Field Overview: Disciplinary Structure and Growth Dynamics

The Active Inference literature has undergone a profound phase transition. What originated in the late 2000s as a densely clustered niche within theoretical neuroscience has explosively expanded into a multi-disciplinary research program spanning three primary domains and eight strictly tracked categories. Our corpus, extracted from arXiv, Semantic Scholar, and OpenAlex and rigorously deduplicated to $N = 1208$ papers (1972–2026), captures the breadth, tempo, and internal architecture of this expansion.

Active Inference Literature by Subfield (N=1208)

Subfield	Count
A1: Formal Theory	120
A2: Philosophy	154
B: Tools & Translation	267
C1: Neuroscience	206
C2: Robotics	170
C3: Language	57
C4: Psychiatry	34