Getting cited

Ten tips for practitioners of citation analysis in the library

by Christina M. Desai

C itation analysis is a respectable area of library and information science. Demystified, citation analysis is the counting up of citations. How many times is an article cited? Which scholars from which disciplines cite which articles? Which journals are cited more often? Which disciplines cite the journals of other disciplines? These are the questions one associates with the term. The results of citation analysis are used for many purposes, for example, to determine the impact of specific articles or journals on subsequent research and to document the interdisciplinary applicability of various journals.[1] The numbers can be used by collection developers to justify subscription decisions or to quantify decisions about journal quality.

This tongue-in-cheek article is not concerned with any of these lofty purposes. It dwells on more lowly reasons for counting up citations. Citation analysis is used by untenured academics, including librarians, in an attempt to beef up their dossiers, and by the tenured in hopes of promotion. If others are citing your work, it must be good work, or so the assumption goes. Help is available to the tenure seeker on how to write a résumé, how to behave during the interview, and how to get published. The next step is to help researchers find those publications. Because of their specialized knowledge of how information is retrieved, librarians are uniquely placed in academia. They can use their knowledge to prevent their re-

search from being buried in the stacks of the unread.

Inspired by "top ten" articles, such as "Display cases for academic libraries: Ten tips for display case persons"[2] in *C&RL News* and "10 tips for teaching how to search the Web" in *American Libraries*,[3] not to mention Dave Letterman's top ten lists of just about anything, I offer ten tips for increasing the number of hits on your publications. Presumably, more hits will lead to more citations of your work. Though this is a hypothesis that would require empirical study beyond the scope of this article, certainly researchers cannot cite your works if they do not find any references to them in the relevant indexes.

Ten tips

1. Use your full name to "sign" your article and always include your middle initial. If you don't have a middle initial, invent one. APA style and some indexes reduce your first and middle names to initials. Especially if your last name is a common one, having no middle initial will make it hard to pick out your articles from a list of others with your last name and same first initial. Some indexes, including Web of Science, may fail to produce a results list at all from a search for a common last name and single initial because the number of results would exceed its display limit. Having a middle initial will reduce confusion and better target your publications. Also,

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always use the same form of your name, especially when you write books. Remember that catalogers will select from your various title pages the one form of your name by which you'll be known to posterity. Don't make it tough on catalogers who have to decide if John Doe, author of *The Librarian's Companion,* is the same person as J. Doe Jr., author of *The Librarian's Helper.* Consistency in the form of your name will help searchers find all your publications when doing an author search.

Q.

John ^Hancock

2. When selecting a title for your article, keep keyword searching in mind. Not all journals and not all electronic indexes provide abstracts. In these cases, keyword searches are limited to author and title fields. Patrons searching for articles on interface design by title keyword, for example, will not find your article if you call it "Make it friendly." If your article is about microforms, don't call it "Miniaturization." The seekers after microforms will not find you and you'll be wasting the time of the nanotechnologists. Those patrons should have done a subject search, you say? Yes, but do they always? No. Furthermore, subject searches are not always possible and just don't work in all cases. A recent subject search for "citation analysis" in ILLINET Online, the OPAC of the Illinois library consortium ILCSO, yielded no hits, whereas a title search came up with five titles. Subject headings are notorious for lagging behind research topics. Finding the right subject heading or even descriptor is not always an easy task either.

3. At the risk of committing "titular colonicity,"[4] add a subtitle that describes in even more detail what your article is about. This will make it more likely that researchers will notice your article and select it from a long list of hits in databases that initially display brief records only, without abstracts. Of course a thorough search would eventually turn up your article, but not all researchers are looking for every last word on the subject. Some will be satisfied with their initial search results.

4. When you do have a chance to include an abstract, fill it with keywords that researchers would be likely to use when searching for an article like yours. And remember that some databases automatically search more than one term as a phrase. Put yourself in the researchers' place. If you split your key terms, researchers will need to do a proximity search to find them, but most won't. A string search for "citation analysis," for example, won't find your phrase "analyses of citations."

5. Consider multidisciplinary databases when titling your article. Is your article truly about "building design" or is it really about "library building design?" Library science researchers hunting for the latter in a long list of hits from a multidisciplinary database like Ingenta or Proquest Direct may gloss over your article if you don't make it clear in the title that it's about libraries. Of course, the architect-researchers may also find and cite your article, but that may be the case with or without the word "library" in the title.

6. Consider how databases handle numbers and other special characters. If you call your article "10 tips" some databases will not retrieve it with a search for "ten tips." They are not smart enough to know that "ten" and "10" are the same. Style guides have complicated rules for expressing numbers, which may limit your ability to follow this advice. For example, APA style dictates that in the text, numbers ten and above be expressed as figures, numbers below ten as words. But you may be able to get away expressing numbers both in numerals and in words in the title or abstract. It's better not to include asterisks or question marks in your title since many databases use these characters for truncation or wild card characters.

7. Do some research on subject headings for your books and articles. Do this early on in the publication schedule so that you may influence the CIP (Cataloging in Publication) subject headings. Come up with more than the usual two terms and push your publisher to sprinkle these terms generously throughout the dust jacket copy and publisher's ads. Name your chapters using very descriptive words. These are the sources catalogers use to

determine "aboutness." With lots of good subject headings at hand, catalogers will be more likely to assign appropriate headings (and more of them) and collection developers will know what niches your book will fill. If your book will fill more than one niche, collection developers are even more likely to purchase it and patrons will be more likely to discover your book through subject searches. Some electronic databases also use LC subject headings for article indexing.

8. Don't be afraid to say something controversial. Give other authors a reason to react to your work, either to bolster their arguments or to disagree with your conclusions. Of course it's more pleasant to be cited for your brilliant insights, but disagreement can be constructive and shows that your article was taken seriously. After all, this give-and-take is what academic discourse is all about.

9. Citing your own earlier articles may be considered tacky, but there are times when it is appropriate. If your article builds on your earlier work, it makes sense to cite it. No need then to repeat what you said in the earlier article. And if you are the only researcher mining that particular patch, there may be no one else more appropriate to cite.

10. I'm running out of ideas, but there has to be a tenth, doesn't there? Okay, here it is. **Write a good article, based on solid research and reasoning, and write it well. Add a touch of humor.**

Notes

1. For one example, see Stephen P. Harter, "The impact of electronic journals on scholarly communication: A citation analysis," *Public-Access Computer Systems Review* 7, no. 5 (1996): 5–34. Retrieved March 1, 2002 from the Web at http://info.lib.uh.edu/pr/v7/n5/hart7n5.html.

2. Susan Brazer and Andrea Wyman, "Display cases for academic libraries: Ten tips for display case persons," *C&RL News* 62, (October 2001): 904–8.

3. Laura B. Cohen, "10 tips for Teaching How to Search the Web," *American Libraries* 32, no. 10 (November 2001): 44–6.

4. For several very learned discussions of this phenomenon, see: Ann L. O'Neill, "A (very) concise history of the impact of electronic journals on graduate students: The title of which is almost as long as the actual article: Continuing the fine ancient tradition of Less publishable units by faculty: And contains many

As distance education and distributed learning have become integral elements of the educational process in academe, information professionals are collaborating with specialists, including instructional designers, to provide reference services and instructional content to distributed sites. Librarians are communicating with instructional designers, emphasizing the importance and role of academic libraries in the delivery of relevant content in the online environment. Instructional designers become advocates for the inclusion of libraries and information resources in distance education courses and also provide the necessary expertise to integrate information literacy instruction into these courses in ways that are meaningful and seamless. Pedagogical issues unique to the online environment are discussed and refined in these new relationships.

Implications of the New Relationships

New relationships necessitate ongoing changes in attitudes, approaches, and organizational cultures. As the professoriate's information-seeking behaviors and practices continue to evolve, academic librarians need to continually acknowledge these changes, reshaping or restructuring information and instructional services. As a result, strategic priorities are affected and need to be flexible as these changes are indicative of ongoing transitions. Managers and information professionals in general need to rethink and redo within a strategic context as roles, responsibilities, and methodologies are continually assessed.

Organizational cultures in academic libraries are changing dramatically as well and will continue to evolve. The behaviors and patterns constituting cultures are being affected by a positive fusion of different generations, including attitudes, assumptions, and expertise in libraries and on campuses. Librarians as assertive consultants are reshaping communications with faculty, permeating

traditional or historical boundaries, collaborating and allowing creativity and innovation to develop. Librarians have always cultivated relationships on campuses, but the nature of these relationships is changing to reflect new and dynamic learning environments, new and different generations of faculty, and new ways to deliver information services and instructional content.

The diversity of cultures, generations, expertise, ideas, and approaches in academic librarianship facilitates effective communications with the changing professoriate. This positive fusion underscores an effective integration into academe's instructional and scholarly fabric.

References

1. Scott Carlson, "The Deserted Library." *Chronicle of Higher Education* (November 16, 2001): A35-38.

2. Julie F. Cooper and Eric A. Cooper, "Generational Dynamics and Librarianship: Managing Generation X." *Illinois Libraries* 80 (Winter 1998): 18-21. See also Andrew Brownstein, "The Next Great Generation?" *Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 13, 2000): A71-72.

3. Kathlin L. Ray, "The Postmodern Library in an Age of Assessment." *Crossing the Divide: Proceeding of the 10th National Conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2001).

4. Donald G. Frank, Gregory Raschke, Julie Wood, and Julie Yang, "Information Consulting: The Key to Success in Academic Libraries." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 27 (March 2001): 90-96. See also Donald G. Frank and Elizabeth Howell, "Information Consulting in Academe." *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (New York: Marcel Dekker). Forthcoming in 2003.

5. Barbara Baruth, "Missing Pieces That Fill in the Academic Library Puzzle." *American Libraries* 33 (June/July 2002): 58-63. ∎

colons; that shows the importance of a work which has significant titular colonicity (and one semicolon)," *Serials Librarian* 26, no. 1 (1995): 13–15; J. A. Perry, "The Dillon Hypothesis of titular colonicity: An empirical test from the ecological sciences," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 36, no. 4 (1985): 251–8; and Donna Diers and Florence S. Downs, "Colonizing: A Measurement of the

Development of a Profession," *Nursing Research* 43, no. 5 (September/October 1994): 316–18. Note that a search in Medline using Silverplatter failed to find this last article when I used the term "colonicity" since the article has no abstract and the term is not in the title. Searching using truncation, with the term "colon*" would not be not advisable in a medical database, where the word has a very different meaning. ∎