

I'm Annette Thomas, the CEO of the Scientific & Academic Research division at Clarivate Analytics and previously the CEO at Nature Publishing Group. Ask me anything about the Future of the Web of Science and our recent acquisition of Kopernio. AMA!

Annette<sub>T</sub>homas<sup>1</sup>andr/ScienceAMAs<sup>1</sup>

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April 17, 2023

### Abstract

In 2016, Web of Science (WoS) was sold to private equity and incorporated into Clarivate Analytics. Our vision for WoS is both ambitious and long-term. When used responsibly scientometrics and bibliometrics offer vital measures of scientific and research output and impact. The Journal Impact Factor, derived from WoS data, is one metric that is particularly valued. But it is not, and should not, be the only measure. For years, these limitations have encouraged healthy debate among the academic community, which has spurred the development of additional ranking platforms that have varied in accuracy. I believe that our history, expertise, and—most importantly—publisher-neutral status perfectly positions WoS to advance the field of scientometrics. And that is exactly what we're setting out to do. In February, we re-established the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), which will act as a think-tank, to identify gaps in and explore new ways to enhance scientometrics. Today, Clarivate Analytics announced the acquisition of Kopernio, the definitive publisher-neutral platform for research workflow and analysis for scientific researchers, publishers and institutions worldwide. Kopernio's vision is to legally provide one-click access to millions of journal articles and academic research papers across the globe, dramatically improving and facilitating access to scientific knowledge. Not only will it revolutionize how academics access research papers, it will also provide unprecedented insights for institutions and publishers into how academics consume this research. These kind of data could feed into article-level scientometric analysis that could, one day, produce a novel way to measure research impact. The path of scientific discovery is long, and every now and then this path is punctuated by a eureka moment. A breakthrough. Today, I'm excited because I believe we are at a new dawn for scientometrics... I'll be back at 1 pm EDT (6 pm GMT) to answer questions. UPDATE I think our time is nearly up! Thanks everyone for your questions, they've been great! I'm happy to come back later and respond to anything I've missed. Where has the time gone? You can find out more about our Kopernio acquisition here: <https://clarivate.com/blog/news/clarivate-analytics-acquires-research-startup-kopernio-accelerate-pace-scientific-innovation/>

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ANNETTE\_THOMAS [R/SCIENCE](#)

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CORRESPONDENCE:

DATE RECEIVED:  
April 11, 2018

Preprinting is growing rapidly in many disciplines, enabling researchers to share drafts of their work prior to formal publication and accelerating constructive feedback, cross-pollination, and discovery. Many funding agencies now formally acknowledge preprints as scholarly objects (<http://asapbio.org/funder-policies>) and permit their citation in grants and reports, and these research objects are also being cited in journal articles.

DOI:  
10.15200/winn.152336.68260

ARCHIVED:  
April 10, 2018

CITATION:  
Annette\_Thomas , r/Science ,  
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Research division at Clarivate  
Analytics and previously the  
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*The Winnower*  
5:e152336.68260 , 2018 , DOI:  
[10.15200/winn.152336.68260](https://doi.org/10.15200/winn.152336.68260)

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As preprints are becoming an ever-greater part of the scholarly record, does Web of Science plan to index them and provide an option to pool citations to preprints with citations to corresponding journal articles? The latter action could encourage journals to provide robust links to all article versions, enhancing opportunities to discover the entire history of a published work.

Thanks! - Jessica

[jpolka](#)

Hi Jessica! It's early days in our new strategy but indexing preprints could be enormously powerful - especially if we can link to the final paper. The same could be said of data itself.

Welcome Annette,

If a layman/woman were to ask you what value scientometrics provides for them, what would you say? Why should they care?

[adenovato](#)

Scientometrics are one of the tools that research managers can use to help drive more, and better, research with the inevitably limited resources made available by governments and business.

These metrics help to identify key research outcomes, the most effective institutions, and groups and emerging research areas of wider significance. They underpin policy decisions that ultimately deliver wealth creation and improve quality of life.

Hi and thanks for joining us today!

Any thoughts of creating a WoS Beall's list or some way to incorporate IF and predatory status?

[PHealthy](#)

Interesting! Web of Science was curating journals and selecting journals for more than 60 years - so way before Beall wrote his list. The point of WoS is to guide researchers - we seek to enrich the records for journals not reduce the info down to the level of a list. WoS places a huge emphasis on the selection and deselection of journals. Our initial reaction is that we don't want to highlight negativity - we seek to encourage positive behavior. As the leading publisher-neutral company in this space, we want to use our wealth of journal data to focus on developing the best standards that guide researchers and can only do it if we're publisher neutral.

Hi Annette, and thank you for doing this AMA.

Maybe, some first-principle type question:

- Who do you think these types of scientometrics and bibliometrics are important for? Researchers? Publishers? Advertisers?
- Something like impact factor is a unsatisfactory metric for many - it is past-looking, it says very little about any given paper, and it is unclear the extent to which the relationship between impact factor and impact of any one study is driven by the science vs the legacy of a journal. What sort of "revolutionary" metrics are you thinking about and how will they get around these problems?
- You write, "When used responsibly scientometrics and bibliometrics offer vital measures of scientific

and research output and impact". But that is the problem. There are all sorts of perverse incentives for researchers to not use them correctly. Their jobs may literally depend on it. How do you get around this problem - if you make a metric important it will almost inevitably be gamed.

[SirT6](#)

Indicators around research and publications can be used by many different groups.

They're not limited by any particular purpose, but some indicators work better for specific contexts.

The Journal Impact Factor (JIF), for example, is an incredibly useful indicator for publishers. The JIF can be a guide for researchers when they need additional information on journals that they might not be familiar with. The problem is that the Impact Factor is being used in ways for which it was never intended. They use other indicators - like the h-index - in equally misconceived ways.

The structured use of these indicators by institutions and agencies have a big influence on researchers, sometimes influencing them to publish in outlets that are less than ideal.

What metrics do you see replacing the impact factor? What were some of the biggest challenges you faced during your time at npg?

[p1percub](#)

What's going to replace it? Nothing can replace the Journal Impact factor. It's THE Journal Impact Factor.

The question is - can we come up with a wider more diverse range of indicators that explain the other features of each serial that are important to different stakeholder groups (authors, peer reviewers, editors, publishers, funders, etc). In part that is why we have re-established the Institute for Scientific Information - to do just that!

My biggest challenge at NPG was to transform Nature - from print to an online platform, from magazines to journals, from regional to global - whilst adding innovation as a new brand value, in addition to quality and authority.

NPG wasn't known for its innovation 25 years ago. I had to harness the talent we had and give them the space and investment, and mindset, to accept failure whilst striving for success and as a result Nature was able to go on and do bigger and bolder things without losing the value of the brand - in fact enhancing the value of the brand.

What other metrics, besides the usual impact factor for journals and h-index for researchers, are Clarivate looking at that, in your opinion, will provide a more accurate and objective assessment of scientific impact and productivity?

[edwinks!](#)

We need to think very seriously about the indicators that would highlight the multiple functions that journals carry, other than being the target for citations in later research. For example, they are a key channel for communicating research outcomes with users in industry and society - but that is very tricky to measure comprehensively and consistently.

Hi Annette, one more question, this one related to ScholarOne!

Peer review is the foundation of our trust in the scientific publication system, yet it is largely conducted in secret. At a recent meeting at HHMI ([asapbio.org/peer-review/summary](https://asapbio.org/peer-review/summary)), scientists, editors, and funders expressed near-unanimous support for publishing the contents of peer review, and also for providing credit to junior researchers (ie, a postdoc or student) who has acted as a co-reviewer, for example by including a text box in the reviewer form to list their names. Are these features supported by ScholarOne, or might they be in the future? And if so, where could journals find information on how to enable them?

Thanks! Jessica

[jpolka](#)

Oh yes! We believe this is hugely valuable which is why we acquired Publons - the leading platform for peer review. I agree peer review is the cornerstone of the scholarly communication process; I agree in the benefits of being more transparent and traceable and giving reviewers credit. I would love to discuss how we could work with HHMI to discuss that further!

What differentiates your vision for Kopernio from that of the creators of similar-in-nature initiatives such as Scihub?

Edit: As [/u/PHealthy](#) notes, SciHub sits on legally questionable grounds. Yet, it garners wide-spread use either way. What would you tell someone looking for research that would convince them the Kopernio initiative is better suited for their needs?

[adenovato](#)

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Comment: For me as researcher scientometrics are not important. I know which journals are good in my field. Scientometrics are important for managers who want to micro-manage scientists. May they have a short life.

Question: For me the most useful function of the Web of Science is finding newer articles that cite articles I am interested in. This is currently a subscription service my university is paying for. Are there any plans to make this information more accessible to researchers from less rich universities and non-academics? Could maybe national science foundations fund this activity for all people in their country and two developing countries?

[VictorVenema](#)

Researchers make decisions about their research; managers make decisions about the research environment. Seems a reasonable proposition.

It also seems a reasonable proposition to endeavor to work with the appropriate organizations to increase accessibility to Web of Science for a much wider range of researchers. We have some such partnerships already and are always willing to consider more.

What do you think of funding agencies that base their granting approach on scientometrics? I work in Italy and we get evaluated based on scientometrics. Which is a ludicrous process: Measure the mean impact factor and all the "cite score" of your publications. Define -somehow- the field where you're working. Compare your scores to that of your colleagues in the same field applying weighting factors according to your name position on the paper. With hilarious results (as a biomedical engineer, you get much more "points" if you are the middle author of a not-very-interesting paper in an average medical journal than if you're the only author of a breakthrough paper in the top biomedical engineering journal).

[lucaxx85](#)

Metrics can be powerful but need to be placed into context. They can help inform good decision making but should not be looked at in isolation.

Hi there! I have lots of older colleagues that show off their skills in using databases like pubmed, web of science, scopus etc... For my generation it makes no sense, we just take a look at Google scholar. Which works incredibly better, provides more information and is actually up to date (compared to web of science which metrics are 1-2 years behind).

So, while in day to day routine I do use exclusively Google scholar, on the other side I'm totally freaking out about the massive abuse of dominant position that Google enjoys also in this field. What's your take on this topic?

[lucaxx85](#)

Today WoS is optimized for high-stake searches. Google is really good at more low-stake searches. With WoS we do want to look at how we satisfy more low-stake searches too and a researcher needs to embrace both at different points in time. And with our acquisition of Kopernio today - we recognize them all and are now in a position to support researchers to access content regardless of the use case.

This AMA is being permanently archived by *The Winnower*, a publishing platform that offers traditional scholarly publishing tools to traditional *and* non-traditional scholarly outputs—because scholarly communication doesn't just happen in journals.

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Great thanks!

Kopernio's vision is to legally provide one-click access to millions of journal articles and academic research papers across the globe, dramatically improving and facilitating access to scientific knowledge.

Couldn't you simply hotlink the DOIs in WoS? That would give one-click access.

[VictorVenema](#)

That would be great if it were so simple! In practice there's a lot of infrastructure missing (or getting in the way). Many publisher platforms require researchers to log in specifically, navigate multiple interstitial pages, wait on laggy redirects, etc. In aggregate that can add up to 15 or more clicks to access a single PDF.

Kopernio takes away these tedious steps by providing true one-click access to articles in WoS and other platforms, saving researchers time and frustration.