
EDITORIAL

Changes in the Publindex's measurement model: new challenges, new requirements.

This year, Colciencias (the Colombian Department for Science, Technology and Innovation) has announced and presented a new change in the measurement model of scientific journals. The most relevant changes are focused on visibility; that is, besides the format elements that have always been checked by the system, the editorial efforts will have to turn to visibility and impact. Changes in rankings and classification will be brought about if the formal (frequency, peer-review, languages, scientific paper structure) requirements are met, but citations from Google, WoS and Scopus will be strongly assessed.

The main problem with this system is that it is no longer the Editor's responsibility that a journal moves to a different category, but it will be the citation dynamics created by the academic communities that use the journal and cite its contents. This is a difficulty because our communities have yet to get used to cite contents carried by our regional journals, and because certain products not covered by WoS or Scopus but indexed by Google (such as book chapters, books, non-indexed journals, theses, and the like) are still closed-access, and our universities are still in the process of developing open-access repositories.

On the other hand, it is clear that Colciencias and the Publindex team should normalize journal information. Specially, it should deal with self-citation in order to avoid its abuse and should ensure that Publindex matches third-party information (Google rankings, for instance). Otherwise, countless debates regarding the legitimacy of the information produced will ensue. We need to remember that quartiles in WoS and Scopus are a product of information that has been cleaned and normalized.

A reflection on indicators is also necessary, on account of their diverse methodologies. WoS and Scopus quartiles, based on the relationship between papers and citations, are not the same as Google's, based on h index (the highest possible n, when n papers have been cited n times - for example, an h-index of 8 means that at least eight papers have been cited eight times each). Colciencias should ensure that their h-index is normalized within fields of study, because if it does not, rankings do not reflect visibility dynamics accurately. This has been addressed and corrected by SJR (SciMAGO Journal Rank) or SNIP, which take knowledge area into account.

These changes must be open, and related to changes in measurement systems, because if the system wants journals to be measured according to impact, it could not avoid dealing with new indicators linked to social and academic networks (such as Altmetrics).

What is definitely clear is that these new citation dynamics will change editorial practices, and that editors and researchers need to foster new behaviours and co-responsibility

relationships with knowledge visibility and communication. Without this, our journals will not be able to survive the changes.

Lastly, Colciencias should assist journals in categories B and C in the process of application for WoS and Scopus, so that the efforts we now make may yield an incentive for those journals that are waiting to get covered.

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