

An Analysis of Management and Economics Journals at the University of Lethbridge:

Beyond Usage Data

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Abstract

This article investigates the importance of journal titles in the area of Management and Economics at the University of Lethbridge in southern Alberta, Canada. Not wanting to rely solely on usage data, the author undertook a citation analysis to see which journals were most frequently published in by the institution's authors. The analysis also illuminated publishers providing journals which were most frequently used. Other business libraries may be interested to replicate the analysis in their own libraries as well as to see the results from this mid-sized academic library.

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Libraries all over the country – and beyond – are facing decreasing budgets and escalating serials costs, especially with the Canadian dollar decreasing in value vis-à-vis the U. S. dollar over the past year. For example, the Canadian dollar was worth .94 to the U. S. dollar on July 2, 2014; it has fallen to .80 on July 2, 2015. (Bank of Canada, 2015). Because of this, it was desirable to take a critical look at the current serials subscriptions at the University of Lethbridge Library.

Background

The University of Lethbridge (U of L) is a medium-sized research institution, with a student population of about 8,200 students and 478 faculty. There are nine librarians, seven of who are mainly involved with subject liaison work which includes collections. There is one library on campus, which also serves two smaller satellite campuses.

In the past, serials have been almost automatically renewed unless an obvious issue with a title is raised. The U of L Library implemented ProQuest's product Intota Assessment in 2015, but until then journal usage evaluation was an onerous, manual task and rarely done in any type of systematic, rigorous manner. However, as the serials prices continue to increase and the Canadian dollar decreases in value against the U. S. dollar, it is clear that librarians will need to take a hard look at their serials subscriptions. As the U of L librarians began to contemplate this, stories of other universities canceling major subscriptions started to surface. The author attended the Centre for Evidence Based Library & Information Practice Symposium at the

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University of Saskatchewan in October 2014 and was treated to an interesting presentation

(Dawson, 2014) which inspired her to undertake a similar study for her liaison areas of

Management and Economics at the U of L. (Dawson's presentation was turned into a paper and recently published; see Dawson, 2015).

Dawson's study focuses on a particular disciplinary package of journals, so isn't completely applicable to the overall subject analysis done here. It is also much more thorough, as she was contemplating a very real possibility of having to individually subscribe to journals previously acquired through a package deal. In the case discussed here, knowledge was being gathered for future consideration, with no actual impending cancellation goal or deadline. However, her presentation was inspiring in her unique approach to analyzing serials collections and caused the author to think more deeply about journal analysis. Normally, usage data is the main consideration when looking at potential journal cancellations; often combined with cost-per-use. (Blecic et al, 2012). However, there is concern that focusing solely on usage data could put an overemphasis on student use of journals. To ensure that faculty use of journals – which is presumably a smaller number – did not get swamped by student use, it was felt that Dawson's use of citation analysis would be a useful addition to the investigation. As well, it has been noted that usage data can often be inflated and may not be an accurate indicator (Nabe and Fowler, 2012). In this study, usage data was compared to the citation analysis for interest's sake, but with no more importance placed on one or the other. Dawson also did a user survey of faculty, staff and research affiliates, which was not possible within the parameters of this particular study.

Methodology

The U of L Library subscribes to Web of Science, and this was used to discover the journals in which University of Lethbridge Management and Economics faculty were publishing. It may be argued that Web of Science is more focused on the science areas and may not be as useful for Management and Economics, but this tool was used as it was the most comprehensive the author had access to. The following query was run `{{SU=Business & Economics OR SU=Communication) AND (OO=Lethbridge OR OG=(University of Lethbridge OR U of L))}` in order to discover these journals. This resulted in a list of 149 titles with record counts ranging from 49 to 1 articles by U of L authors in each. A similar query was run to discover the author of these papers in order to ensure that the majority of them were situated within the Faculty of Management and the Department of Economics, which they were. As stated by Dawson (2015), the journals in which a researcher publishes can be an indicator of the importance of a journal to their discipline.

In total, there were 341 articles in these 149 publications. The top title had 49 articles published in it by a U of L author, which represents over 14% of the total. The top 48 titles have two or more articles each, representing nearly 77% of the total; the remaining 101 each contain one article by a U of L-affiliated author. To better represent these percentages on the graph, they were multiplied by 100.

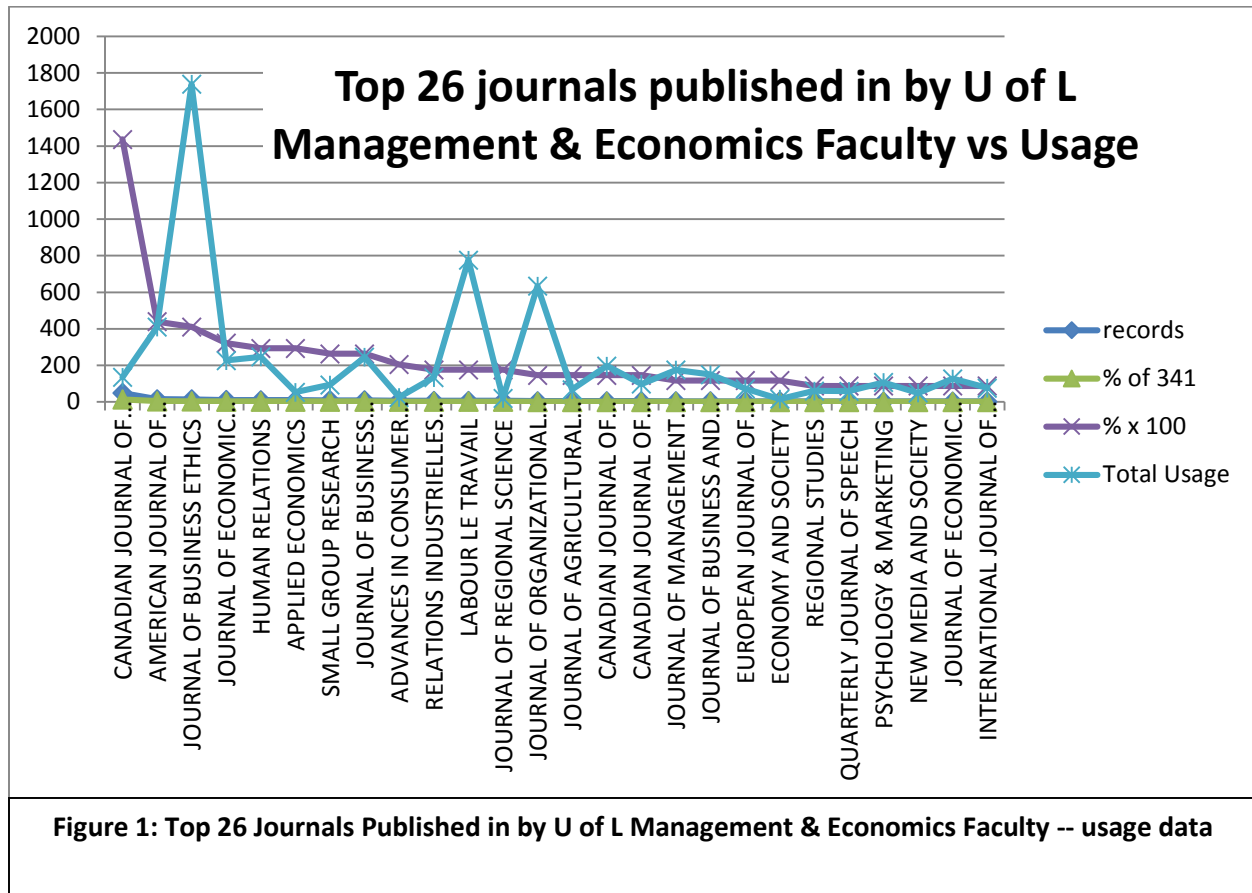
With the exception of one set of conference proceedings (totaling 5 records) and three individual monograph titles (totaling 7 records), the U of L Library has current, non-embargoed access to all of the journals in the top 50 titles found in Web of Science in which U of L authors

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are publishing. However, for 8 of these titles we have access only via aggregators. The top 50 also encompasses all of the titles which have more than one article published in that title by a U of L author (the top 48 have two or more articles each), and represents over 77% of the total number of publications in which U of L authors have published. Because this study is concerned with journal serials subscriptions, it was deemed appropriate to do the analysis with conference proceedings and monographs removed from the list. Journals in which U of L faculty have three or more publications numbered 26, so that was considered the 'top tier' for analysis. 48 of the journals contained two or more publications by U of L faculty; this number was rounded to include the top 50 as the second tier of analysis.

Usage data was then obtained for these titles (through all formats/vendors) for comparison purposes. The analysis began December 2014, so at that time only 2013 usage data was available. Because Intota Assessments was only implemented in spring 2015 when this analysis was nearly completed, compiling usage data was a very time-consuming task entailing looking in the catalogue to discover all the vendors providing access to the journals in question, and then going into the statistics file for each vendor and looking up each journal individually. This analysis would be much simpler in the future, as Intota compiles the statistics by title provided by each vendor in one place. For the purposes of this study, usage was measured using full-text downloads (PDF and HTML). A master list containing the top 50 journals used in this analysis and their associated publication and usage data can be found in the appendix.

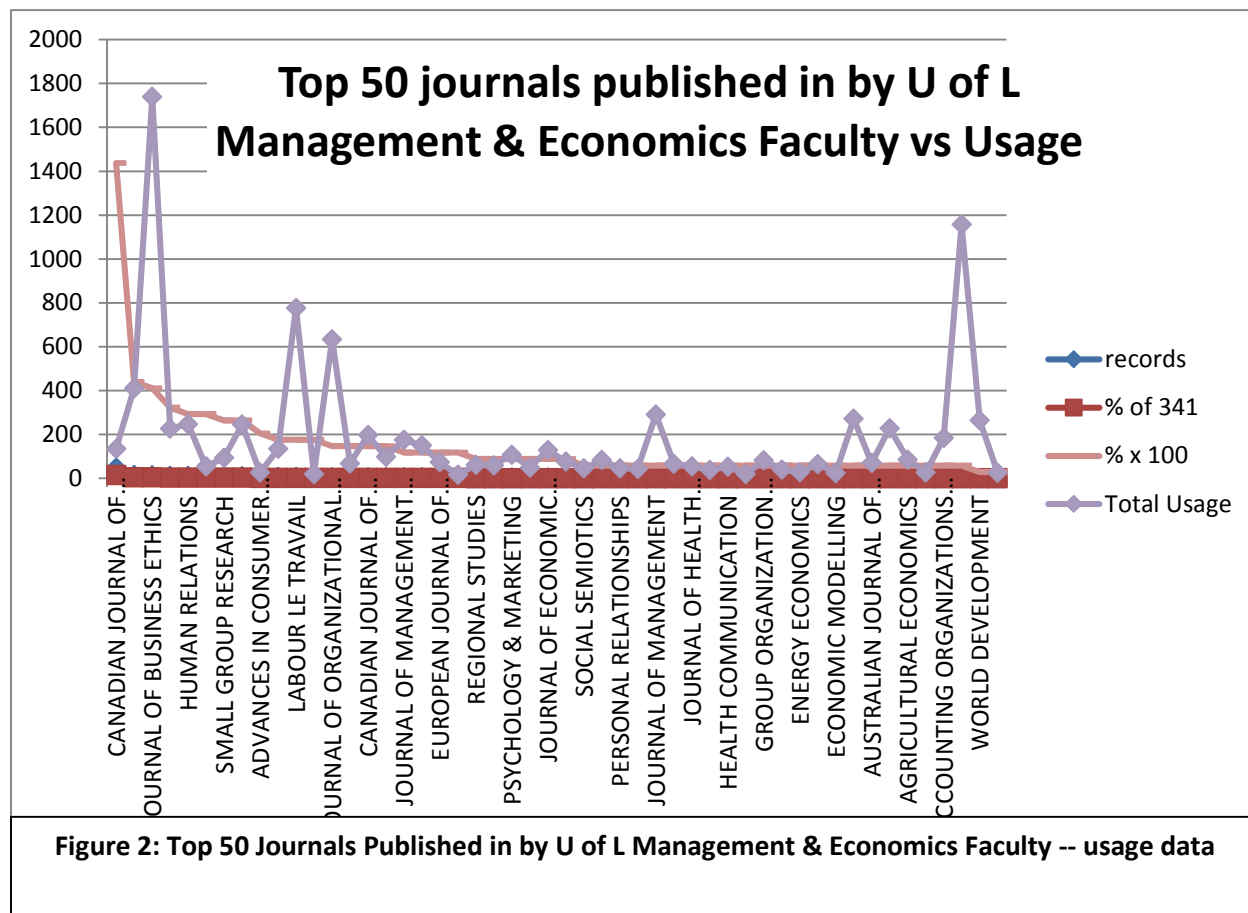
Results



Looking at the top 26 and the top 50 journals published in by U of L management & economics faculty, it is evident that usage data has very little correlation with publication data (see Figures 1 & 2). Clearly, student use of the journals impacts usage data more than faculty use. However, this is still important information to gather as it shows that subscriptions should not be based solely on usage data. % of 341 represents the percentage of citations out of the total number of citations (341) in that particular title, thus indicating its relative importance. This number was

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multiplied by 100 in order to better represent visually the peaks and valleys as they compared to usage data.



For example, the *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics/ Revue Canadienne*

D'Agroeconomie is by far the journal most frequently published in by *Institution* authors, with

49 records. Usage, however, is in the bottom half of the top 50 journals listed in Web of

Science, with only 135 uses in 2013. If one was going solely on usage, this journal's usefulness

would be in question; however, it is clearly of use to the faculty at this institution. The *Journal*

of Business Ethics is third in terms of faculty publications (14 records), but has very high usage

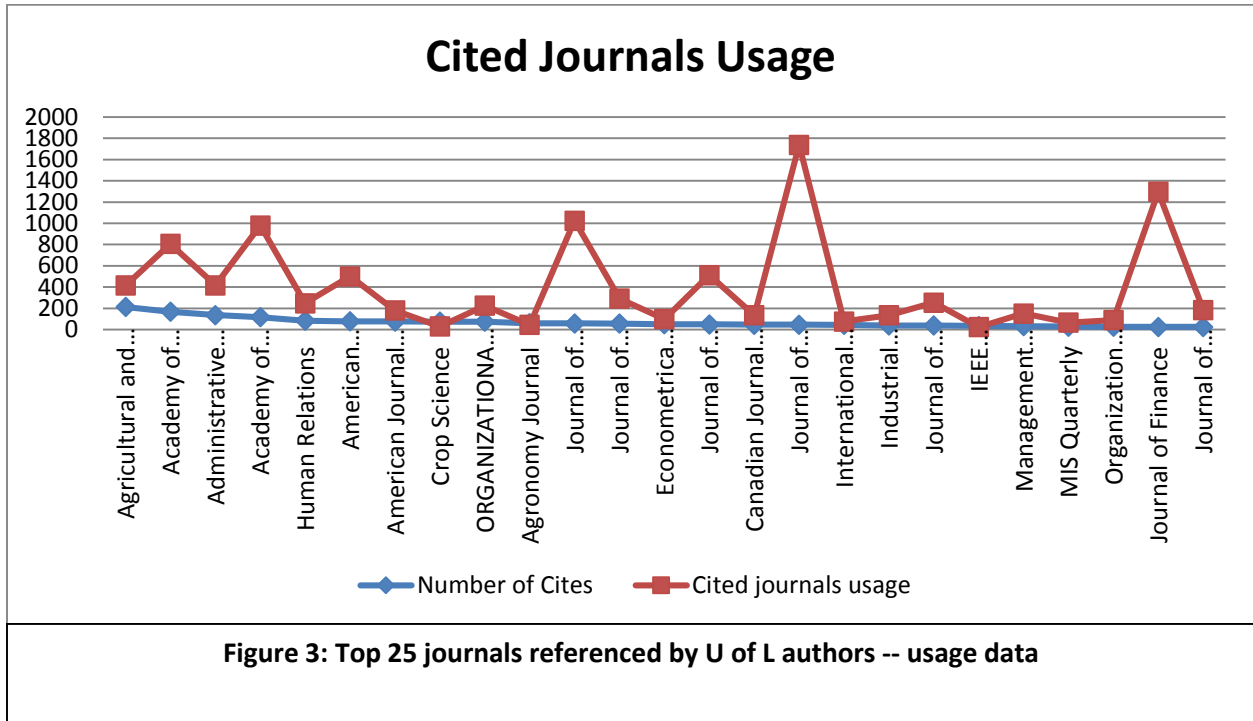
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numbers (1739)– presumably based on the fact that it is indexed in both Business Source Complete and ABI/Inform, which are highly favoured by students. Of definitely more concern, though, is those journals, like the *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics/ Revue Canadienne D'Agroeconomie*, which are of importance to faculty members but which are not reflected in the usage numbers which are largely based on student use. Other journals for which this gap on the graph calls attention to this disparity is *Applied Economics*, with 54 uses and 10 faculty publications; *Small Group Research*, with 94 uses and 9 publications; *Advances in Consumer Research*, with and 26 uses and 7 publications; *Journal of Regional Science*, with 20 uses and 6 publications; and *Economy and Society* with 16 uses and 4 publications. While some of these publication numbers may seem low, they are significant given the overall number of faculty publications (as demonstrated with the % of 341 numbers on Figures 1 & 2); it is critical to know about these faculty publication venues given that the usage numbers alone would question the validity of keeping some of these titles.

The U of L also purchased a subscription to ISI's Local Journal Utilization Report (LJUR) in 2008. This can show not only which journals faculty at an institution are publishing in, but also which journals faculty members are citing in their own papers and which journals contain citations to U of L authors. As this can also be a large factor in a journal's desirability, reports were run to see which publications U of L authors have been citing and cited in the most. There was clear overlap between the journals in which faculty were citing, and those which they read and reference; however, a few new titles emerged which could be essential to faculty when considering maintenance of the journal collection. For this analysis, the top 25 cited journals were chosen. Less emphasis is put on this data for two reasons: the data is older, and the same

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type of subject breakdown is not possible for the LJUR as it was for Web of Science, so some of the journals may be from faculty members in departments other than Management or Economics.



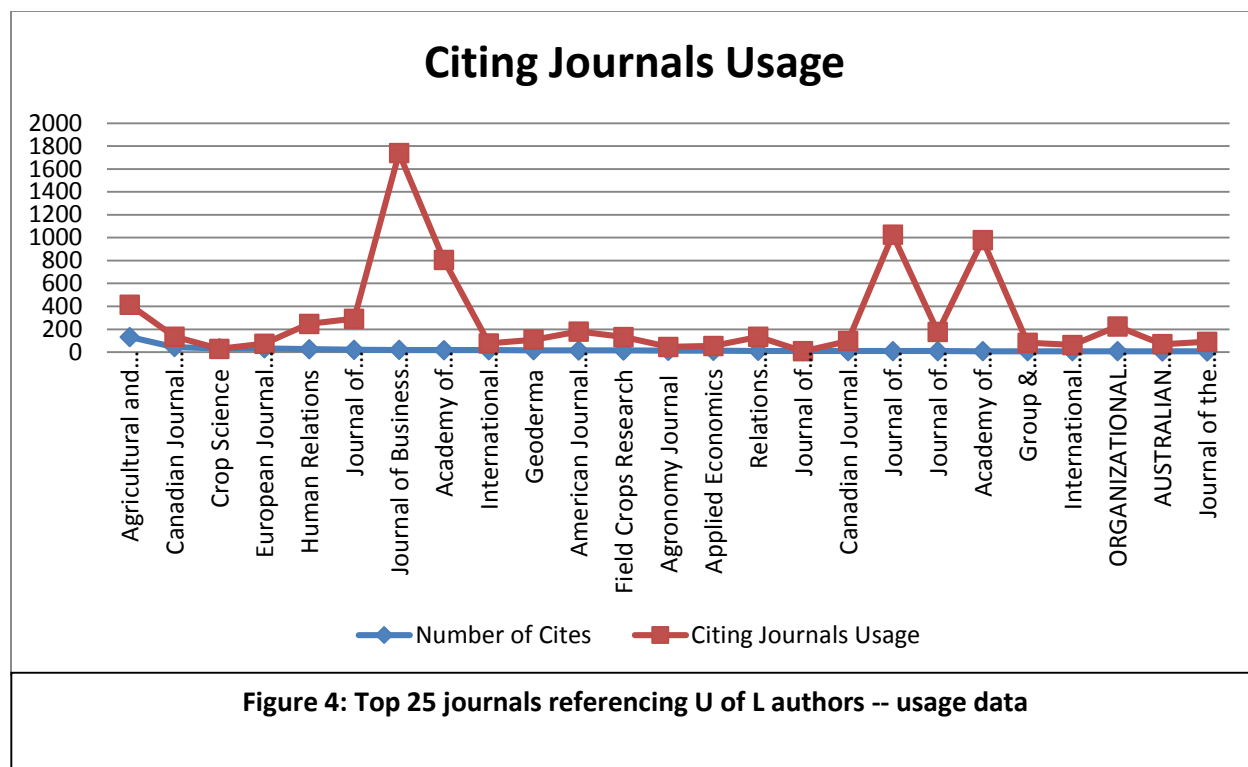
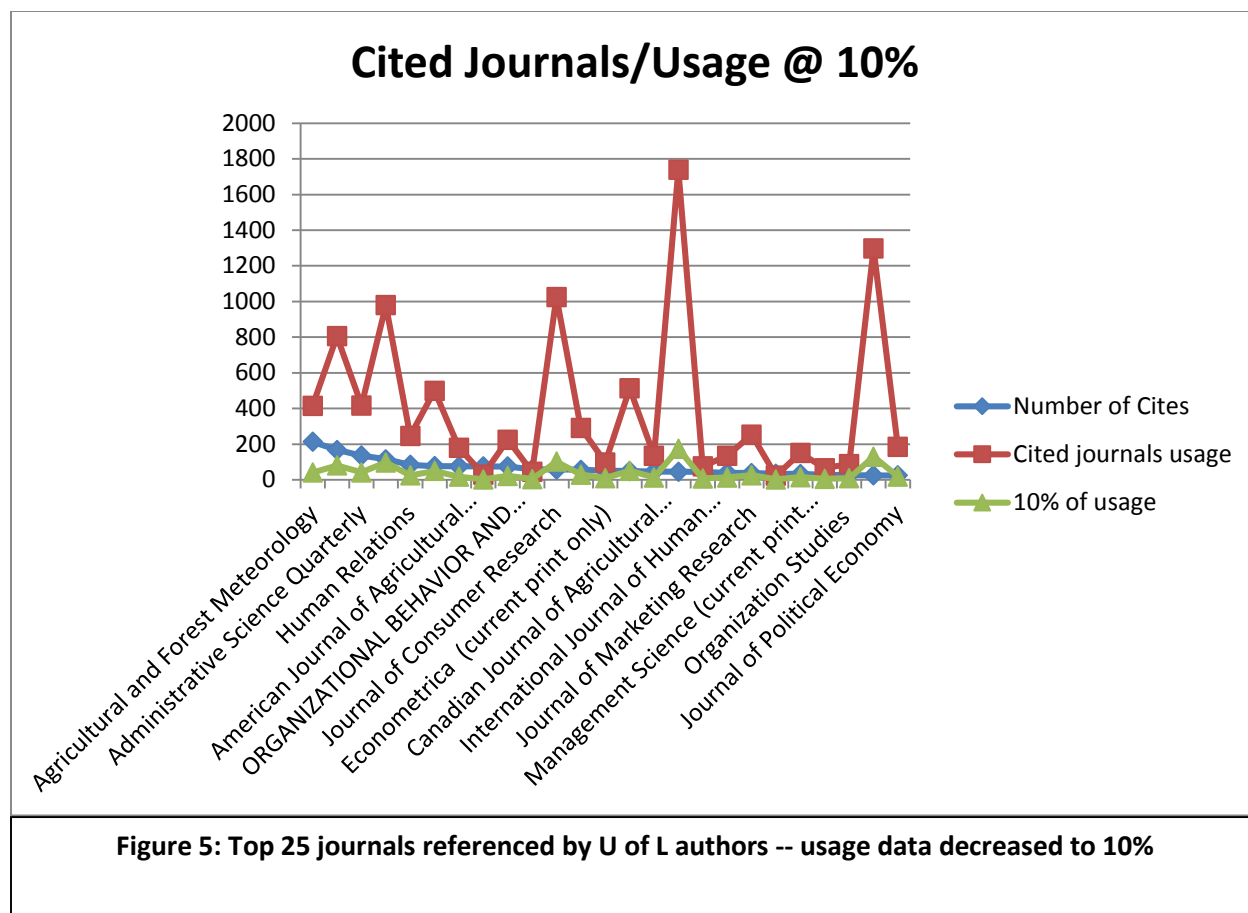


Figure 3 shows the top 25 journals referenced by *Institution* authors as opposed to usage data;

Figure 4 shows the top 25 journals referencing *Institution* authors vs usage data. Because the number of citations is so much lower than the journal usage numbers, it is hard to discern patterns. By taking the usage number to 10% of its whole number, it is plainer to see whether the jumps in usage are correlated with the jumps in citation – which they do appear to be, as shown in

Figures 5 & 6.



A few journals stand out against this pattern; *Agricultural and Forest Meteorology*, for one, is referenced fairly often by *Institution* authors, with 213 cites, but usage is fairly low, with 415 uses. This presumes that the main people accessing this journal are the faculty referencing it. This example is played out numerous times in Figures 5 & 6: *Administrative Science Quarterly* had 136 cites, but usage is only 417 uses. *Crop Science* has only 29 uses, but was cited 75 times. *Agronomy Journal* was cited 59 times, but used only 45 times. *Econometrica* was cited 51 times, but had only 98 uses. *IEEE Transactions on Information Theory* was only accessed 23 times, but cited 34 times. This plays out over and over, in both the referenced journals as well as the journals containing references to *Institution* authors (Figure 6). In this case, *Crop Science* shows up with the biggest disparity, with 33 citations to *Institution* authors but only 29 uses.

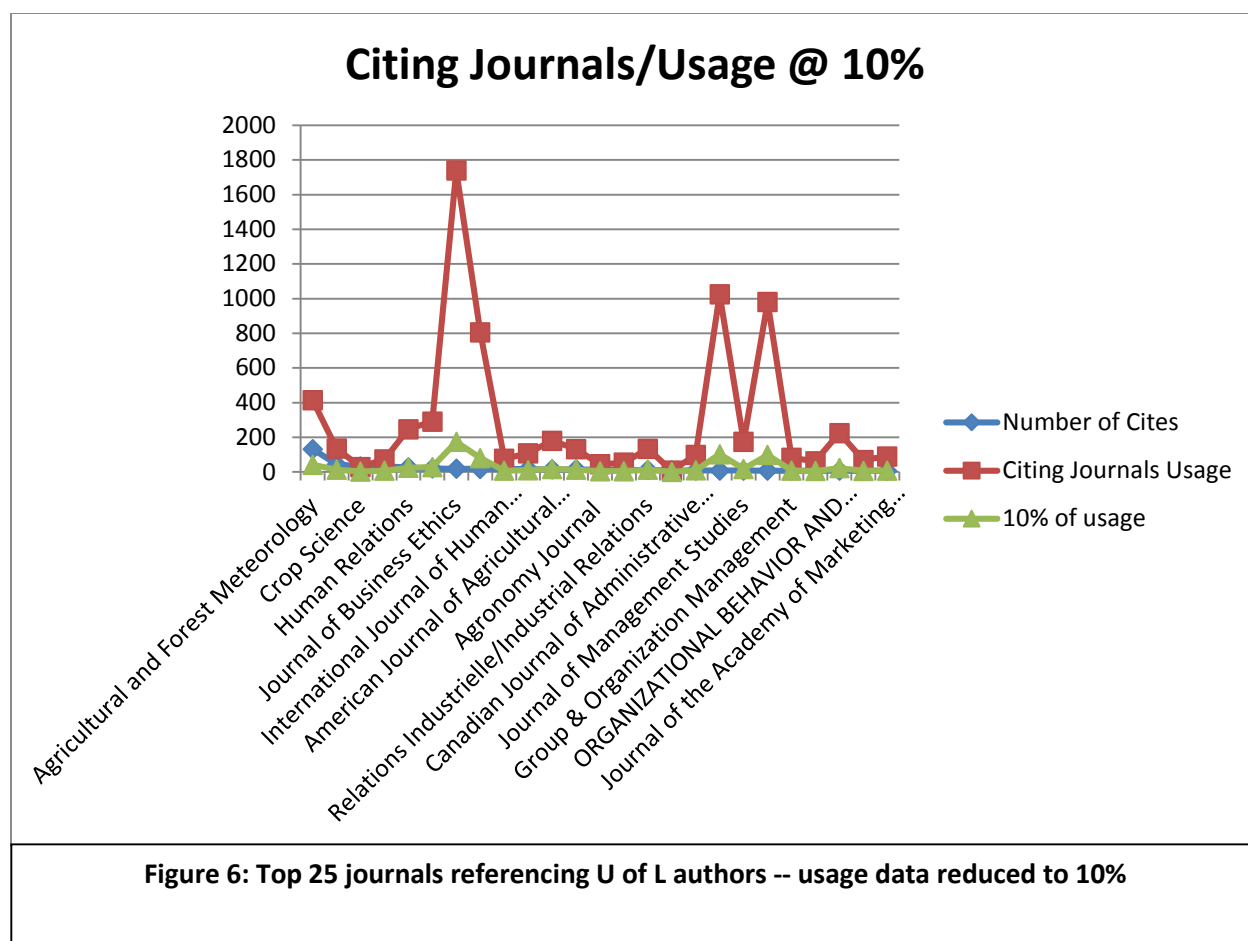
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Agricultural and Forest Meteorology contains 132 citations to *Institution* authors, but only 415 uses;

Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics, already shown to be of highest importance to the

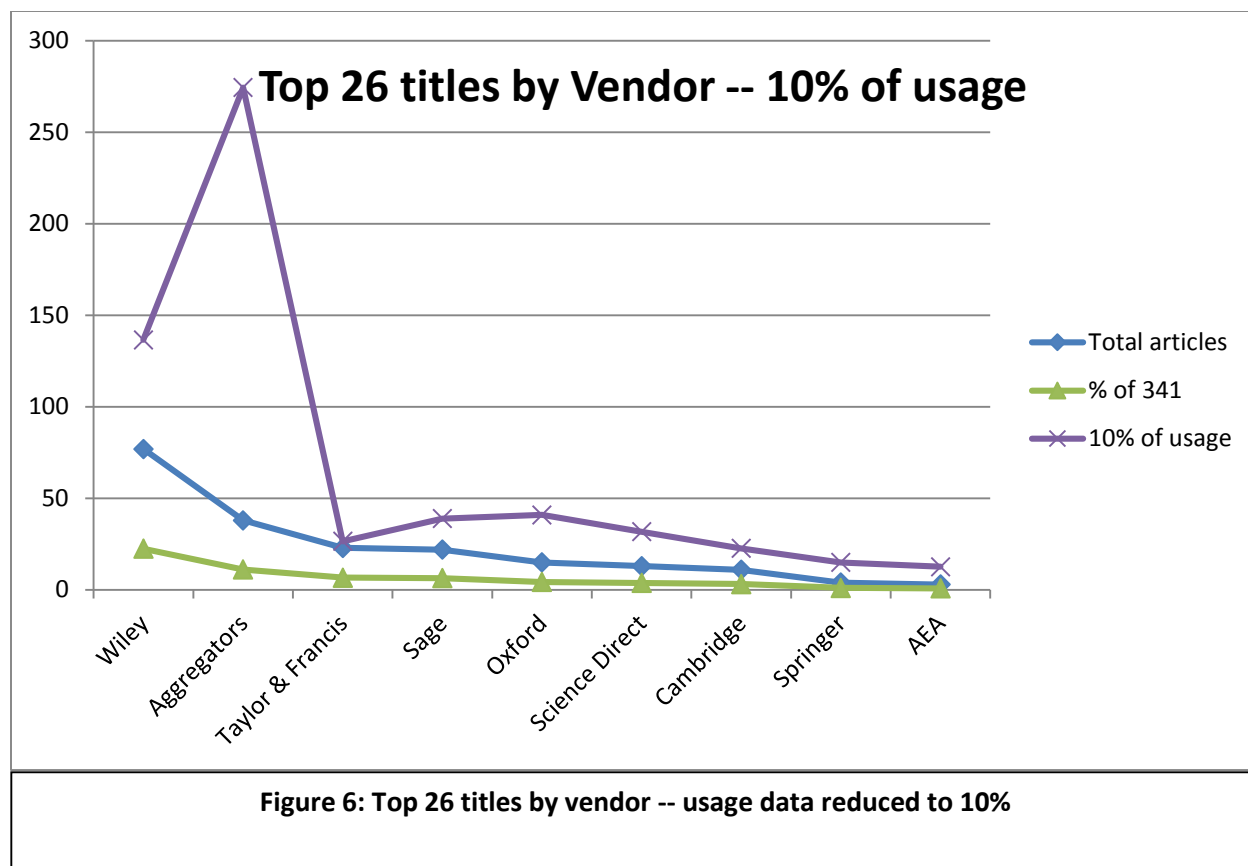
Institution's publishing authors, contains 44 citations to the *Institution's* authors but only has 135 uses.

Again, this analysis highlights journals which may be of importance to the institution even if that importance is not reflected in the usage numbers.

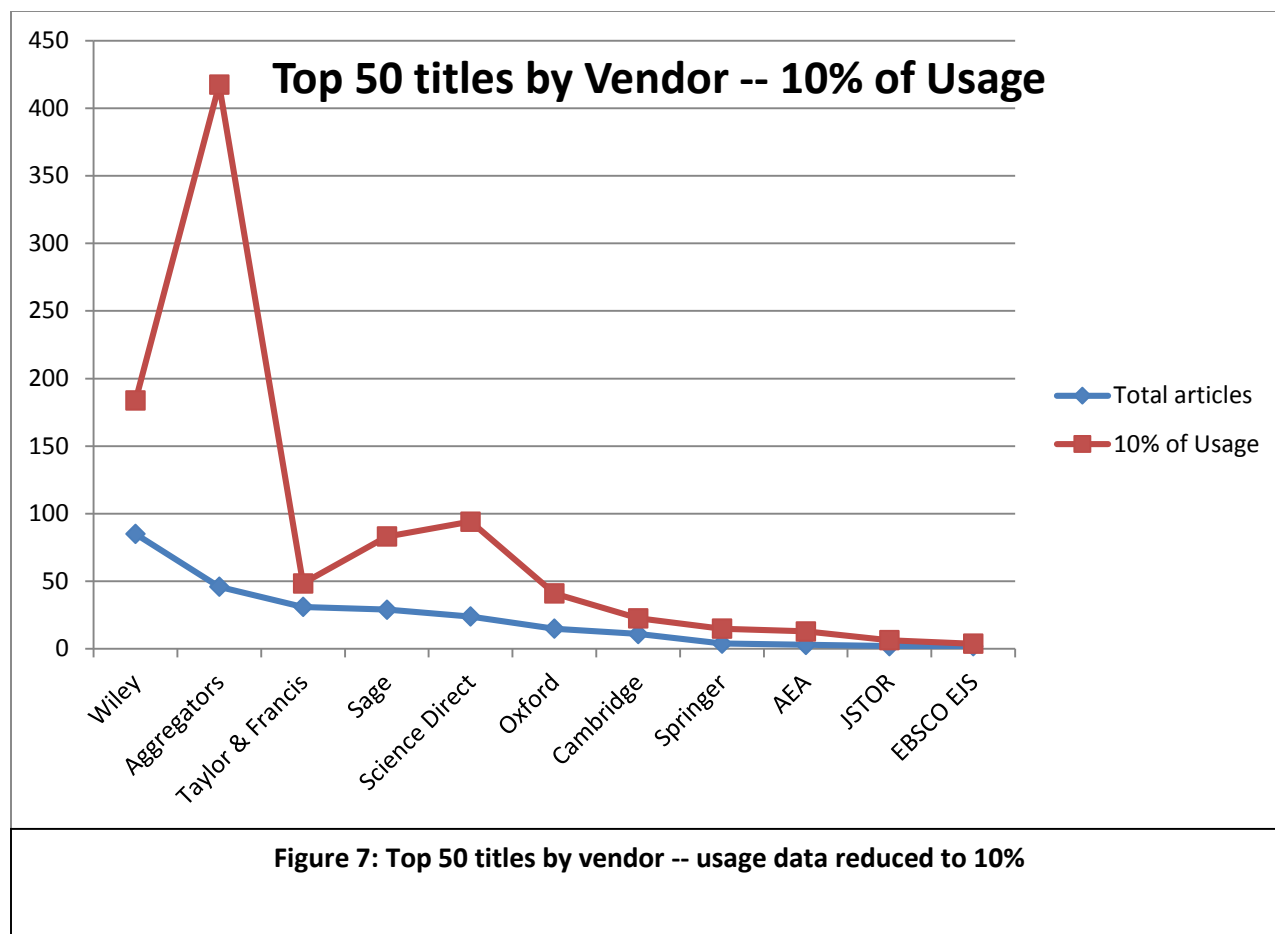


Bonus Discoveries

One interesting outcome of this study was to note which journals were coming from which packages. Of the top 26 journals, seven are from the Wiley package; five from Taylor & Francis; three from Sage; two from Science Direct; one from Cambridge; one from Oxford Online; one from Springer; one from the American Economic Association; and five from aggregators. This was eye-opening for the author, and a good thing to know for future consideration of package deals. It was also important to note that while the number of journals with aggregator-only access was relatively low, these journals have high numbers of faculty publications so they perhaps should be looked on with relatively more importance. When compounded with the extremely high usage of these journals (which could be inflated, given their presence in an aggregator which is presumably accessed more often by students than the publisher databases), the prominence of these titles shines even more. This was a valuable exercise in terms of highlighting those titles and knowing which ones are necessary to subscribe to in the event of discontinued aggregator access. See Figure 7 for details.



The same analysis done with the top 50 journals is interesting, as the aggregators show up less often in the second half of the group; however, their usage numbers are still highly inflated. All vendors maintained their ranking in terms of pure numbers of articles in these top journals except Science Direct and Oxford swapped for 5th & 6th place, with a couple added near the end. Overall, the trend in the top 50 appears very close to that in the top 26 in terms of publisher/package importance. Details are shown in Figure 8.



Discussion & Future Plans

The analysis performed here was not intended to be systematically complete; nor was it deemed necessary to overlay the various measures to arrive at 'one list'. Rather, it was intended to flush out the most important journals in the fields of Management and Economics as it pertains to the University of Lethbridge. Usage data in the form of full-text downloads is certainly one indicator of importance, but other measures are necessary in order to obtain a more complete picture of journal significance at a given institution. Now that this data has been

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compiled, when questions regarding the importance of a particular title arise it will be possible to look at these results at a glance and assess the journal in question in a more complete way.

This being said, other Business and Management libraries may be interested to see the top titles as they pertain to the University of Lethbridge, as they may also find similar patterns at their own institutions. Likewise, they may want to use this model of a relatively quick method to ascertain journals using something other than usage data.

While surveying faculty, instructors, and staff on journal importance was deemed impossible for this phase of the study it is planned in the future, which will add an important layer to this analysis. As well, the usage data gathered by Intota Assessments will be added to the analysis for the next several years to arrive at a 'mean' for complete downloads by title. This is merely the first stage of an ongoing analysis; likewise, the Web of Science query is automatically generated every month in order to add new titles to the analysis. It is also possible that the reference list analysis described by Dawson in her 2015 study will be added to the investigation here. As a project being run 'off the side of the author's desk', and one that was intended to be a practical application rather than a theoretical research project, it will be done in incremental phases rather than one large study.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank DeDe Dawson for her presentation at C-EBLIP 2014 which inspired this study. I would also like to thank the University of Lethbridge CDS department – particularly Karen McCallum and Sandy Wiest – for their invaluable help gathering usage data.

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Source Titles - Published in by U of L authors	Supplier	records	% of 341	% x 100	Total Usage	Usage x 10%
1 CANADIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS/REVUE CANADIENNE D'AGROECONOMIE (COMBINED)	Wiley	49	14.37	1437	135	13.5
2 AMERICAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS	Oxford	15	4.399	439.9	410	41
3 JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS	Aggregator	14	4.106	410.6	1739	173.9
4 JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC HISTORY	Cambridge	11	3.226	322.6	227	22.7
5 HUMAN RELATIONS	Sage	10	2.933	293.3	247	24.7
6 APPLIED ECONOMICS	Taylor & Francis	10	2.933	293.3	54	5.4
7 SMALL GROUP RESEARCH	Sage	9	2.639	263.9	94	9.4
8 JOURNAL OF BUSINESS RESEARCH	Science Direct	9	2.639	263.9	245	24.5
9 ADVANCES IN CONSUMER RESEARCH	Aggregator	7	2.053	205.3	26	2.6
10 RELATIONS INDUSTRIELLES INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS	Aggregator	6	1.76	176	134	13.4
11 LABOUR LE TRAVAIL	Aggregator	6	1.76	176	777	77.7
12 JOURNAL OF REGIONAL SCIENCE	Wiley	6	1.76	176	20	2
13 JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	Wiley	5	1.466	146.6	634	63.4
14 JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS	Aggregator	5	1.466	146.6	68	6.8
15 CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS / REVUE CANADIENNE D'ECONOMIQUE	Wiley	5	1.466	146.6	197	19.7
16 CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES / REVUE CANADIENNE DES SCIENCES DE L'ADMINISTRATION	Wiley	5	1.466	146.6	98	9.8
17 JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES	Wiley	4	1.173	117.3	175	17.5
18 JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND PSYCHOLOGY	Springer	4	1.173	117.3	150	15
19 EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF OPERATIONAL RESEARCH	Science Direct	4	1.173	117.3	73	7.3
20 ECONOMY AND SOCIETY	Taylor & Francis	4	1.173	117.3	16	1.6
21 REGIONAL STUDIES	Taylor & Francis	3	0.88	88	61	6.1
22 QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SPEECH	Taylor & Francis	3	0.88	88	59	5.9
23 PSYCHOLOGY & MARKETING	Wiley	3	0.88	88	107	10.7
24 NEW MEDIA AND SOCIETY	Sage	3	0.88	88	49	4.9
25 JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC LITERATURE	AEA	3	0.88	88	127	12.7
26 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	Taylor & Francis	3	0.88	88	76	7.6
27 SOCIAL SEMIOTICS	Taylor & Francis	2	0.587	58.7	45	4.5
28 REGIONAL SCIENCE AND URBAN ECONOMICS	Science Direct	2	0.587	58.7	83	8.3
29 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	Wiley	2	0.587	58.7	46	4.6
30 JOURNAL OF SPORTS ECONOMICS	Sage	2	0.587	58.7	43	4.3
31 JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT	Sage	2	0.587	58.7	291	29.1
32 JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Taylor & Francis	2	0.587	58.7	66	6.6
33 JOURNAL OF HEALTH COMMUNICATION	Taylor & Francis	2	0.587	58.7	55	5.5
34 INFORMATION SYSTEMS RESEARCH	Ebsco	2	0.587	58.7	38	3.8
35 HEALTH COMMUNICATION	Taylor & Francis	2	0.587	58.7	53	5.3
36 GROUP & ORGANIZATION STUDIES	Aggregator	2	0.587	58.7	19	1.9
37 GROUP ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT	Sage	2	0.587	58.7	82	8.2
38 EXPLORATIONS IN ECONOMIC HISTORY	Science Direct	2	0.587	58.7	40	4
39 ENERGY ECONOMICS	Science Direct	2	0.587	58.7	28	2.8
40 EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY JOURNAL	JSTOR	2	0.587	58.7	64	6.4
41 ECONOMIC MODELLING	Science Direct	2	0.587	58.7	24	2.4
42 ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY	Wiley	2	0.587	58.7	271	27.1
43 AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS	Wiley	2	0.587	58.7	70	7
44 AUDITING A JOURNAL OF PRACTICE THEORY	Aggregator	2	0.587	58.7	228	22.8
45 AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS	Wiley	2	0.587	58.7	85	8.5
46 ADVANCES IN CONSUMER RESEARCH VOL XXVIII	Aggregator	2	0.587	58.7	26	2.6
47 ACCOUNTING ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIETY	Science Direct	2	0.587	58.7	184	18.4
48 ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	Aggregator	2	0.587	58.7	1157	115.7
49 WORLD DEVELOPMENT	Science Direct	1	0.293	29.3	264	26.4
50 WORK EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIETY	Sage	1	0.293	29.3	25	2.5