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A Snapshot of the Body of Karst Literature

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Presentation Time: 1:30 PM-5:30 PM

A SNAPSHOT OF THE BODY OF KARST LITERATURE

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The pace of research in cave and karst science is increasing. The inherent multidisciplinary nature of the field exacerbates the need for globalized communication. The field, however, is served by a literature that is dispersed across far-flung topical journals, government publications, and club newsletters. As part of an inter-institutional project to globalize karst information (KIP, the Karst Information Portal), the USF Library undertook a structured battery of literature searches to map the domain of karst literature. The administrators of the KIP will use these data to design strategies to aggregate and evaluate the representation of information within the KIP.

The study used 4300 individual searches and four literature databases: GeoRef, BIOSIS, Anthropology Plus, and GPO Access. The searches were based on a list of 321 karst-related keywords culled from three leading encyclopedias and glossaries of cave and karst science, plus lists of major geographical categories (including countries), subdisciplines within the field, geomorphic and climatic settings, and the names of several major cave systems. In addition, the study included searches of all cave- and karst-related publications from 1960 to 2005.

For the last 45 years, the number of cave and karst publications has increased steadily in all databases, and in GeoRef by ~30 articles/year. The number of GSA abstracts has increased from a handful in 1970 to 2.6% of all abstracts in 2005. Of the scientific subfields, geomorphology and geology have the most citations. Of 24 climates and locations, the top three are related to marine environments. Two of the top five keywords are biology related, whereas only one ("water") is geological. Publications about karst in Europe are by far the most numerous (by a factor of at least two), reflecting the European origins of the discipline. When broken down by country, however, there are more articles about karst in the United States (by a factor of at least three). France has the most citations of European countries. Searches by individual cave names yield comparatively few results, with Mammoth Cave garnering the most hits.

[2006 Philadelphia Annual Meeting \(22–25 October 2006\)](#)

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