A PRACTICAL COMPARISON OF SCOPUS AND WEB OF SCIENCE CORE COLLECTION

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DISCLAIMERS

- Evaluative opinions are my own, period.

- Different institutions, different issues.

- Past results are no guarantee of future performance.

- If I don’t mention a feature, e.g. sorting or downloading, generally same in both databases.
Head-to-Head Competitors

- **Scopus**
  - Single, bundled product (journals, book chapters, proceedings, & more).
  - Strongest coverage 1996+.
  - Highly multi-sourced.

- **Web of Science (WOS)**
  - Many optional components, e.g. conference papers & books.
  - Separate databases e.g. BIOSIS & INSPEC.
  - Separate back files back to 1900.
  - Single unified processing stream.
ADVANTAGE: SCOPUS

- Somewhat stronger international/non-English coverage (*WOS appears to be catching up*).
- Stronger social sciences, arts & humanities.
- Effective keyword/index term facet based on underlying databases with indexing.
- Beautiful, new interface (similar to EI Village)
- NSF recently switched from WOS to Scopus for reporting citation metrics.
SCOPUS: THREE WONDERFUL FEATURES

- **Analyze search results:** Graphs by year, authors, institutions, journals, discipline, country, & doc. type; exportable to MS Excel.

- **Compare journals:** Compares any group of journals by 3 impact metrics, # of citations, # of published articles, % of articles not cited, & % of review articles, all graphed by year.

- **View secondary documents:** Mines articles’ cited references to retrieve references with no Scopus record (different from WOS’ Related Records & Cited Reference Search).
DISADVANTAGE: SCOPUS I

- Author clustering is highly problematic.
- Institutional clustering is even more problematic.
- Until citation indexing retrospective project (1970-1995) is completed, time span of citation metrics unknown.
DISADVANTAGE: SCOPUS II

- No “SAME” operator; difficult to link department names to organizations and locations.

- Random missing articles from core journals, e.g. Physical Review B.

- Can not directly see underlying citation database (WOS’s Cited Reference Search).
**Advantage: Web of Science I**

- More consistent coverage of journals.
- Citation database back to 1900 (1900 to ~1964 built retrospectively).
- *Related Records* – analyzes overlap of target paper’s bibliography against all other papers’ bibliographies.
ADVANTAGE: WEB OF SCIENCE II

- More robust author searching
  - “Same” operator allows intricate address searching.
  - Unique *Cited Reference Search* - ferret out citing documents with faulty citations.

- Two more *Refine* options: Funding & Open Access.
DISADVANTAGE: WEB OF SCIENCE

- Minimal additional keywords; no controlled vocabulary – no effective analysis by keyword.

- No question that retrieval sets are smaller (*Is more better?*).

- Inferior visualization of journal metrics and result set bibliometric data.
**BY THE NUMBERS: based on 2014 records**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scopus</th>
<th>WOS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of journals</td>
<td>22,245</td>
<td>12,000+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citation Indexing</td>
<td>1970+ *</td>
<td>1900+</td>
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<td>New items/week</td>
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<td>37,800 (Core Coll.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>% English</td>
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<tr>
<td>% USA</td>
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<td>25%</td>
</tr>
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*Citation indexing currently in progress for 1970-1995; estimated completion is end of 2016.*
Which one should I choose?

- It depends.

- Questions?