

Back at the range: The position of the individual journal and author

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US Seminar: The changing landscape of academic research and publishing

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**Institute for Media Analysis
in South Africa (iMasa)**



***Ecquid Novi:
African Journalism Studies***
Listed: ISI/SSCI

The golden grail: It is written in the book of ISI (a.k.a. Thomson-Reuters)

□ Presentation

- Personal journey through corridors: DHET/Assaf, IBSS/ISI/Scopus
- Focus on Social Sciences and Humanities (Journalism/Media)
- Presentation: Personal and even anecdotal
- Other points of view: Official/formal and journal experience

□ Why is the topic relevant?

- Important, 'necessary' road for SA journals and authors to take, especially with regard to the Journal Impact Factor of ISI (IF)
- The strict essentialist view of DHET/Sapse/Universities about ISI
- Low percentage of SA social science/humanities journals on ISI
- Effect on authors and editors; status and standard of the field

□ Aim

- How to approach ISI/IBSS/Scopus/Scielo/Google indexing

Why bother with having your journal or article on an index such as ISI?

- It is the SA journal flavour of the month thing to do
 - *Pressure* from SA education/university/research authorities
 - Research *output* calculated in terms of '*accredited*' journals
 - Marketing/fund raising *needs* of universities
 - *Income* from state subsidies for universities and (some) researchers
 - *Pressure* from *peer* group/readers, also journal contributors
 - *Individual* promotion, NRF ratings, funding, project applications
 - Page-fee *income* for subsidized journals
 - International *trends*: SA lacking behind in ISI Journal Impact Factor
 - Much *criticism* about recognition of only ISI and IBSS
 - However: Other systems are gaining support, e.g. Scopus, Google

What is the SA (DHET) journal position on ISI (and IBSS)?

- Number of journals on DHET Approved List (2010): 248 (100%)
- Less than a fifth (18.5%) are on ISI and/or IBSS 46 (18.5%)
- Number of DHET Journals on three ISI lists: 37 (14.9%)
 - ISI Science List: 15 (6.1%)
 - ISI SSCI: 14 (5.6%)
 - ISI Arts List only: 8 (3.2%)
- Number of DHET Journals on IBSS only: 9 (3.6%)
- Number of DHET Journals not on ISI or IBSS: 202 (81.5%)

South Africa lacking behind in the ISI stakes – Social Science Index

- **Total of 15 of DHET soc.sc / hum journals on ISI SSCI**
 - Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies
 - Education as Change
 - Investment Analysts Journal
 - Language Matters
 - SAJ for Research in Sport, Physical Education & Recreation
 - SAJ of Business Management
 - SAJ of Economic & Management Sciences
 - SAJ of Psychology
 - SAHARA (IBSS)
 - Social Dynamics (IBSS)
 - Perspectives in Education (IBSS)
 - SAJ of Education (IBSS)
 - SAJ on Human Rights (IBSS)
 - SA Linguistics and Applied Language Studies (Arts)

SA journals on ISI (Arts) and IBSS

ISI Arts

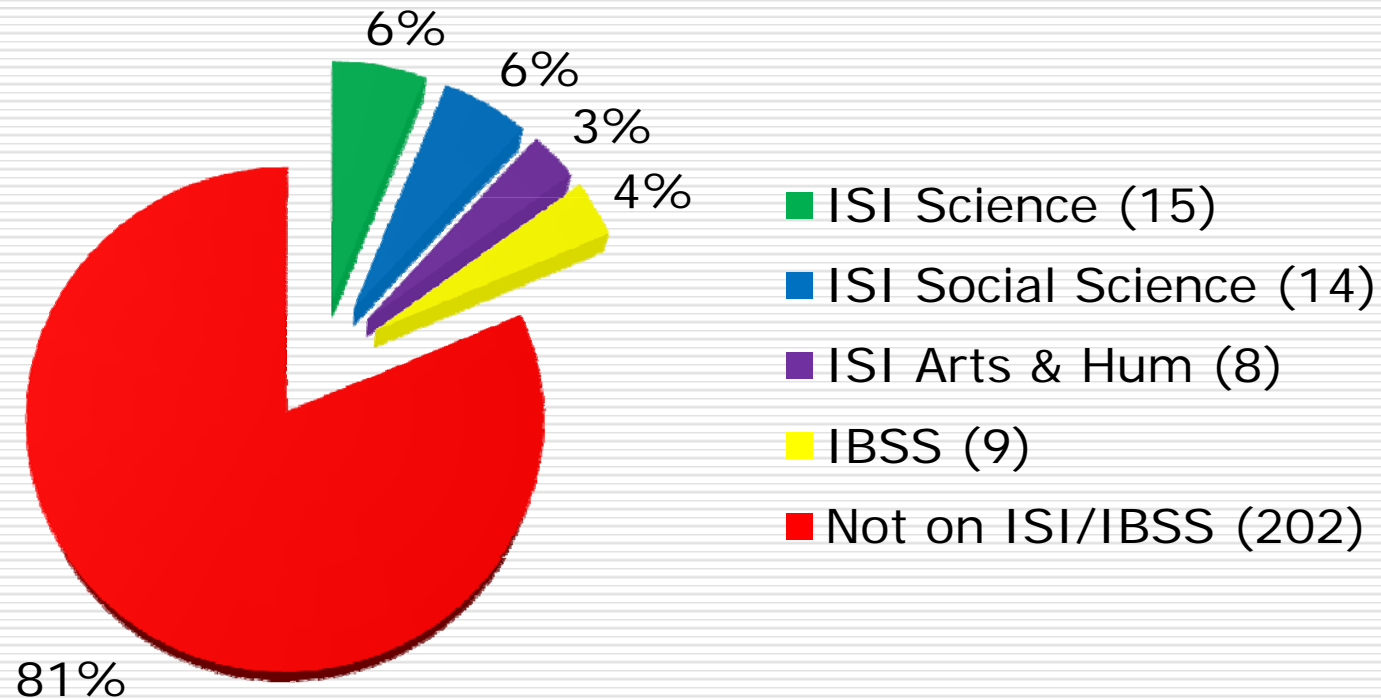
- Acta Theologica
- English Studies in Africa
- HTS Theological Studies
- J. of the Musical Arts in Africa
- Lexikos
- SAJ of Philosophy
- Tydskrif vir Letterkunde
- SA Archaeological Bulletin

IBSS

- Africa Insight
- African Finance Journal
- African Journal of Aids Research
- African Sociological Review
- Historia: J. of the Hist. Soc. of SA
- Journal of Psychology in Africa
- Journal of Public Administration
- Strategic Review for So. Africa
- Theoria: J of Social & Pol. Theory

SA journal position on ISI (and IBSS)

DHET Journals 2010 N = 248



Department of Education's journal criteria for the approved list

- Journal application for DHET 'accredited' journal list
 - Purpose: disseminate research results
 - Content: support high level learning
 - Teaching/research in relevant subject area
 - Articles: must be peer reviewed
 - Contributions: beyond a single institution
 - Must have International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)
 - Must be published regularly
 - Editorial board: Members beyond a single institution reflective of expertise in the relevant subject area
 - Distribution: beyond a single institution
 - Relevancy
 - Aim

ISI Journal Submission Form

- The main hoops to jump through seem straight forward
- But it is deceptively simple and without real clues

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journal title * | <input type="checkbox"/> ISSN Electronic (if applicable) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Editor-in-Chief | <input type="checkbox"/> Journal URL * |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publisher's Address | <input type="checkbox"/> Publisher name (if available) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequency(# of issues p.a.) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1st Year of Publication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Country of origin * | <input type="checkbox"/> Most recent issue (Vol, ISSN, Yr) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unique features
distinguishing this journal | <input type="checkbox"/> Journal Scope |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ISSN Print (if applicable) | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Details * |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone, Address, Email * |

ISI: The name of the game is 'frequency' and again 'frequency'

Frequency of publication

- Extremely important
- Show three successive issues – on time
- Frequency applies to print and electronic

Unique features that distinguish the journal, also 'Scope'

- Being regional with a very particular focus
- Subject matter not covered by other (also Northern) journals
- Subject matter is relevant, 'cutting edge', authoritative
- What will be missing for the scientific community if not listed?

IBSS Submission Form for Journals

- Scholarly nature
- Analytical articles
- '**Ideally**' (?) peer reviewed
- Editorial Board - respected international academics
- Languages: English, French, German, Rus. & Sp.
- Relevant to IBSS's own subject coverage**
- Journals **international** and **comparative** in scope
- Regional** focus other than the US or UK
- Priority** (80%) unsolicited journals outside UK/US
- Importance to social science research in the UK (sic!)**
- Judged: IBSS's EAB and **LSE Library**
- Is now part of the ProQuest group.
- DHET needs to decide whether to keep IBSS or not

IBSS hurdles to overcome... or not

- ❑ **Relevant to IBSS's own subject coverage**

- ❑ Implications for disciplines not part of 'own subject coverage'

- ❑ **Importance to social science research in the UK**

- ❑ Sic! As far as the DHET criteria are concerned

- ❑ **Judged with reference to the collection of the LSE Library**

- ❑ Sic! As far as the DHET criteria are concerned

- ❖ **Question:** How relevant is IBSS to the global journal indexing/database scene?

Scopus: A possible alternative to ISI?

Prior: Oct 2009 evaluated by Content Selection and Advisory Board

- English-language title
- English-language abstracts
- Full-text articles in **any language**
- Minimum **one issue** p.a. (sic)
- Overall high quality
- Authority in the field
- Reputation of commercial or society **publisher**
- Diversity (?)** of authors/EB
- International recognition of leading editors
- 'Some'** (sic) form of **quality control** (e.g. peer review).

Post- Oct 2009. Scoring system

- Journal Policy (35%)
- Content (20%)
- Scope of citations (25%)
- Regularity** (10%)
- Online Availability** (10%)

Possible questions for discussion

1. How important is it for (all of) the journals on the DHET list to be listed by ISI?
2. How can the above (1) best be realised?
3. How realistic is it to expect more than 20% of the DHET journals to be indexed by ISI?
4. What should the percentage aim of inclusion on ISI be?
5. How important is it to keep ISI as one of only two indexes recognised by the DHET?
6. How important is it to keep IBSS as one of only two indexes recognised by the DHET?
7. Which other indexes can realistically compete with ISI (IBSS)?
8. Given question 7, which other indexes should be considered by the DHET for inclusion for subsidy on journal articles?

Possible questions for authors

- ❑ What is my primary research/publication goal?
 - ❑ 'The academic NRF road': Contributor to and standing in the field; aim to publish in the most prestigious journals in the world and books (ISI and non-ISI)
 - ❑ 'The financial gain Sapse road': Even in 'backyard journals' (see tkg) if it must
- ❑ Which journals best serve my field or my promotional/financial gain?
- ❑ Who is my intended readership (peer group or 'financial authorities')?
- ❑ What is the likely impact of my article on that readership?
- ❑ How will my article impact both local and international debates?
- ❑ Who is likely to set my article for prescribed and recommended reading?
- ❑ How will the article's reception amongst the community of scholars enable my research career goals? Note: Impact of Sapse publications on e.g. promotion and grants
- ❑ What will be the likely life of the article, chapter, or book?

The Sapse article phone conversation*

- "Is your journal accredited?"
- It reveals that the inquirer is employed at a SA university.
- It will soon be followed with "can my article be published in your *next* issue".
- Usually, our next issue with available space is three or four years hence.
- Bewilderment follows.
- But I *need* the incentive, I've got conferences to go to, auditors' reports to complete, promotional applications to make.
- It's the money, dummy, that's what I *want*. Your journal is my ticket to the moolah.
- Why are you putting obstacles in my way?

* Keyan Tomaselli

Recommendations/'Pressure' on journals - 1

- University insistence on publishing in ISI journals
 - Also from academic societies and other groupings:
 - Access for 'new' researchers (mentoring)
 - Special 'new voices', student articles
 - Race and gender equity in acceptance of articles
 - Race, gender and age equity in appointing editors and editorial board members
- * Note impact on international standing and blind peer review

Recommendations/'Pressure' on journals - 2

- Assaf Peer Review Report recommendations 2010
 - E.g. Sociology and psychology: To amalgamate with other journals
 - Placement of 'enrichment' articles
 - Placement of more empirical articles
 - Joining Scielo
 - Editorial boards should be appointed competitively
 - Placing more 'analytical and theoretical' articles
 - Placing of 'formal, position-taking editorials'
 - Recommendation to join Scielo

Publish or perish...

□ A 'worst publishing scenario'
(Expectation: 60 units)

SA Sapse article, low impact, non-ISI	=	60
ISI article	=	60
High impact, non-Sapse, non-ISI article	=	0
Sapse book chapter	=	15
Sapse book	=	100
Non-Sapse high impact chapter	=	0
Non-Sapse high impact book	=	0

Deadline is calling.... Happy writing!

