

Do-it-yourself bibliometrics

A tool to evaluate your library's journal holdings

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Citation analysis as a tool to evaluate a library's journal holdings is far from new, but it may require resources not all libraries have. This instruction, developed by Stockholm University Library, allows almost any librarian to perform analysis on their own, given time.

No research library wants to pay for journals that researchers do not use, hence there is a need to measure usage.

Downloads?

You may of course measure article downloads, but there are some unsolved problems.

- You do not always know who is downloading, researchers or students.
- You cannot determine the purpose of the download, if it's for research or something else.
- Download statistics often have measurement errors. Figures may be doubled for technical reasons.
- You cannot know for sure if suppliers are affected by the measurement methods – figures may be manipulated.

Overall, it is difficult to make decisions based only on download statistics.

The bibliometric approach

An alternative way to measure journal usage is to examine to what extent the journals are cited by your researchers. Researchers citing previous articles in journals, have not only clicked them, but have actually used them in their own work. The basic assumption is that:

Cited Journals = Used journals.

These would be the journals you want to provide access to and are prepared to pay for. Less used journals may be subject to review in order to save money.

How is it done?

Choose a subject area (for instance biology) and a time period (usually 2-4 years from today)

- (a) Identify all research publications in this area by scholars at your university for the time period, regardless of organizational belonging, OR
- (b) Identify publications from all institutions, institutes, centers etcetera at your university, performing research in the subject area.



Download the records with cited references for these articles from Web of Science. Identify the journal for each cited reference.

As a result, you get a list of all the cited journals with frequencies. Thus, you can determine which journals are used and how much they are used by your university's researchers.

Based on facts, you can now decide if journals should or should not be acquired or cancelled, taking into account other circumstances, like costs, downloads, start year, etcetera.

The Cited Journals tool

You can access our tool by scanning the QR code, or visit:
<http://www.sub.su.se/publicera/bibliometri.aspx>

