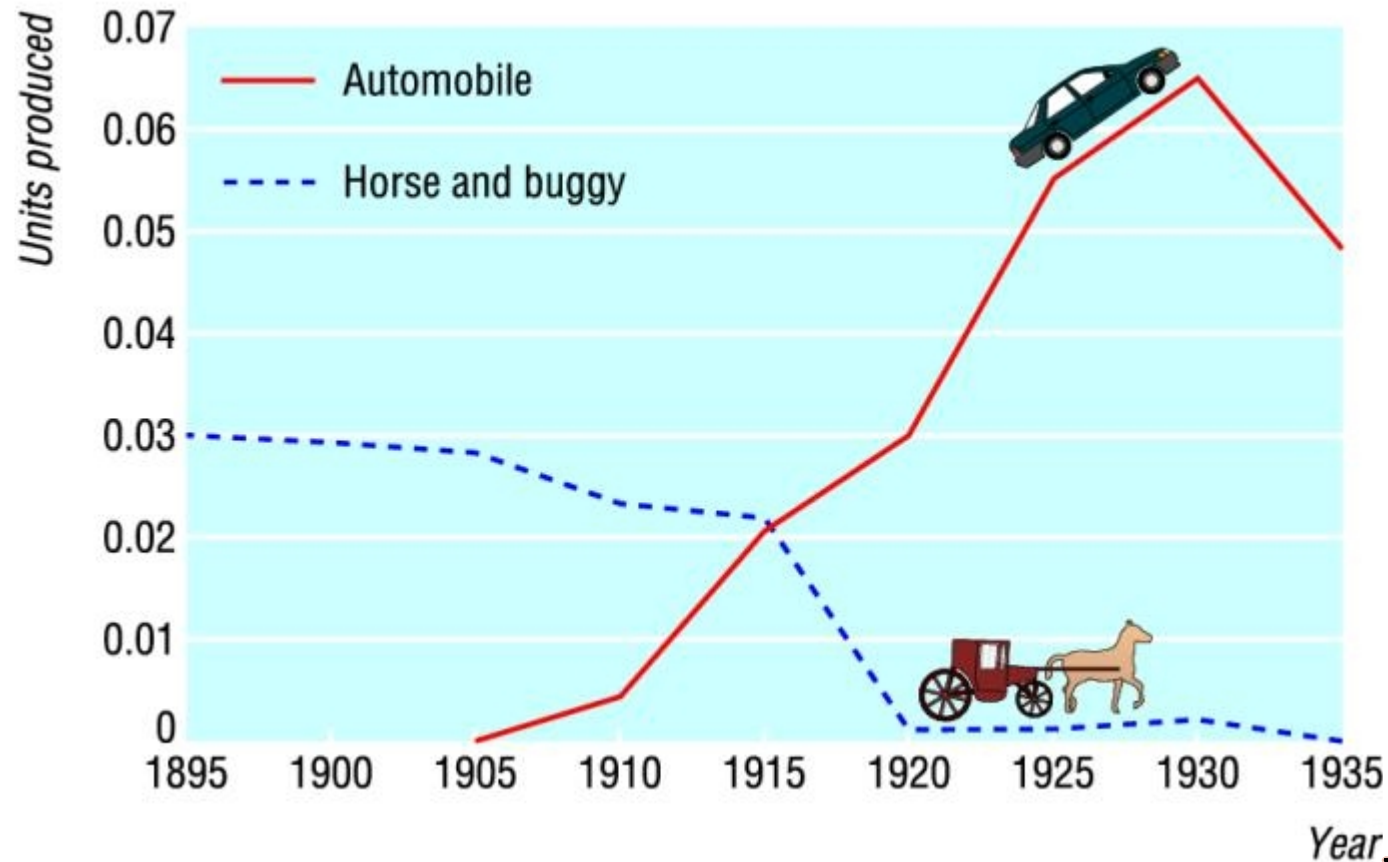
GL NEW LOOK

in 2003

Where is the border line?



FUTURE UNCERTAINTY



La Porte R, et al. *BMJ* 2002;375:21-9

NEW INITIATIVES

for open access



Budapest (BOAI)

Biomed Central

SPARC

PLOS



25 YEARS AFTER YORK ...

What has the Internet changed?

Bulk of information
Awareness of GL
Growing interest in GL
GL access
GL availability
Differences GL/open literature
Report code vs URL or DOI

INCREASE

UNDISCUSSE

UNPRECEDENTE

NEW

UNLIMITED

LESS

MORE USEFUL



IN CONCLUSION, GL...



- 
- has now new dignity
 - becomes closer and closer to innovative scientific publications supported by researchers in view of a generalised movement towards **OPEN ACCESS**
- The nuances of grey are becoming lighter and lighter.



ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY
of producing and issuing quality documents
can never be disregarded.



FINAL *reflection...*

“

**We hope that the age of “mental delusion”
has passed, and that mystery and
concealment will no longer be
encouraged.**

Thomas Wakley, 1823
first editor of The Lancet

”