The library's critical role in the shift to open access publishing

How the Clarivate research analytics tools can help institutions assess OA publishing support solutions with reliable evidence.

Customer

Johns Hopkins University (JHU)

Solution

Web of Science™ and InCites Benchmarking & Analytics™

Challenge

JHU needed to refine their open access strategy and assess publishing support solutions for JHU faculty, staff, and students.

Outcome

Using Web of Science and InCites Benchmarking & Analytics, JHU librarians were able to generate data-driven analyses to help shape and build the most effective open access strategy for their publishing scholars.

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Johns Hopkins University (JHU), located in Baltimore, Maryland, is a top research university offering over 400 programs in the arts and music, the humanities, the social and natural sciences, engineering, international studies, education, business, and the health professions. For more than 140 years, their faculty and students have worked side by side in pursuit of discoveries that improve lives. Twenty-nine people associated with JHU as a faculty member, fellow, resident, or graduate have received a Nobel Prize.

With world-class resources from rare books to the latest electronic databases and millions of print volumes, the nine university libraries help make discovery possible around the clock, across their campuses and around the world. Laurel Crawford (Manager, Collections Strategies) and Nancy Shin (Scholarly Communications Librarian) work on open access initiatives and projects, including managing institutional open access programs and partnerships with publishers. JHU libraries have evolved their approach to supporting open access publishing over time.

As dynamics shift, Johns Hopkins libraries respond to provide optimal publishing support solutions for their scholars. When the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued the Nelson Memo of 2022, the urgency of developing an OA strategy grew. Crawford and Shin recognized the need for a reliable tool that enables ongoing data-driven analyses to inform a sustainable and long-term institutional OA strategy.

400
programs across multiple faculties.

140+
years in pursuit of discoveries.

Assessing publisher agreements

In August 2022, the US government released a public access memo to federal departments and agencies, a.k.a. the Nelson Memo, which advises agencies to update their public access policies as soon as possible to provide free, immediate (without embargo), and equitable access to research that is federally funded.

All federal agencies funding research must update their public access policies by December 31st, 2025.

For over 40 years, JHU has been the nation's leader in federal research and development funding, and policy changes can have a significant impact on faculty research. In that context, more and more publishers are approaching JHU with transformative agreements and discount programs to replace journal subscription bundles ("big deals"). But with only one fund across campus that provides budget for open access, the cost for the library is hardly sustainable. That is why JHU needed a tool that would provide data and analyses to back-up their decisions on renewals or new agreements.

"We have to ask ourselves, is it sustainable for us to be paying hundreds of thousands of dollars per year to a single publisher to cover only part of the Open Access output from our school?"

Laurel Crawford
Manager, Collections Strategies

Leveraging expertise and high-quality data inputs from Clarivate

Using InCites Benchmarking & Analytics, Crawford and Shin were able to dig into the data to look at historical trends and make predictions (e.g. year by year numbers of OA publications and paywall publications) and JHU data – starting with their open access output and narrowing it down to federal funders, which overnight became important because of the Nelson memo. For these analyses, it was immensely beneficial to work with a member of the Clarivate Customer Success team. Shin was able to bounce ideas off of an expert and iterate on reports to ensure that they are answering the questions she had.

Crawford and Shin have carried out broad-brush analyses using different data sources, but they turn to InCites Benchmarking & Analytics for more granular reporting, relying on the standardization and curation of the Web of Science data to provide reliable insights. Comprehensive author address (e.g., corresponding author function) capture paired with organizational unification in Web of Science and InCites provide Crawford and Shin with a high level of confidence in the trends that they identify using the data. The ability to add in quality indicators, such as Journal Impact Factor, is a particularly useful and unique feature of InCites Benchmarking & Analytics. "InCites can tell you about the impact of a researcher's work in a way that other databases can't", says Crawford.

Crawford wants to stress that with the lack of staff and time at the library, InCites is extremely helpful as it automates analyses that would otherwise require a dedicated employee. "Using a tool like InCites, you do some of this big-time work and determine whether or not your open access strategy is going to work for you", she says.

> "Excellent customer service at Clarivate, excellent expert knowledge and experience"

Nancy Shin
Scholarly Communications Librarian
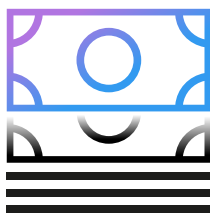
Supporting the institution's future funding success

In addition to helping JHU scholars comply with federal funding agency policies related to OA, Shin has also been focusing on helping individual researchers demonstrate the impact of their work. Showing the citation impact of previously funded work can strengthen grant applications for future funding. Using specific InCites indicators that put citation counts in context for individual articles or groups of papers, such as the Category Normalized Citation Impact or Journal Normalized Citation Impact, Shin can help researchers highlight the influence of their work.

As for Crawford, she uses Web of Science and InCites to determine the needs of JHU's local users and shape a local strategy that makes sense for them, as opposed to looking at what their peers are doing. Diverse organizations are considering how they support OA publishing, and there isn't a one size fits all strategy. Simple, repeatable, deep dive analyses help Crawford and Shin ensure that they continue to support JHU faculty as the landscape evolves.

At the same time, Crawford acknowledges that it is also important to look outside your institution. With universities becoming increasingly competitive – about government resources, students and faculty – a tool like InCites will come in handy to look at collaborators and competition and establish strategic goals that fit into broader contexts.

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