

Executive Summary of the Web of Science Working Group Full Report

September 26, 2017.

Group Members:

Kelli Trei (Chair and Life Sciences and Physical and Engineering Sciences Division)

Esra Coskun (Collections Analysis and Planning Specialist)

Wendy Shelburne (E-resources Librarian)

DoMonique Arnold (Central Public Services Division)

Paula Carns (Arts & Humanities Division)

Kelsey Cheshire (Social Sciences Division)

Becky Smith (Central Public Services Division)

Steve Witt (International and Area Studies Division)

Introduction

This is the executive report of the Web of Science Working Group. The group first met on August 3, with this report to be delivered by September 26. While the bulk of the data was gathered by the group, due to limited time and resources, some of the finer points were supplemented with outside information. It came to the group's attention on September 8, 2017, that the contract with the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) and Clarivate was such that all universities had procured content in 2015 to achieve a percentage that would allow for all universities to access the entire suite of the Web of Science. Any major changes to the model would likely affect the contract as a whole. As such, our final charge was develop recommendations based on the preferences revealed in this study in order for Illinois to share information with the BTAA to achieve better bargaining with Clarivate.

The full report contains the following:

- The working group charge.
- Caveats to the investigation.
- Relevant purchases in the past 5 years including our last package purchase that obtained backfiles.
- The complete listing of Web of Science platform we currently have access to, including the databases that we subscribe to and their coverage.
- Individual database purchase availability outside of the Web of Science platform.
- Usage statistics including cost-per-use and use breakdown from each database in the platform.
- Referral statistics.
- DeskTracker statistics.
- Unique content in the Web of Science Core Collection.
- Overlap between Scopus and Web of Science.
- Overlap within the Core Collection of Web of Science.
- Faculty and librarian survey results.
- Divisional specific usage information and opinions.
- Conclusion about strengths and weaknesses of databases in the platform.
- Recommendations and future plans (also included here).

Perception and Usage

The usage data was inconclusive due to changes the Library has made with the Easy Search display and the full usage data is not yet available for 2017. Esra plans to evaluate the 2017 usage data when we have it in full in January 2018, which will give us a clearer picture.

Faculty completing the survey highly value the Web of Science for article searching and analytical tools such as the Journal Citation Reports and Cited Reference Searching. Both faculty and librarians use Web of Science in their classrooms and in instruction. The majority of librarians who completed the survey indicated that they had used or suggested Web of Science in a reference interaction.

Overlap

Though there is likely overlap between Web of Science and other large databases, full statistics were not able to be collected in the time allotted. However, from other reports and analyses between Web of Science and Scopus we have found that both contain unique content.

Caveats and Needs

The Web of Science Platform contains multiple databases, including databases not owned by Clarivate. The platform is complex and at times opaque to users as well as librarians. Due to the short time frame our discussions with both groups was grounded in viewing Web of Science as one entity, though in reality it is many. Additionally, it became clear that users and librarians are many times unaware of the strengths and weaknesses of these tools. The group feels it is imperative to follow up this investigation with user education and discussions with our faculty and students who use these various resources within the platform and share other complementary tools.

Recommendations and Future Plans

1. We suggest reaching out to faculty up to a year before any major cancellation (e.g. Core Collection). Summer and beginning of semesters are poor times to consult with faculty.
2. We suggest evaluating alternatives that we subscribe to and strongly suggest more user education around these other options.
3. We suggest speaking directly with library and campus faculty in our subject areas about the many subject specific databases listed above to provide clarity.
4. If forced to face large inflation and individual subscription choices for Web of Science, we suggest the following:
 - a. Use the above parameters to consider items of most importance.
 - b. Consider cost effects of cancellation
 - i. The proposal from Clarivate indicates that any changes to the existing contract or cancellations within would result in higher cost for each individual subscription.
 - ii. Find out cost of databases available elsewhere
 1. Buy items available in other platforms elsewhere so we do not get tied down by a multi-year subscription.
 - c. Consider a one-year subscription from Clarivate in order to speak with faculty and prepare them for any major cancellations.
 - d. If we were to do away with Web of Science, keep in mind we would lose “free” access to EndNote Web.
5. Based on passionate responses from the faculty we did speak to, any major cancellation without more due diligence with faculty would be met with great resistance.