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## Indexing, reviewing and publishing – Being a public intellectual

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper discusses the concept of indexing and its importance for a researcher. A study of various indexing agencies, indexing parameters and the different review methods followed by these agencies. The paper would attempt to assess the review methods, indexing agencies, and the parameters. In addition to this, it would suggest methods to share knowledge with the common people so that the responsibility of being a public intellectual is also fulfilled.*

**Keywords**— Index, Indexing, Indexing agencies, Indexing parameters, Review methods, Publishing, Peer-Review, Open and closed-access journals, Public intellectual

### 1. INTRODUCTION

“Write what should not be forgotten”, says Isabel Allende and indexing is one way to keep what one has written accountable and available online. The term ‘indexing’ means pointing to something. The concept of indexing was brought into effect to make it easier for scholars or researchers to locate any particular record of information or knowledge field. The process of indexing would include listing out information that is available in an alphabetical or logical order. While publishing might be a part of being a scholar, the greater part is in fulfilling the role of being a public intellectual and one should delve out ways in which it can be done.

### 2. METHODOLOGY

An in-depth analysis of the history of indexing, different indexing agencies and parameters is done. Different journals and their review processes are studied and evaluated to understand the process of reviewing and publishing. A qualitative study of the whole process of writing a research article to publishing it is understood and ways in which it can be taken to the common audience is identified.

### 3. HISTORY OF INDEXING

Initially, indexing was handwritten. People developed keywords and wrote down manually which caused problems with pagination as their handwriting were not identical. This resulted in different ways of indexing and with the invention of the printing press, indexing became a lot easier.

Concordances is a similar concept which includes an alphabetical list of the words, especially the most important ones, present in a text or texts, usually with citations of the passages concerned or with the context displayed. One such work was the *Complete Concordance of the Holy Scriptures* by Alexander Cruden in 1737. It was the first Bible Concordance to be accepted and existing.

*A Dictionary of the English Language* by Samuel Johnson in 1755 is considered to be the very first index to the English Language. Indexing became so important that indexing societies were set up. In 1877, Index Society was set up in London with the aim of creating a general index of universal literature. There was also The Society of Indexers which was set up in 1957.

There are some remarkable people like William Frederick Poole who prepared a 154 page index to periodical literature, which became a precursor to modern-day indexing and Paul Otlet who wanted to start the Universal Bibliography Repertory. However, it could be said that the Bible was one of the first examples of indexing. The New Testament often cited the Old Testament. Indexing could also be seen since the twelfth century in Hebrew Religious Literature. Some prominent people who did great work in the field of indexing, often known as or looked upon as the ones who brought a proper form and structure in indexing were Fr. Robert Busa and Eugene Garfield. Fr. Busa, the Father of Computational Linguistics indexed the whole of St. Thomas Aquinas' works and Eugene Garfield conducted a complete and thorough analysis of review articles and their cited references. Legal citations, another example of citation indexing, are a list of all authorities citing a particular case, statute or any other legal authority and Shepard's Citations (1873) is the first of its kind.

#### **4. INDEXING AGENCIES**

An indexed journal is considered to be of higher quality than a non-indexed journal. Indexed journals are made widely available. Being accessible will, in turn, increase the value of the journal. In the present scenario, indexing is done by various indexing agencies which include Scopus, ISI Web of Science, Google Scholar, Ulrich's periodicals directory, Crossref, BIOSIS, BASE, Index Copernicus, ABDC, etc. These indexing agencies are online databases which index journals, books, research papers, etc. Each of these indexing agencies have their own evaluation policies by which they decide the quality and content of the information sent to them to be indexed. They include having a serial title according to the particular agency's regulations, having content that is relevant and of interest to an audience all around the world, having a well-documented references or bibliography section, having a published peer-review procedure, also being analysed by a tool of a particular agency to identify relevant, concrete and authentic titles and content.

Scopus is an online database of peer-reviewed literature and delivers a comprehensive overview of the research output from all around the world. All journals that have to be indexed by Scopus are examined, reviewed and evaluated by their Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB). They select only serial titles and the instruction on how one should suggest a serial title is also made available on their website. For a journal to be reviewed by Scopus, it should have peer-reviewed content and a publicly available description of the peer-review process. It should have content that is relevant and readable worldwide. It should also be published regularly and have an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). It should also meet the criteria for evaluation in five categories such as journal policy, content, journal standing, publishing regularity and online availability. A tool named Radar was launched in 2017 to identify outlier journal behaviour in the Scopus database.

Ulrich's periodicals directory includes bibliographic details, online and indexing coverage as well as publisher contact information. Ulrich does not demand an ISSN but ProQuest recommends all publishers to possess an ISSN. Ulrich includes maximum title coverage of publications that meet the definition of a serial. Academic and scholarly journals, trade publications and newsletters, consumer magazines, niche titles, and others are included. Titles whose publishers do not provide adequate information for identification or updating may be excluded from Ulrich's at ProQuest's sole discretion. UlrichsWeb provides tools for analyzing and evaluating serial titles of interest.

ISI Web of Science has three flagship Citation indexes namely, the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI). Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), a new edition in the *Web of Science Core Collection*, is a multidisciplinary collection of all scholarly literature of the sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities. Journals are selected directly under one of the flagships and other eligible journals are covered initially by ESCI. They are later evaluated under one of the flagships. The *Web of Science Core Collection* Journal Selection Process includes some criteria that the Editorial Development applies to journals evaluated and selected (or rejected) for the ESCI. The Journal Selection Process for the central focus of Core Collection, namely, SCIE, SSCI and AHCI, remains fundamentally unchanged and consistent.

As far as Google Scholar is concerned, one can simply upload the paper by following a few guidelines. One needs to check if the full text is in a PDF file that ends with ".pdf", the title of the paper appears in large font on the first page, the author's name is listed right below the title on a separate line and there's a bibliography section titled, e.g., "References" or "Bibliography" at the end. Once this is done, Google's search robots would find the paper and upload it on Google Scholar within a few weeks.

In order to have something indexed by Crossref, publishers are to deposit the data citations by including them in their content registration metadata as references and/or relation type. No new workflows are required in the deposit process as part of the standard, existing content registration process. Once deposited, data citations across journals (and publishers) are sorted and made freely available for the community to retrieve and reuse in a single, shared location. The Metadata Manager Tool allows single and multiple journal deposits, automatically validates the format of metadata elements and processes the deposits immediately. Member 'participation' is an important concept. Crossref distinguishes itself from other Digital Object Identifier (DOI) registration agencies by providing this richer infrastructure which allows for things like funding information, license information, links between data and preprints, and so on for everyone's benefit. There is a content registration fee which is different for different types of content. Index Copernicus expects the Editorial office to submit a journal for assessment in the ICI Journals Master List database in the normal mode or accelerated mode. In the normal mode, it is free and the possibility to submit a journal for assessment expires on a set date. The evaluation is done in the order of the application. One has to fill in an evaluation questionnaire and send it until the set date. In the accelerated mode, a journal is assessed in compliance with the evaluation methodology in the ICI Journals Master List database and the journal receives the ICV (Index Copernicus Value) index. It is not free of cost and does not have a particular set time for submission of the journal. There are some preliminary indexation requirements which include scientific character, minimum number of published research papers, current ISSN number, active and up-to-date website, published review procedure of research papers.

Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) is one of the world's voluminous search engines for academic web resources. The sources in the BASE are intellectually selected by the BASE team and reviewed. There are three criteria that a journal should satisfy. The source has to contain academic content. At least, some documents from the source should be available as open access (full texts free of charge, without registration). The metadata of the documents should be provided via a valid Open Access Initiative (OAI) interface.

Selection for BIOSIS databases occurs at two levels: first at the journal (or source) level, where journals are evaluated and accepted for coverage, and secondly, at the journal issue level as issues of a journal are received, when specific items within an issue are chosen for inclusion. At the journal level, the BIOSIS editorial group evaluates a title for coverage on three aspects: Subject, Editorial content and publication attributes and Geographic origin and scope.

## **5. INDEXING PARAMETERS**

Having looked at the evaluation policies of a few indexing agencies, it is important that one focuses on the different indexing parameters which would determine which category a research article or journal lies. The factors that decide the quality of an indexed piece of information can be termed as indexing parameters. These indexing parameters give a high level of credibility to the indexed articles or journals. A few of them are impact factor, h-index, cite score, Eigenfactor score, g-index, m-index, etc.

The impact factor is an indexing parameter that is associated with the ISI Web of Science. It is the rate at which an article in a particular journal is cited in a particular year. It can help predict the importance or quality of a journal by measuring the number of times it has been cited. It is calculated based on a two-year period by dividing the number of times an article is cited by the number of articles that can be cited. It is an objective measure that helps researchers locate the best-reviewed journal which might be of help to them. It can present the change in the nature of a journal from one year to another. It keeps the journals that are frequently cited in the list thereby helping researchers find the ones that are recent and in demand. It is used as a substitute for quality and impact of the papers published in a journal.

The h-index is an author-level metric used to measure both the citation impact and productivity of a scholar or researcher. It was developed by Jorge E. Hirsch in 2005. It can also be calculated for a journal. It is the h number of articles cited h number of times each. It is the measure of the number of articles published and not just the citations. It allows the researcher to evaluate an article or journal objectively. It can be calculated by anyone since it is not copyrighted. It allows the researcher locate journals or articles easily.

SJR (SCImago Journal and Country Rank) is an indexing parameter developed by SCImago lab from the widely known Google Pagerank. Provides an alternative to Journal Impact Factor/CiteScore. It gives different weights to citations from different journals that reflects hierarchy of journals. The only peer-reviewed articles are counted.

Though these parameters help researchers and scholars to a great extent, there are times when these would pose a difficulty. Most of these parameters are discipline-specific and so does not help much in the not so common or sought after disciplines. It might fail to recognize a good article in a journal just because it has not been cited a number of times. It also does not help a journal that has fewer citations to be able to receive more because it would be pushed to the end of the list. It depends on the longevity of the author or scholar because the more the number of articles published and the more citations they receive. It is a disadvantage for new scholars and authors because they would have really low citation rates. Sometimes, it leads to good works being unidentified.

## **6. THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING AND PUBLISHING**

Every indexing agency has a process of reviewing and publishing a research article. Reviews happen before and after the publishing of an article or research paper. The process includes an editorial review, a desk review, and a peer review. There are open and closed peer reviews that can be broadly classified into internal and external and single, double and triple-blind reviews respectively. The peer review is done by a committee of people belonging to the same expertise.

The purpose of such reviews is to evaluate the quality, impact, and novelty of an article or research paper that has been submitted for publishing. This can be due to the fact that a scholar or researcher should engage themselves in the responsibility of knowledge creation, where knowledge creation would mean not to state something that is already there but to use the information that is already there to weave out something new and original.

As far as the publication is concerned, there are open and closed-access journals. Open access publications grant the copyrights to the author or creator of the original work. They give the right to copy, distribute and adapt the work and not for the ideas. Some disadvantages with open access journals would be decrease in the quality of peer-review, an increase in the misunderstanding of topics and the notion that these journals are just focused on decreasing the cost. Closed journals demand individual or institutional subscriptions to access their full text and in some cases, even purchase. They also require site licenses and pay per view charges. They might at the most, allow one to read the abstract so that one can decide if the article or research paper would definitely help their study or not. One advantage of closed access journals would be that they would have a strong peer-review process and the quality of the content would not be compromised upon in any manner.

## **7. BEING A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL**

Whilst a scholar/researcher has all knowledge about indexing, publishing and fulfilling all the requirements to complete a doctoral degree, it is very important that a scholar also performs one's duty as a public intellectual. Emerson speaks about an intellectual who is the 'world's eye'. He understands and preserves great ideas of the past, communicates them and creates new knowledge. He adheres to the responsibility of communicating them to the world and not just to the fellow intellectual community.

On the other hand, Edward Said entrusts the intellectual with the mission of advancing human knowledge and freedom. According to him, the intellectual is a part of society and should spread his ideas to the public as much as possible. Said's intellectual is therefore expected to be inside society and outside society at the same time.

Every researcher/scholar is always bound by the responsibility of making the ideas and concerns reach the public. One should at least be able to deliver it to the immediate audience – the sample of the study. Unless one justifies this role, the research is not complete. When researches are expected to be applicable, it is necessary and important that the conclusions, suggestions and the ways in which the problem could be addressed should be brought to the knowledge of the group or community-facing that particular problem.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

Indexing is important for research journals as it would increase the visibility of that particular journal. It also helps researchers explore ideas and thought processes different from theirs, something they would not have thought otherwise, from around the world. It would also help them narrow down the choices of the articles or journals they would spend time reading.

It is a sad fact that after so much reviewing and reworking, it so happens that it takes almost two years to have an article or research paper published. This poses a problem to many because their work might become outdated by the time it is published. Since work is expected to be current and application-oriented, it would be of much help to researchers if the review processes happen a little faster. This would also help in getting a particular piece of information to the audience so that they could act upon the problem before it is too late.

The publication also involves a lot of expenses which at times would pose as an obstacle in getting a work of great importance to the reading community. All these processes help scholars or researchers attain certain set goals in their academic career but it does not help the public in any way because these works are published and can be accessed online from these databases which no common man would possibly look for. It is therefore important to deliver information to the public audience – the common people simultaneously in some other manner. It can be done by organizing talks, conferences, seminars in educational institutions, writing in the local newspapers so that it reaches a wider audience, maintaining blogs and discussion forums to understand and collate different views and perceptions on that particular topic. It can also be taken to them in the form of traditional art forms that are native to that particular area or region.

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