Monitoring the impact of your research

The use of metrics for assessing research is often quite rightly decried. However, metrics may be useful when deciding about matters relating to publication and research topics. Open science offers alternative complementary possibilities for monitoring research impact.

Bibliometric indicators are widely used nowadays for rankings and by bodies overseeing research. They provide an overview of research but have many limits, relating to their linguistic or disciplinary representativity, interpretation bias, and inappropriate use (each indicator corresponding to a precise context and usage). It is nevertheless important to know and understand them. They may be profitably used for analysing research contexts, possibilities for cooperation, and emerging concepts.

These metrics are mainly based on multinationals' proprietary databases (Clarivate, Elsevier). There are indicators for journals (impact factor, SJR, eigenfactor, SNIP, CiteScore, etc) and for authors (h-index, g-index, total and average number of citations per publication).

Open tools now make it possible to visualise certain metrics for a given researcher or institution, together with their networks of co-authors, on the basis of publications listed in the databases examined (especially Google Scholar).

Open science facilitates alternatives to these "classic" metrics :

- open citations
- bibliodiversity and a clearer vision of all an institution's publications in open archives
- altmetrics: usage issuing from the web and social media, offering the major advantage of gauging societal impact

Furthermore, it is now well established that open access to the full text of an article provides a way of increasing its use and citations. The same also applies to data access, according to a recent study. Warehouses (especially HAL) have statistical tools for monitoring usage of a publication or set of publications

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Further information

- Evaluation guides from CIRAD (French)
- Journalbase
- Google Scholar Profiles
- Publish or perish
- VOSviewer