UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Finding your h-index (Hirsch index) in Google Scholar

Library Factsheet no.3

What is the h-index?

"An index that quantifies both the actual scientific productivity and the apparent scientific impact of a scientist"

e.g. a h-index of 20 means the researcher has 20 papers each of which has been cited 20+ times.

An alternative to total citations which can be disproportionately affected by a few very highly cited papers.

Where to start:

With Google Scholar there are a variety of sites and programs that can help you calculate your h-index. These are generally free and quality varies.

Recommended sites and services:

1. Quadsearch http://quadsearch.csd.auth.gr/index.php?lan=1&s=2 (i.e. the 'Science' search)
2. Scholar H-index Calculator https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/45283
   (add-on for the Mozilla Firefox browser, adds metrics to the standard Google Scholar site, easy to use but only calculates for the articles on the current page, a maximum of 100)
3. Scholarometer http://scholarometer.indiana.edu/
   (add-on for the Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome browsers – appears as a sidebar when installed)
4. Publish or Perish http://www.harzing.com/pop.htm
   (application that calculates a wide variety of metrics)

How to search

Choose an Author search …

- Use quotation marks e.g. "RJ Nichols" (or it will retrieve RJ Lipton co-authoring with WR Nichols)
- If you need to include alternatives separate with OR (in capitols) e.g. "nicholls, rj" OR "brown, rj"
- It is possible to restrict using 7 broad categories (if they aren't visible look in the advanced search). These are useful to eliminate namesakes
- Once you are satisfied you may want to make a note of how you searched. This will save time if you need to repeat the process.

The results screen should show your h-index, and possibly other metrics.

If any articles in the list are not your's you can often exclude them (varies a little depending on the tool you use, all can do this except 2).

Using Google Scholar for the h-index

Benefits

- Covers a wider range of sources, (especially conferences, technical reports and eprints).
- Easier to calculate some of the less common metrics (since it isn't linked to proprietary data – thus more innovation)
- Free

Disadvantages

- May be considered a less authoritative than Web of Science
- More difficult to search where there are multiple authors with the same family name & initials – limited options to refine

Issues to be aware of:

- In general you can only compare values within a single discipline. Different citation patterns will mean for example an average medical researcher will generally have much larger h-index values than a world-class mathematician!
- Also if you are comparing people all h-index values need to be found using the same database, and using the same method.
- The h-index may be less useful in some disciplines, particularly some areas of the humanities.

More details

- For more details see http://www.soton.ac.uk/library/research/bibliometrics
- References to articles in the scientific literature.
- Calculating the h-index with different databases (e.g. Web of Science).
- Other bibliometrics including variations on the h-index.

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