LEARNING AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Raising your research impact & profile: bibliographic data

Why is this important?
By understanding your research impact, you can:
- Improve your identity as a researcher
- Increase your visibility
- Build your reputation
- Enhance your employability

One way of raising your profile is through the means of bibliographic data, which is used to assess the impact of research, and to track and evaluate research activity – as is the case of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). There are various metrics used to measure publication impact, and this guide covers Journal Impact Factors, citation counts and the H-index.

Journal Impact Factors
Journal impact factors are applied to individual journals and represent the average citation counts of papers published in an individual journal during a two year time frame.

How are journal impact factors calculated?
For each journal a count is made of the total number of times all its articles, reviews, proceedings or notes from the previous two years were cited during the current year. The number is divided by the total number of ‘citable’ items published in the journal over the same period. Items which are ‘non-citable’ include editorials and letters. You can also obtain the Eigenfactor which is five year calculation that is useful for subject areas that take longer to cite.

Where can I find journal impact factors?
The Web of Knowledge databases provides journal citation reports where you can search for an individual journal and compare journal impact factors in your subject area.

Limitations
A journal’s impact factor cannot be used to assess the quality of individual papers. Journals that publish more review articles are likely to get a higher number of citations than those that publish more research papers.

Alternatives to Journal Citation Reports
SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) is a journal rank based on the belief that ‘not all citations are created equally’. The SJR takes into account the differences in citation behaviour between subject fields and is weighted by the prestige of the journal, meaning that a citation from a journal with a high SJR is worth more than one with a low SJR.

Source Normalised Impact per Paper (SNP) measures citation impact by weighting citations based on the total number of citations in a subject field. You can find both the SNP and SJR in the Scopus database.
The H-index is a calculation of how many times a researcher’s papers have been cited. For example, an H-index of 7 means that the researcher has published 7 papers which have all been cited at least 7 times by other papers. The H-index can help to measure the impact of a researcher’s work and compare individuals within the same discipline, especially the sciences. You can find it within Web of Knowledge, Scopus and Google Scholar. However, you can only compare individuals within the same discipline, and it also favours established researchers who have published more over early-career researchers who have published less.

A Citation Count is the number of times an article is cited by other articles. A number of databases include the citation count of an article such as: Web of Knowledge, Scopus, Medline, PsycInfo, and Google Scholar. The citation count of an article is rarely the total number of times an article has been cited. The citing article must be included in the database. An article may have a different citation count in another database, as each database contains a unique set of citations. The number of citations is not an indicator of the quality of the article or of the citing articles.

**Summary of metrics and where to find them**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Web of Knowledge</th>
<th>Scopus</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal Impact Factors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SJR</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation Counts</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - various databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-Index</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – Google Scholar</td>
</tr>
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Google Scholar covers all types of literature (conference papers, reports etc.) as well as journal articles. However, Google Scholar lacks transparency and so from a citation indexing perspective is not considered an authoritative source.

**Alternative metrics**

Altmetrics are metrics that are complementary to traditional, citation-based metrics. They can include peer reviews, citations on Wikipedia, discussion on blogs, mainstream media coverage, bookmarks, and mentions on Twitter. Altmetrics can tell you a lot about how often journal articles are discussed around the world. For that reason, Altmetrics are often incorporated into researchers’ websites, institutional repositories, journal websites, and databases such as Scopus.

**Useful Links:**
Access Web of Knowledge and Scopus database through our A-Z list of databases from our subject resources pages: http://www.wlv.ac.uk/lib/resources.aspx

For help and advice on any aspect of measuring publication impact please see the LIS Researcher section: http://www.wlv.ac.uk/lib/academics/research.aspx

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