

**ASSESSING THE STRUCTURE OF INTER AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY
SCHOLARSHIP IN EMERGING TOPIC AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF
"ECOSYSTEM SERVICES"**

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Abstract:

The structure of scholarship is changing rapidly. The increasing necessity to work across traditional disciplinary lines, combined with the increasing ability to do so, has resulted in significant blurring of traditional boundaries. There is a need to develop new ways of understanding the structure of multi, inter, and transdisciplinary scholarship, perhaps discarding "disciplinary" boundaries altogether. In this paper we develop methods to describe the structure of a "topic area." The rapid emergence of new topic areas and their often inter and transdisciplinary nature makes this approach increasingly relevant. As a case study, we apply these methods to the rapidly emerging topic area of "ecosystem services," which has generated approximately 2,400 papers listed in ISI Web of Science journals written by over 2000 authors since the 1990's. We describe the number of publications, the number and interconnection of co-authors, clusters of co-authors, and other variables for the top 172 authors. This allows for a coherent picture of participants in the field and their collaborative interconnections. These methods can be applied to any topic area and represent one way to better understand and support emerging scholarship that goes beyond disciplinary boundaries.