

Access to Grey Literature in the Netherlands/ Grey Literature at Data Archiving and Networked Services – DANS

Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS) is the national Dutch organization for permanent access to research data, with a focus on the humanities and social sciences. DANS offers three services to the scholarly community: DataverseNL, EASY, and NARCIS.

DataverseNL is intended to support data management during the research process and as an intermediate archive for the short term (up to five or ten years). When a research project is concluded, researchers can deposit their research data in the long-term archiving system EASY. In the portal NARCIS research data of DANS and other research institutes are shown in context, namely in relation to e-publications, and other research information. Via EASY and NARCIS one can find "grey literature" in the Netherlands, such as data documentation, archaeological reports, doctoral theses, conference papers, patents et cetera produced in the universities and other research institutes in The Netherlands.

Introduction

We use the term "grey literature" in this article in accordance with the definition of The Fourth International Conference on Grey Literature (GL '99): "That which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers".¹ In a scholarly or scientific context, this refers to reports, doctoral theses, conference papers, contributions to periodicals, book reviews, working papers, excavation reports, (informal) publications belonging to research datasets, data documentation, annotations, patents, lectures, et cetera.² There are now discussions to use the term "grey literature" in a broader sense and to include for example datasets³. We doubt whether this is workable: if everything except for officially published journals and books is considered as grey literature, the term becomes boundless and will be almost synonymous with "information" (minus officially/commercially published books and journals).

A way to find grey literature in the Netherlands is to search in the services of Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS)⁴. DANS promotes sustained access to digital research data, primarily in the social sciences and humanities, and provides access to nearly one million of publications in the Netherlands (April 2015), of which around 40% is openly available. To fulfil this mission DANS developed the online archiving system EASY⁵ (Electronic Archiving System) where scholarly researchers, affiliated to universities and other research institutes, can store and reuse research data in a permanent and sustainable manner. During the research process, the data can be stored in DataverseNL⁶, another service hosted by DANS. With the portal NARCIS⁷ DANS also provides access to thousands of scholarly datasets, publications and other research information in the Netherlands.

Both EASY and NARCIS give access to a substantial grey literature in the Netherlands. In DataverseNL there are so far only a few reports (grey literature) about the stored data.

The institute furthermore provides training and consultancy and carries out research on sustained access to digital information. Driven by data, DANS ensures the further improvement of access to digital research data with its services and participation in national and international projects and networks. DANS is an institute of Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and research funding organisation (NWO).

Paragraph 1 of this article contains a brief overview of the three core services of DANS. In paragraph 2 a description of the contents of the services EASY and NARCIS is given, with emphasis on the grey literature they provide access to. In paragraph 3 follows a short conclusion.

This overview article is based upon a paper presented at the Conference on Grey Literature and Repositories in October 2014 in Prague⁸.

¹ See <http://www.greylit.org/about>

² See: Alberani V, Pietrangeli PDC, Mazza AMR (1990). The use of grey literature in health sciences: a preliminary survey. Bulletin of the Medical Library Association 78(4): 358-363.

³ For more definitions see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_literature and <http://www.greynet.org/greysourceindex/document-types.html>

⁴ See: <http://www.dans.knaw.nl/en>

⁵ See: <https://easy.dans.knaw.nl>

⁶ See <http://www.dataverse.nl>

⁷ See: <http://www.narcis.nl>

⁸ See: <http://nrgl.techlib.cz/index.php/Proceedings>

1. The services of DANS

DANS provides three services to support the research community with research data management and to give information about open access to research data and scholarly publications:

- Researchers and lecturers can store and share research data during the research process in DataverseNL. DataverseNL uses the Dataverse software developed by the IQSS at Harvard University. DANS hosts DataverseNL and provides back-office service to the institutions participating in the Dutch Dataverse Network. Most Dutch universities are now connected in this network, be it that the content is still modest. This is related to the fact that most universities are in the process of formulating and initial phases of implementing data management policies. The collaborating organisations in the network have decided to position DataverseNL as an archive for the short term.
- After completing their research, researchers in the social sciences and humanities can store their scholarly data in EASY, the long-term archiving service of DANS. EASY is a trusted digital repository: in 2011 EASY received the Data Seal of Approval (DSA)⁹ and this seal was renewed and updated in 2013. DSA encompasses a total of sixteen guidelines regarding creation, storage and (re-)use of digital research data.
- The third core service of DANS is the portal NARCIS. In NARCIS the research data are shown in the context of scholarly information in the Netherlands, including (open access) publications from repositories of all Dutch universities, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)¹⁰, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)¹¹, and various other research institutions, and datasets from data archives, including EASY. Moreover, NARCIS gives an overview of descriptions of research, researchers, and research institutes. DANS collaborates closely with Dutch research institutes to maintain and develop NARCIS.

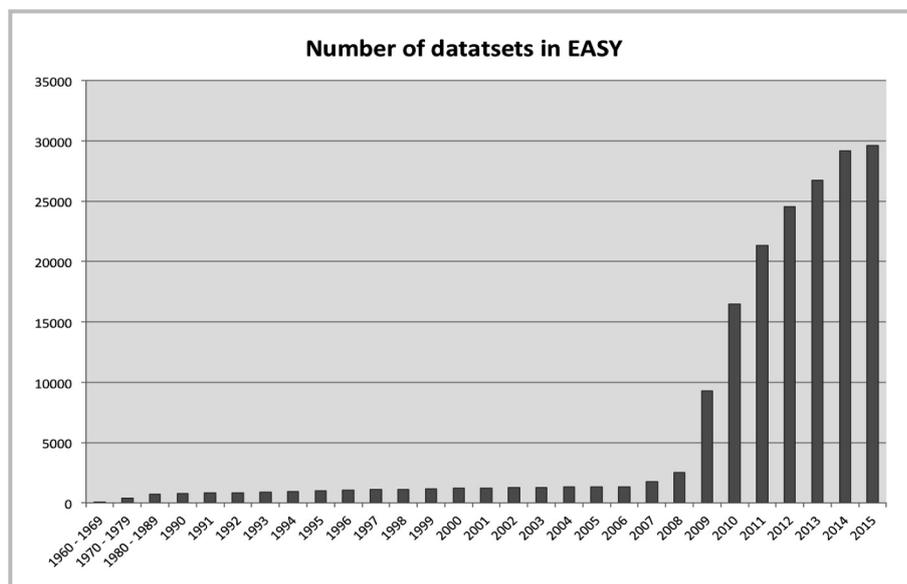
2. Grey literature in the services of DANS

In DataverseNL there is hardly any grey literature, so the focus in this paragraph is on EASY and NARCIS.

2.1 EASY

2.1.1 Contents

The collection of EASY¹² currently consists of nearly 30,000 published datasets (April 2015). DANS was founded in 2005¹³, but the first predecessors of DANS date back to 1964: the Steinmetz Foundation for the social sciences. The first datasets were acquired in the 1960s, and these are now archived in DANS EASY. The oldest datasets in our collection date back to the late fifties and early sixties of the 20th century.



EASY contains datasets from the following disciplines (a dataset can be tagged to belong to more than one discipline): almost 30,000 tags for datasets in the humanities (archaeology, history, language and text, oral history, and theology); 3,700 datasets in the sociocultural sciences (e.g. communication Sciences; Political Science); 2,600 datasets in the social sciences (e.g. sociology); 1,100 datasets in the behavioural sciences (e.g. psychology, criminology, pedagogy); 300 datasets in the life sciences and medicine; and 40 datasets in the geospatial sciences (cadastre data). EASY also offers authorised institutions access to the anonymised micro data of Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

Fig.1. Number of datasets in EASY over the years, 1960s – April 2015

⁹ See: <http://datasealofapproval.org>

¹⁰ See: <http://www.knaw.nl>

¹¹ See: <http://www.nwo.nl>

¹² See for the latest numbers: <https://easy.dans.knaw.nl/ui/browse>

¹³ DANS is an institute of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)

2.1.2 Grey literature in EASY

There are over 15,000 datasets in EASY that can be considered as "grey literature publications". One can find these publications by using respectively the Dutch and English keywords "rapport" or "report" (14,217), "documentatie" or "documentation" (341), and "publicatie" or "publication" (665). These informal publications are all connected to the datasets stored in EASY by the Dutch research community. In EASY there are archaeological reports (in which the excavation results are described and documented), publications belonging to research datasets, and data documentation. Especially in archaeology, the distinction between data and report is not always clear. A typical archaeological excavation project is characterized by a cluster of different file types: next to databases of finds, one may encounter GISes with surface plans, CAD drawings of sherds, excavation report with qualitative descriptions and interpretations, digital photographs, etc.

2.2 NARCIS

2.2.1 Contents

NARCIS is the national aggregator of the Research Information Systems and repositories with publications and datasets in the Netherlands. In April 2015 NARCIS contains the following information:

- metadata of more than 980,000 publications from the repositories of 33 institutions, of which 41% is available under open access licences;
- metadata of over 181,000 datasets from seven repositories, e.g. EASY;
- descriptions of over 61,000 projects of research institutions
- nearly 52,000 researchers of which 17,000 are labeled as "experts" (including 8,550 professors and associate professors) about whom expertise and workplace are recorded;
- around 3,000 organizations and divisions of research institutions; and
- more than 1,700 enhanced publications from 8 projects. In this last category the results of projects are collected in which different information types were linked, e.g. a report with accompanying data, project information, etc. In a way, these enhanced publications can also be regarded as a specific form of grey literature, since they usually do not have the status of a formal publication (although a "traditional" publication, such as a PhD dissertation or an article, may constitute part of the enhanced publication).

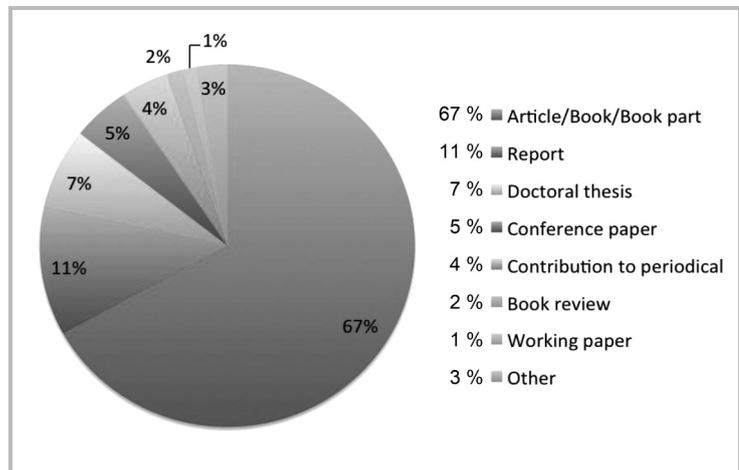


Fig. 2. Contents of NARCIS, April 2015

2.2.2 Grey literature in NARCIS

In NARCIS 33% of the publications can be considered as grey literature: nearly 305,000 reports, doctoral theses, conference papers, contributions to periodicals, book reviews, working papers, annotations, patents, lectures et cetera. The other 67% of the publications is not grey literature: articles, books and book parts.

If we look at all the open access publications in NARCIS, over 171,000 publications are grey literature, or 46% of all open access publications. There are over 202,000 open access articles, books and book parts, which is 54% of all the open access publications. So proportionally, there is more grey literature available as full text than officially published articles, books, and book parts.

From all doctoral theses, 78 % is open access because this is mandatory for doctoral theses at most universities. The biggest part of the working papers (91 %) is open access, and so is 57 % of the reports and 43 % of the conference papers. From the contributions to periodicals¹⁴ 37 % is openly available and only 20 % of the book reviews is open.

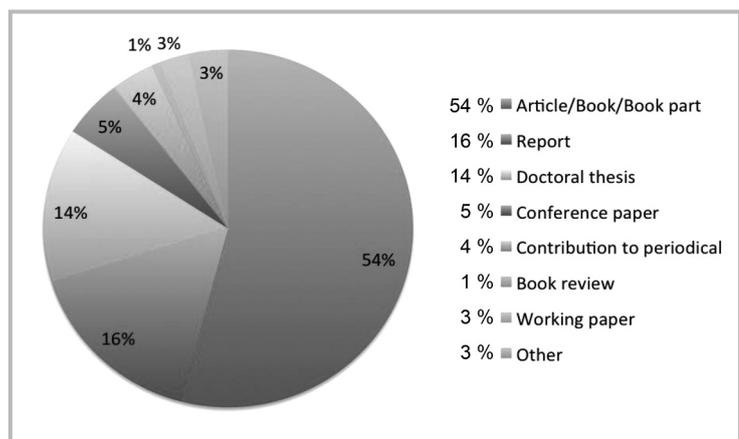


Fig. 3. Open Access contents of NARCIS, April 2015

¹⁴ Definition: contribution to a newspaper, weekly magazine or another non-academic periodical

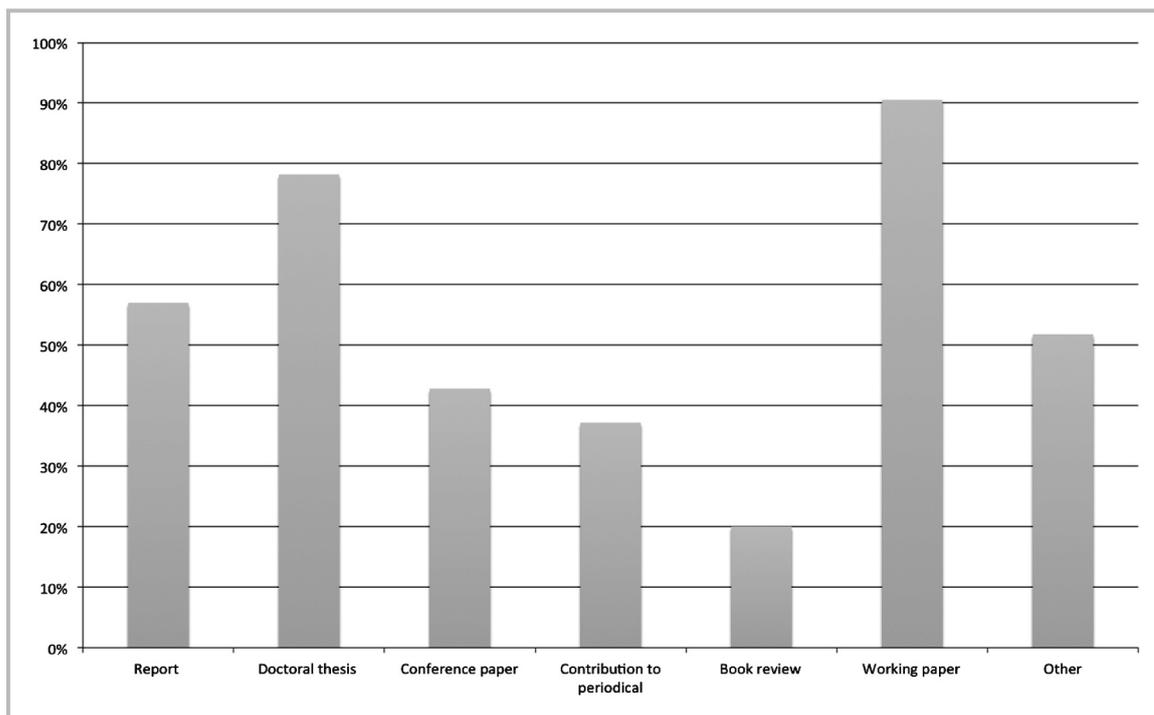


Fig. 3. Open Access of grey literature in NARCIS, April 2015

3. Conclusion

The main task of DANS is to promote permanent access to digital research data in Netherlands. Although the focus of DANS is not on grey literature but on data archiving, two of our main services (EASY and NARCIS) provide access to a substantial amount of grey literature in the Netherlands.

Giving access to grey literature can be seen as a useful aspect of the services that DANS offers for the scholarly community and for all other users of grey literature.

References

Elly Dijk and Peter Doorn. Providing access to research data, publications and current research information at Data Archiving and Networked Services – DANS. In: Conference on Grey Literature and Repositories: proceedings 2014: the Value of Grey Literature in Repositories [online]. Prague: National Library of Technology, 2014 [cit. 2014 - [cit. 2014-12-19]. ISSN 2336 – 5021. See: <http://nrgl.techlib.cz/index.php/Proceedings>

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