Journal Metrics

Measuring the importance of journals in your subject area

Journal Citation Reports

The Journal Impact Factor is a measure of the average number of citations to recent articles published in the journal. Journals with higher impact factors are generally considered to be more important than those with lower impact factors (provided the journals being compared are in the same discipline or subject grouping). The citation data is taken from the Web of Science database and published by Thomson Reuters as the Journal Citation Reports (JCR). There are separate editions for Science and for Social Sciences.

While promoting the Journal Impact Factor, JCR does address some of the criticisms levelled at it, and explains how it can best be interpreted, but this advice is not always followed. JCR also publishes several other metrics which attempt to give a more nuanced view of a journal's importance. None of these additional metrics are widely used, however.

To access Journal Citation Reports:

- Go to the Web of Knowledge gateway at http://wok.mimas.ac.uk/
- Click the orange button to access Web of Science & choose IP authentication or log-in as usual.
- Select Journal Citation Reports from the top of the page.
- The default year is 2013 as this has the most recent data.
- Two ‘editions’ of JCR – science and social science. De-select one if it is not relevant.
- Select Category – from the menu on the left.
- Select a subject area(s) from the drop-down list
- Click Submit. (**This is at the foot of the page!)
- Results - displayed on the right of the screen. Listed in order of Impact Factor (high to low).
- Hide visualization – to get rid of the annoying graphic!
- Journal Details – are available in full if you click on the titles. This will give you an idea of trends.
SCImago Journal & Country Rank

SCImago is Elsevier's attempt to rank journals in a similar way to JCR. It hasn't been going for as long so isn't as widely known and used but it does cover some subjects such as arts and humanities which are not represented in JCR.

SCImago Journal Rank (SJR)
SJR is published by Elsevier based on citation data in their Scopus database. SJR is another measure of citation impact which takes into account the prestige of the citing journal (similar to Google's Page Rank algorithm). Citations are weighted depending on whether they come from a journal with a high or low SJR.

Source Normalised Impact per Paper (SNIP)
SNIP is also published by Elsevier. SNIP takes into account a journal's subject field, "smoothing differences between field-specific properties such as the number of citations per paper, the amount of indexed literature, and the speed of the publication process." The idea is to enable comparison of impact between journals in different subject areas.

SCImago can be accessed at: http://www.scimagojr.com/ or via SCOPUS

- Go to Scopus http://www.scopus.com
- Compare journals – (to the right above the search box)
- Enter journal titles – select subject area
- Results display – SJR is the default. Trends shown. Other useful options - % not cited, % reviews, number of articles published each year….
- Search for another journal title – for graphic comparison.

Eigenfactor Metrics

Eigenfactor Score
The Eigenfactor score, developed at the University of Washington and based on citation data in JCR, uses a prestige-weighted citation analysis similar to Elsevier's SJR. It is described as a measure of a journal's total importance to the scientific community. With all else equal, a journal's Eigenfactor score doubles when it doubles in size.

Article Influence
A journal's Article Influence score is a measure of the average influence of each of its articles over the first five years after publication. The Article Influence score is calculated by eigenfactor.org and is comparable to Thomson Reuters' Impact Factor.