Productivity of Australian LIS academics

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For academics, including LIS academics[2], publication is an increasingly important component of professional life; likewise, university productivity is increasingly evaluated and measured. There is ongoing discussion about how academic evaluation and measurement are to be conducted. One common way is to aim for high productivity and publication in quality journals with high impact factors. ISI Thomson Scientific provides journal impact factors through its *Journal Citation Reports*; this has become a *de facto* standard for determining quality in many fields. Accordingly in 2007 we conducted a study looking at research productivity of the Australian LIS field in the ISI Thomson Scientific databases under the journal subject category, *Information Science & Library Science.*[3] In doing so we became aware that many publications by Australian LIS academics were overlooked by this resource, for example those in related fields, at the periphery of LIS or published in Australian, or non-mainstream journals. Conversely, we found numerous publications by Australian non-LIS academics in related or reference disciplines such as Information Systems, Information Technology, and Computer Science. The ISI Thomson Scientific databases are not limited to academics and include publications authored by LIS (and non-LIS) practitioners.

To overcome the limitations in our earlier study, we compiled a comprehensive list of Australian LIS academic staff for the period from 1959 when the first tertiary institution-based LIS education in Australia began until 2008. We located 693 LIS academics with working durations from 1 to 37 years. We selected those who had been employed as LIS educators for more than two years and ended up with 382 (55%) academics.

For each of the 382 academics, we searched the following e-resources by the author field along with corresponding appropriate years for each academic: two Australian-specific databases, *AEI+* and *ALISA*; three international LIS-focused databases, *LISTA, LISA* and *LLIS*; and the three multidisciplinary citation databases of ISI Thomson Scientific, *SSCI, SCI* and *A&HCI.*[4] We found that even the poorest performing of the non-ISI e-resources reported a much higher number of publications for Australian LIS academics than the three citation databases. An analysis of productivity based on local, international subject-specific and international multidisciplinary databases enabled greater comprehensiveness in retrieval results and in describing the publication landscape of Australian LIS academics for the past fifty years.

The implications of our findings include the importance of considering publications not reported by ISI Thomson Scientific in measuring and evaluating Australian LIS academic output. Further, it indicates which databases provide the best returns for practitioners and academics seeking information on Australian Librarianship and related fields. Finally, non-Australian LIS educators may find our methodology useful in charting LIS productivity specific to their institution or country.

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[1] Contact person.

[2] LIS will be used in this presentation as the 'generic' acronym to indicate, *inter alia*, [(Library or Librarianship) and (Information or Knowledge) and (Science, Studies, Services, Stewardship, or Management)]. Hereafter, LIS subsumes LIM (Library and Information Management), used widely in Australian university schools and/or programs.

[3] Willard, P.; Kennan, M.A.; Wilson, C.S.*;* White, H.D. (2008). Publication by Australian LIS academics and practitioners: A preliminary investigation. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*. Vol.39, No.2, pp.65-78.

[4] *AEI+* (Australian Education Index + full text); *ALISA* (Australian Library & Information Science Abstracts); *LISTA* (Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts); *LISA* (Library and Information Science Abstracts); *LLIS* (Library Literature and Information Science); *SSCI* (Social Sciences Citation Index); *SCI* (Science Citation Index); and *A&HC*I (Arts and Humanities Citation Index).