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Evaluating the importance of journals in your subject area

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Part 1: Introduction

Bibliometric analysis is becoming an increasingly important way to measure and assess research impact of individuals, groups of individuals or institutions.

This guide aims to show you how to use bibliometric tools to evaluate the importance of journals in your subject area. Identifying important/influential journals in your subject can help you when deciding where you will publish your research. Publishing your research in a journal which is considered important/influential may help to make your research more visible and therefore increase the reach of your publications.

If you would like to know more about what bibliometrics is, why you may want to use bibliometrics, what the main metrics are, what tools are available to gather bibliometric data and what the limitations of bibliometrics are, please refer to the Bibliometrics webpages: https://library.leeds.ac.uk/researcher-bibliometrics-about

Key journal metrics

The impact of a journal depends on how often articles in that journal are cited by other academic publications. The more that journal is cited, the greater its impact. There are a number of journal metrics you can use to evaluate the importance of journals:

Journal Impact Factor

Journal impact factors are calculated from data held in Journal Citation Reports (available via Web of Science) and is an alternative to the SCImago Journal Rank and Scopus SNIP. Journal Citation Reports covers more than 10,500 journal titles, representing over 2500 publishers worldwide in over 230 disciplines. Journal Citations Reports lists journal titles and assigns an impact factor to each title.

Over a two-year period, the number of citations to a particular journal is divided by the number of articles published in that journal. For example, for 2012 impact factors the following formula was used:

$$\text{2012 Journal Impact Factor} = \frac{\text{Number of times articles published in the journal during 2010 and 2011 were cited during 2012}}{\text{Total number of articles published in the particular journal during 2010 and 2011}}$$

The Journal Impact Factor will help you evaluate a journal's relative importance, especially when you compare it to others in the same field.

Part 2 of this workbook will show you how to find Journal Impact Factors.

SCImago Journal Rank (SJR)

SJR is calculated from data held in Scopus and it is an alternative to the Journal Impact Factor and Scopus SNIP. It is a measure of scientific influence of journals that accounts for both the number of citations received by a journal and the importance or prestige of the journals where such citations come from. With SJR, the subject field, quality and reputation of the journal have a direct effect on the value of a citation. Scopus provides journal metrics values to all peer-reviewed journals indexed in the database.

SJR expresses the average number of weighted citations received in the selected year by the documents published in the selected journal in the three previous years.

For more detailed information about SJR please visit the SJR pages: http://www.journalmetrics.com/sjr.php.

Part 2 of this workbook will show you how to find the SJR of a journal.

Scopus Source Normalised Impact per Paper (Scopus SNIP)

Scopus SNIP is calculated from data held in Scopus and it is an alternative to the Journal Impact Factor and SJR. It measures contextual citation impact by weighting citations based on the total number of citations in a subject field. Citation practices can vary significantly from one field to another, SNIP corrects for those differences, i.e. it normalises for subject differences.

The Scopus SNIP is defined as the ratio of a journal's citation count per paper and the citation potential in its subject field.

For more detailed information about Scopus SNIP please visit the Scopus SNIP pages: http://www.journalmetrics.com/snip.php.

Part 2 of this workbook will show you how to find the Scopus SNIP for a journal.

Issues to consider when using journal metrics

There are a number of issues to consider when using journal metrics:

- A large number of citations does not automatically mean that a work is of high quality. A work may be heavily cited because many other authors are refuting its research
- Beware of citation bias. People may cite their own work or work from the journals in which they publish
- An impact factor is a measure of average citation impact, not individual author citation impact. Therefore an impact factor cannot be used to measure the performance of an author
- Time needs to elapse before a meaningful citation analysis can be made, so new journals tend to fare badly
- Not all research work is published and cited in the citation indices. For example conference proceedings are often poorly covered

- There is a bias towards English language material
- Different fields of research publish at different rates. Some disciplines such as the arts, humanities and social sciences rely less on publishing in journals.

Part 2: Finding journal metrics

This section will show you how to find the key journal metrics using Journal Citation Reports and Scopus.

Journal Impact Factor

Journal Impact Factors are available from Journal Citation Reports (via Web of Science)

Accessing Journal Citation Reports:

- Go to the Library homepage at http://library.leeds.ac.uk/.
- Type Journal Citation Reports into the Library Catalogue search box and click on search
- From the results page, click on 'Journal citation reports: social science edition'
- Click on 'Journal Citation Reports: social science edition – Thomson Reuters' in the 'Available online' box
- Depending on where you are (e.g. off campus), you may be required to log in with your ISS username and password
- You will then be logged into Web of Science
- Click on 'Journal Citation Reports' at the top of the page:
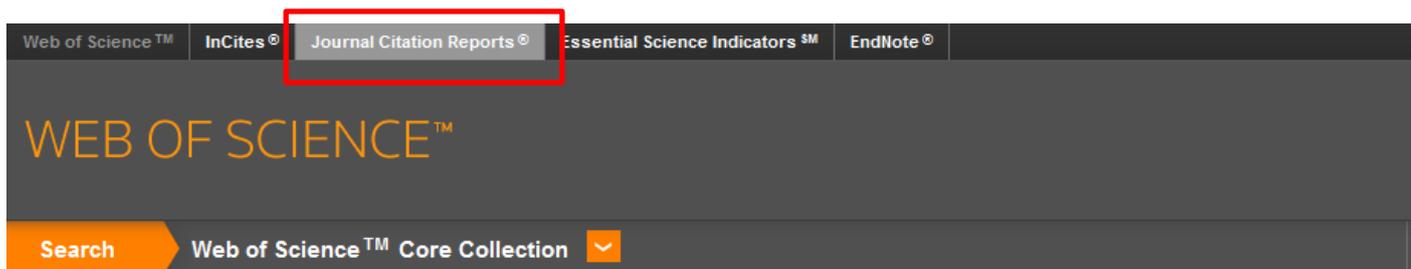
- You can either search the Science Edition or the Social Science Edition depending on your subject area.
- You can search for a specific journal, view a group of journals (by subject category, publisher or country) or view all journals.

View a group of journals by subject

- Ensure you have the 'View a group of journals by subject category' selected and click on 'submit':

- Select a category/categories you are interested in

- 'View Journal Data' will display the impact information for the individual journals in the category. There is the option to sort by title, impact factor, total cites, etc
- 'View Category Data' will display the category-level information, which is useful if you want to compare many categories at once
- Click submit:

- You will be presented with a table displaying journal metrics (including the Journal Impact Factor) for the journals in the selected categories:

Mark	Rank	Abbreviated Journal Title (linked to journal information)	ISSN	Total Cites	Impact Factor	5-Year Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	Articles	Cited Half-life	Eigenfactor® Score	Article Influence® Score
☐	1	ACTA ODONTOL SCAND	0001-6357	2581	1.309	1.617	0.265	238	>10.0	0.00247	0.467
☐	2	AM J DENT	0894-8275	1748	1.062	1.504	0.352	71	9.5	0.00240	0.404
☐	3	AM J ORTHOD DENTOFAC	0889-5406	8960	1.437	1.997	0.209	196	>10.0	0.01230	0.591
☐	4	ANGLE ORTHOD	0003-3219	3904	1.277	1.491	0.245	147	9.0	0.00703	0.527
☐	5	ARCH ORAL BIOL	0003-9969	5529	1.880	1.852	0.192	219	>10.0	0.00741	0.498
☐	6	AUST DENT J	0045-0421	1640	1.482	1.833	0.184	87	7.5	0.00320	0.516
☐	7	AUST ENDOD J	1329-1947	195	0.744	1.000	0.031	32	5.1	0.00061	0.327
☐	8	AUST ORTHOD J	0587-3908	143	0.269	0.403			8.7	0.00041	0.189

Search for a specific journal

- From the JCR homepage select 'Search for a specific journal' and click on 'Submit':

- Type in the name of the journal you are looking for and click 'search':

- You will be presented with journal metrics (including the Journal Impact Factor) for that particular journal:

Mark	Rank	Abbreviated Journal Title (linked to journal information)	ISSN	JCR Data						Eigenfactor® Metrics	
				Total Cites	Impact Factor	5-Year Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	Articles	Cited Half-life	Eigenfactor® Score	Article Influence® Score
☐	1	ARCH ORAL BIOL	0003-9969	5529	1.880	1.852	0.192	219	>10.0	0.00741	0.498

SCImago Journal Rank and Scopus SNIP

SCImago Journal Rank and Scopus SNIP are both available via Scopus.

Accessing Scopus

- Go to the Library homepage at http://library.leeds.ac.uk/
- Type Scopus into the Library Catalogue search box and click on search
- From the results page, click on Scopus.
- Depending on where you are (e.g. off campus), you may be required to log in with your ISS username and password

Searching for a journal

- From the Scopus homepage, click on 'Compare Journals':

- Enter the name of a journal you are interested in analysing and tick the SJR or SNIP checkbox:

- Tick the checkbox next to the journal name to add to the graph:
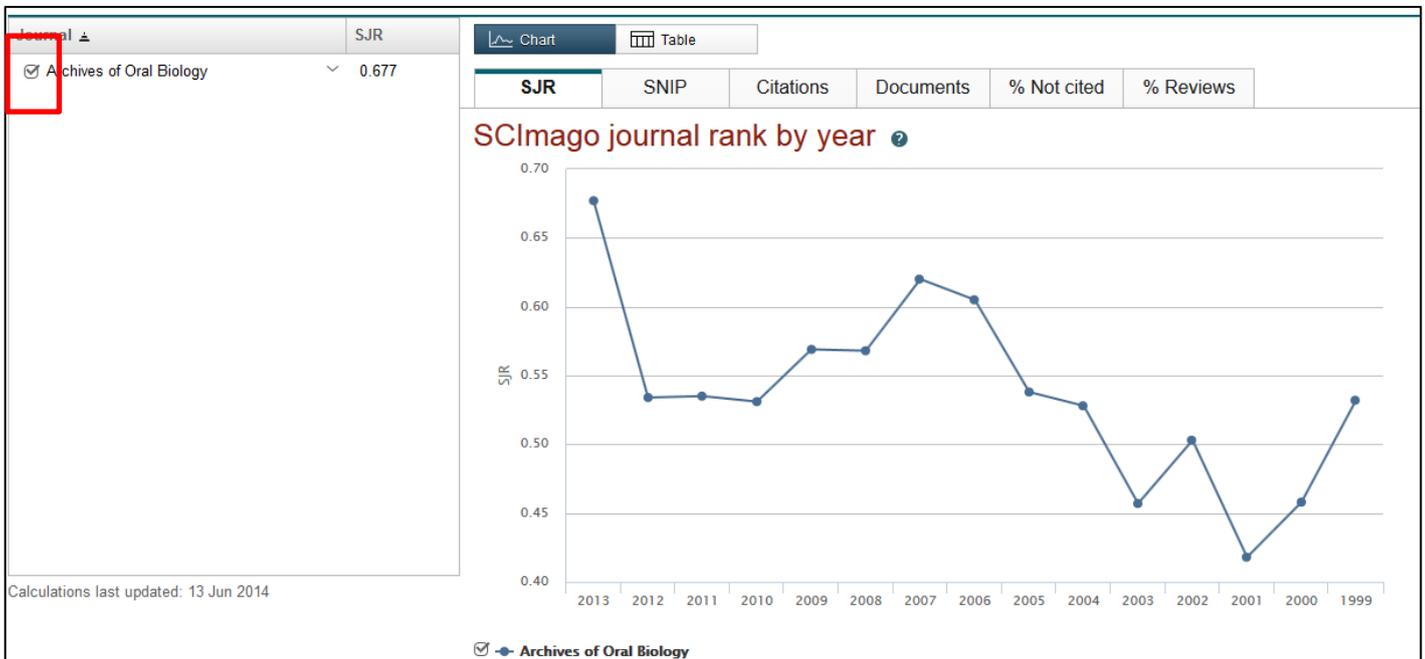
- If you want to compare journals in your subject area, search for them individually and tick the checkbox next to the journal to add them to the graph.
- You can easily change between SJR and Scopus SNIP by clicking on the appropriate tab:
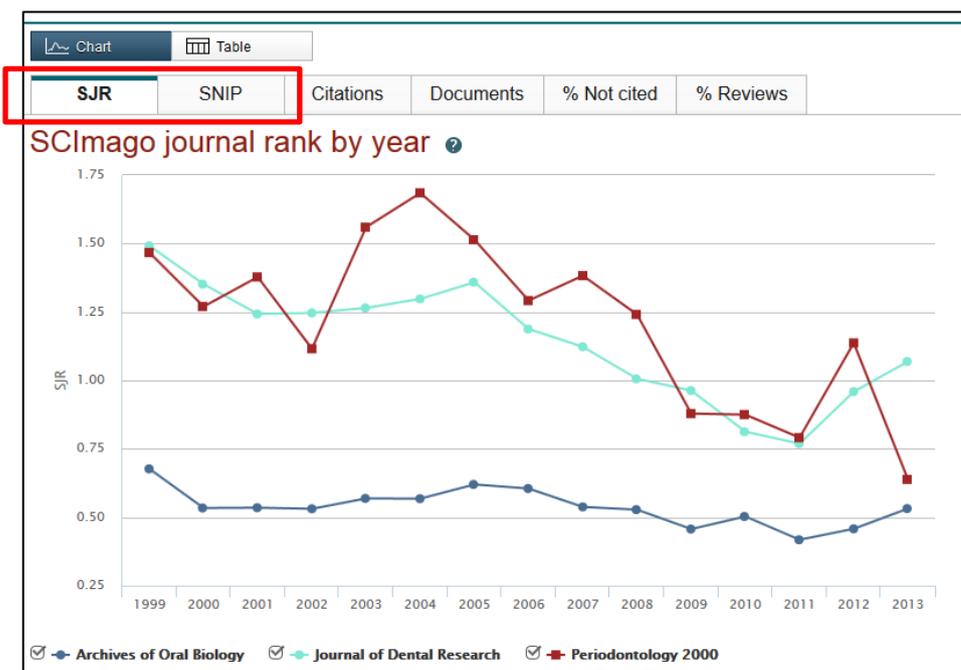
- If you want to look at a ranked list of journals in your subject area you can go to the SCImago website (http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php) and select your subject area.

Further help

- For further detailed help on using Journal Citation Reports please visit the Journal Citation Reports help pages: http://admin-apps.webofknowledge.com/JCR/help/h_toc.htm

- For further detailed help on using Scopus to find SCR and Scopus SNIP please visit Scopus help pages:
http://help.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/2350/p/8150/incidents.c$portal_account_name/5458

- For further information on bibliometrics please see our bibliometric support pages:
https://library.leeds.ac.uk/researcher-bibliometrics

- If you cannot find the answer through the resources above, you can contact the Scholarly Communications and Researcher Skills (SCoReS) Team on research@library.leeds.ac.uk

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