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Editorial 28(2)

Bibliometrics revisited

A number of previous Editorials have reported upon bibliometric data for AJET and its peer journals. In earlier times, the emphasis was upon getting AJET into important bibliometrics, especially the Thomson Reuters Impact Factor [1], and into important databases, especially ERIC [2]. More recently, it became important to inform readers and authors about bibliometric data that challenged the ARC’s ‘Four Tiers’ ranking of AJET as merely a ‘Tier B’ journal [3]. Going forward (to borrow a hackneyed phrase from the business world) after Tiers [4], it is now important to monitor all of the bibliometrics available to us, to help fade the collective memory of Tiers, and avoid the scenario identified in Editorial 27(6): “Is AJET forever locked into an ‘underground’ Tier B?” [5]. Table 1 contributes to this monitoring.

Table 1: SJR rankings for some educational technology journals
Rank order by SJR (covering 525 education journals). Data retrieval: 15 March 2012 [6].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>SJR</th>
<th>H index</th>
<th>Total docs. (2011)</th>
<th>Total docs. (3yrs)</th>
<th>Total refs.</th>
<th>Total cites (3yrs)</th>
<th>Citable docs. (3yrs)</th>
<th>Cites/doc. (2yrs)</th>
<th>Ref./doc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Computers &amp; Education</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>9,651</td>
<td>1,538</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Journal of Computer Assisted Learning</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>2,170</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>British Journal of Educational Technology</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2,740</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Educational Technology Research and Devt.</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2,349</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Instructional Science</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3,137</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Australasian Journal of Educational Technology</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Educational Technology and Society</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>1,633</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>Technology, Pedagogy and Education</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Journal of Technology & Teacher Education
  No SJR calculated in 2012

- Research in Learning Technology
  No SJR calculated in 2012

SJR (SCImago Journal Rank) rankings [7], produced by Scimago Lab, are calculated from citation data contained in Elsevier’s Scopus database [8]. The key feature of SJR is summarised as follows by its originators, González-Pereira, Guerrero-Bote and Moya-Anegón (2009) [9]:

The essential idea ... is to assign weights to bibliographic citations based on the importance of the journals that issued them, so that citations issued by more important journals will be more valuable than those issued by less important ones. This “importance” will be computed recursively, i.e., the important journals will be those which in turn receive many citations from other important journals. [9]

Comparing AJET with its major peers as ranked by SJR (Table 1 above), by Thomson Reuters Impact Factor [3] and by Tiers [3] shows only relatively minor differences, except in the case of the Tiers rankings for AJET and Research in Learning Technology [10]. AJET, though relatively well ranked according to Impact Factor and SJR, was B ranked in Tiers, whilst Research in Learning Technology, unranked in Impact Factor and SJR, was A ranked in Tiers. Interestingly, recent issues of Research in Learning Technology show a remarkably high proportion of Australian and New Zealand papers, 50%! [based on counts of country of first author, for regular issues 19(2), 19(3), 20(1) and 20(2) (as at 29 March 2012)]. There is a particular preponderance of Australian authors in Research in Learning Technology 20(1) and 20(2), raising the possibility that as a Tier A journal it quite recently became especially attractive to Australian authors.

To explore SJR a little further, consider the first seven journals listed in Table 1. All announce their Thomson-Reuters Impact Factor on their home pages, but none mention SJR, not even Journal of Computer Assisted Learning which ranks higher with SJR than with Impact Factor. One factor that could attract editors and authors to use of SJR is that it is an open access service, whereas Impact Factor is provided through subscription. SJR may have some problems that could be due to imperfections in coverage by Scopus. For example, Table 2, showing changes in AJET’s SJR, also shows that Scopus counts of AJET articles differ from the actual counts, especially for 2011, and that SJR lists 525 journals under “Education”, whereas Tiers listed 1012. The reasons for this are not known, so further investigation is warranted.

Table 2: SCImago data for AJET, 2008-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SJR</th>
<th>Rank (out of 525)</th>
<th>Scopus article count</th>
<th>Actual article count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No SJR calculated for AJET in 2008
Nevertheless, AJET’s "climb" during its years of SJR inclusion is an encouraging bibliometric. At the same time, we have to be sensitive to other performance criteria that are not necessarily well-correlated with citation based bibliometrics, such as number of submissions per year, acceptance rates, numbers of issues and articles per year, measures of internationalisation, review process times, size of reviewer panel and average loads per reviewer. The identification of key peer journals for AJET, i.e. the journals that appear with AJET in ranking tables such as Table 1, is a moot point. If one chooses peer journals astutely, it is possible to always secure a position at the top of a rankings table!

In 2011 AJET received 349 submissions (including 29 full papers for two special issues). This represents a 48% increase over the 236 submissions received in 2010, and an 82% increase over the 186 submissions received in 2009 [11]. More details will be available within about two months, when the retiring Production Editor completes review and author advice processes for 2011’s submissions.

Roger Atkinson
AJET Production Editor (retirement pending)

Endnotes

4th IEEE International Conference on Technology for Education
IEEE Computer Society and IEEE
Hyderabad, India, 18-20 July 2012
http://t4e.iiit.ac.in/

EAC2012: ePortfolios Australia Conference
Australian Catholic University
North Sydney, 27-28 September 2012
http://eportfoliosaustralia.wordpress.com/
conference/conference-eac2012/

ACEC 2012
Australian Council for Computers in Education and the Educational Computing Association of Western Australia
Perth, 2-5 October 2012
http://acec2012.info/

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Distance Education Summit