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Library Review 1989-2017: Publication and Citation Statistics

Peter Willett
Information School, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK

Abstract

Purpose To provide a bibliometric review of the journal *Library Review* from 1989 until its relaunch in 2018 as *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*.
Design/methodology Bibliometric analysis of 1,084 articles published in *Library Review* in the period 1989-2017
Findings Authors from 69 different countries have published in the journal, with Scotland providing the largest single contribution in terms of authors and institutions. Articles in the journal have been extensively cited, with the citations coming not only from the core library and information science literature but also from journals in a very broad range of disciplines.
Originality This paper extends previous work on articles published in the journal and provides the first detailed study of citations to those published articles.
Keywords Bibliometrics, Citation analysis, *Library Review*, *Scopus*
Article classification General review

Introduction

The journal *Library Review* (hereafter LR) was founded in 1927, its principal aim being to encourage an interest in books for the staff of the many new libraries that were being established at that time throughout the UK (James, 2007). This focus on 'bookish librarianship' and 'curious stories of libraries or bookmen' continued for at least the journal's first half-century (Kinninmont, 1976). In time, the scope gradually broadened, this being accompanied by a marked increase in the number of contributions from beyond the UK and from academic departments of librarianship and information science (LIS). The broadening of scope is reflected in the change of name in 2018 from LR to *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*, which the journal website states is "concerned with innovation and developments in digital information, as they relate to global knowledge, communication and world memory. It covers the creation, management, dissemination and use of the full range of information objects". This provides an opportunity to investigate the bibliometric profile of the journal in the run-up to this change: specifically, this paper discusses the articles in, and the citations to, LR in the period 1989-2017.

A bibliometric analysis of an academic journal uses quantitive data to investigate factors such as changes in the subject-focus of the journal over time, the identification of the key researchers publishing in the journal, and the impact – both of individual articles and of the journal as a whole – on a subject area. The approach is inherently historical in nature, being based on published issues of the journal, but may also have predictive value in, e.g., highlighting

emerging topics that have previously received little coverage in the journal. Such analyses are increasingly common (Anyi *et al*., 2009; Tiew, 1997), especially the case in the LIS literature as exemplified by studies of the *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information* Science (Tella and Olabooye, 2014), *Collection Building* (Singh, 2013), *Electronic Library* (Jena *et al*., 2012), the *Journal of Documentation* (Nebelong-Bonnevie and Frandsen, 2006; Tsay and Shu, 2011), *Library Quarterly* (Young, 2006), and the *Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science* (Bakri and Willett, 2008) *inter alia*.

One of the most detailed LIS studies is that by Furner (2009) of the *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* (formerly the *Journal of Librarianship*). This is an example of a publication study, in that it focusses upon those individuals, organisations and nations that have provided the largest numbers of contributions to the journal. Furner notes that both the individual and organisational frequencies of publication follow a power-law distribution (Newman, 2005), in which a small number of authors provide a large fraction of the total number of articles, with the great majority of authors contributing just a single article. Such distributions are common with bibliometric data, as noted by Davarpanah and Aslekia (2008) in a study of the publication characteristics of 56 different LIS journals in the period 2000-2004. Citation studies focus upon the citations to and from a specific journal, rather than upon the characteristics of the articles published within it, as exemplified by a detailed analysis of the *Journal of Information Science* by Bonnevie (2003) (who compares some of the results with analogous data for the journal *Libri*). Publication characteristics are described but the bulk of her paper focuses upon citations to the journal (including journal self-citations, where an article in a journal cites another article in the same journal), and the scientific impact as denoted by the subject domains of those journals that most frequently cited articles published in the *Journal of Information Science*. Tsay (2011) provides a more extended example of a comparative study in a citation analysis of *Information Processing and Management*, the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* (as it was then named) and the *Journal of Documentation*.

Many other publication and citation studies of LIS journals are discussed in the reviews by Tiew (1997) and Anyi *et al*. (2009). Of particular interest in the present context is the study by Swain *et al.* (2012), who discuss articles published in LR in the five-year period 2007-2011. Aspects covered include the types of contribution, authorship patterns (in terms of both individuals and nations) and the titles of other journals cited in the chosen articles. Although predominantly a publication study there is also some discussion of the most cited articles published in the journal during the review period. The present brief communication covers a more extended timespan (1989 to 2017) and provides a much more extensive analysis of the citations to the journal.

Methodology

LR is indexed in both of the major curated citation databases, the *Web of Science* and *Scopus*. The former started coverage of the journal only as recently as 2015; *Scopus*, conversely, has

data for LR right back to its inauguration in 1927, a total of 2,614 records, and was thus the database of choice for this study, with the results here based on searches of the database carried out in mid-2019. The 2,614 records are divided by *Scopus* into three categories: 1,517 reviews, 1,084 articles and 13 editorials[1]. Of these, the earliest of the editorials dates from 2007, and the earliest of the articles from 1989; prior to this year, all of the records appear to have been recorded as being reviews, irrespective of their actual nature; from then on the term includes not only a large number of book reviews but also literature reviews and also what would appear to be conventional articles. There is very little metadata for the early records; for example, there is no country data for 83% of the pre-1989 records and not even an author for 8% of them. Accordingly, the analyses here have been based on the 1,084 post-1988 records described specifically as articles; this is less of a restriction than might be first thought since it is these that have attracted 81.2% of the total number of citations to the journal for this period.

Results and discussion

The 1989 volume of LR (volume 38) comprised five issues but the number of issues then began to increase, settling on nine issues from 2000 (volume 49) onwards, with each individual issue typically containing four or five articles. The international character of the journal is demonstrated by the articles coming from a total of 69 different countries; moreover the international coverage has increased over the period, as demonstrated in Table 1. This lists the ten largest national contributors (as reflected in the authors' institutional addresses) to the journal over the entire period, and over the sub-periods 1989-2003 and 2004-2017. It will be seen that there has been very little change in the principal national contributors, although the dominance of the UK is much reduced, from 45.4% of the 551 articles from 44 countries in 1989-2003 to 25.1% of the 533 articles from 63 countries in 2004-2017. These changes are illustrated in Figure 1, which shows the publications for the UK, the USA, Nigeria and India – the four nations that appear in all three parts of Table 1 – and for all of the other contributing nations. The figure makes clear the increasing contribution from countries other than these four, and the decreasing prominence of the UK. Indeed, the UK's percentage is further reduced to just 14.1% if only the most recent articles – the 249 in the issues for 2011-2017 – are considered. The increase in the number of countries contributing to the journal demonstrates an enhanced global spread that is appropriately reflected in its new title. That said, it is perhaps surprising that Greece is the only European country apart from the UK to appear in Table 1; indeed, Spain with 12 is the only other such country to have had ten or more articles published. There is hence clear scope for the journal to seek to increase contributions from mainland

[1] The instructions for authors on the LR website (at https://www.emeraldinsight.com/loi/lr) lists the following seven categories: research paper, viewpoint, technical paper, conceptual paper, case study, literature review, and general review. The first five of these would presumably be categorised by Scopus as 'article' and the last two as 'review'. Book reviews are not listed here: while these were an important component of LR for many years it appears to have stopped publishing them at the end of 2015.

Europe, and similar comments apply to the People's Republic of China, which has contributed only 8 articles, the most recent of which appeared as long ago as 2012.

Table 1 and then Figure 1 about here

A substantial part of the UK contribution has come from authors in Scotland, with three of the six authors who contributed at least ten articles to LR being based there: Nicholas Joint, a member of the Andersonian Library at the University of Strathclyde and also the editor of the journal from 2003 to 2006 (44 articles); David McMenemy, a member of the Department of Computer and Information Sciences at the University of Strathclyde and the editor from 2007 to 2011 (15 articles); and Stuart Hannabuss, a member of the School of Information and Media at the Robert Gordon University (10 articles). The other three authors with at least ten articles are Eric Gordon based in Stockport (who published no less than 27 articles on various aspects of library history in the period 1997-2002) and Qun Jiao and Anthony Onwuegbuzie in the USA, most recently at the City University of New York and Sam Houston State University respectively (who were co-authors of ten articles on library anxiety, one of which is included in the most cited articles in Table 3 below).

The strong Scottish influence is also reflected in the editorship of the journal since, with the exception of the period 1984-1987, all of the editors of LR since its start in 1927 until 2012 were based in Scotland (James, 2007). It is thus perhaps hardly surprising that many of the papers considered here have come from that country's academic institutions: the two most productive were the University of Strathclyde and Robert Gordon University as shown in Table 2, which lists the institutions that have made the greatest contribution to the journal. Three other Scottish institutions - the University of Glasgow (nine articles), Glasgow Caledonian University and Edinburgh Napier University (both six articles) - are amongst the total of 37 institutions that contributed more than five articles. The academic, as against the formerly professional, nature of the journal is reflected in the fact that, of these 37, the British Library was the only non-university organization.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 also shows the number of citations that each of these institutions has attracted, where it will be seen that the University of Strathclyde has not only provided by far the largest number of articles but also by far the largest number of citations to its articles. This is due, in part at least, to it being the source of three of the most-cited LR articles (those by MacGregor and McCulloch, by Abdullah and Gibb, and by Buchanan and Salako in Table 3 and discussed further below).

A comparison of the title words for the two periods shows a fair degree of overlap, and hence a considerable degree of consistency in the subject matter of the journal's articles. The Tag Crowd (at https://tagcrowd.com) for the words occurring in the 2004-2017 titles at least 50 times is shown in Figure 2. Of the words here, 28 also appeared in the corresponding figure for the 1989-2003 title-words, and it is hardly surprising that 'academic', 'information',

'education', 'library', 'public', 'services' and 'university' were prominent in both. However, again as might be expected, 'digital' and 'knowledge' were both much smaller in, and 'literacy' and 'social' were both absent from, the corresponding 1989-2003 figure; conversely, 'book', 'cataloguing' and 'publishing' were amongst the words included in that but omitted from Figure 1.

Figure 2 about here

The 1,084 LR articles had attracted a total of 4,400 citations by the end of 2018, with 3,156 (71.7%) of these coming from journal articles but also with significant numbers of citations from conference papers and books. This corresponds to an h-index of 26, i.e., 26 of the articles had been cited at least 26 times. There were 162 citations in 17 languages other than English, the most popular being Spanish (54 articles) and Persian (36 articles). There has been a steady growth in citations as shown in Figure 3, as might be expected as more and more post-1988 articles have become available for citing. Some of the articles are cited over a very long period, e.g., when discussing academic librarians at the University of Ghana, Oduko (2013) cited an LR article from 1989, the very first year of articles discussed here.

Figure 3 about here

The ten most cited articles are listed in Table 3. Three factors stand out: the country-specific nature of several of the articles, this reflecting the discussion above relating to the geographic spread of the contributions; a focus on various aspects of information behaviour; and the very large number of citations to Macgregor and McCulloch (2006). This last is effectively an outlier, having attracted more than twice as many citations as any other article that has ever been published in LR. The reason for this is that, as the authors noted at the time, this was the first review to be published of collaborative tagging, covering not just the emergence of the technology but also highlighting its general applicability for a range of knowledge organisation applications. It hence has a stronger technological focus than the other articles listed in the table, and it is thus hardly surprising that it has attracted citations not only from the LIS community and the social sciences, but also from the computer, decision and engineering science literatures, and more generally: in all the citations encompass 14 of the 27 broad subject categories used by Scopus to characterise articles in the database.

Table 3 about here

The journals shown in Table 4 provided the largest numbers of citations to LR. It is hardly surprising that LR provides the largest number of citations to itself (i.e., journal self-citations) and the other journals listed here are much as one would expect since they would all be regarded as being in the LIS main-stream. That said, it is interesting to note that *Lecture Notes in Computer Science* (including the associated series in bioinformatics and in artificial intelligence) provided 53 citations, the same number as the *Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science*.

Table 4 about here

Citations to LR provide one way of quantifying the academic impact of the journal, and it is hence of interest to identify journals, unlike those in Table 4, that cite LR from what might be regarded as rather different academic disciplines, i.e., occasions when a knowledge export has taken place (Yan *et al*., 2013). In many cases, the citation to LR arises from the use of a standard LIS technique in a non-LIS context. For example, an article in the *Journal of Animal and Plant Sciences* (Nosheen *et al*., 2010) discusses gender-specific sources of information used by people in the Potohar region of north-eastern Pakistan; an article in the *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* (Guillet *et al*., 2016) analyzes the use of social media to market Chinese hotel brands; and Akmal *et al*. (2018) report a bibliometric study of the journal *Production Planning and Control*. These examples of knowledge exports are fairly obvious ones: arguably more interesting are those cases where there is a less obvious reason for the LR material to have had an impact. For example, Chodzaza and Gombachika (2013) in *International Journal of Energy Sector Management* analyse the responses of industrial customers of a public utility in Malawi, citing an evaluation technique described in LR in the context of a Malaysian academic library; Moeck and Anaokar (2006) in *LEUKOS - Journal of Illuminating Engineering Society of North America* describe a new method for illuminance analysis (i.e., measuring the quantity of light due to specific objects, colours and features), citing an LR study of architectural lighting in historic libraries; and Welch *et al*. (2014) in *Journal of Athletic Training* discuss the education of athletics trainers, citing an LR article on the development of information literacy tutorials. As noted in the Introduction, there have been many bibliometric analyses of individual journals reported in the literature, and most of the data reported here is analogous to that appearing in these previous studies. One area of slight difference is the focus here on identifying individual citations that on first glance appear to link unrelated articles but that do, in fact, reflect the influence of LR in unexpected ways: this form of knowledge export might usefully be explored in analyses of other journals.

The breadth of the journal's impact is also reflected when one considers the disciplines of the citing articles – rather than the journals from which those citations come - as reflected by the numbers of citations to LR on the basis of the Scopus broad subject categories. The LR articles themselves are all characterised as belonging only to the Social Sciences category, and it is hence hardly surprising that this category provided the largest number of citations to the journal. However, it receives citations from across the spectrum of academic disciplines as illustrated in Table 5, which lists the ten categories that cited LR most frequently. Scopus uses 27 different categories and journals in all but two of these categories - Dentistry and Veterinary – have provided one or more citations to the journal.

Table 5 about here

It is interesting to note that while there have been significant changes in the national contributions to LR (as detailed in Table 1 and Figure 1), there have not been comparable changes in the journals citing LR and in the subject categories of those citing journals. For example, tables analogous to Table 5 for the periods 1989-2003 and 2004-2017 demonstrate a

near-identical ranking of subject categories (and this is also the case if the analysis is repeated using the periods 1989-2012 and 2013-2018, each of which contributes approximately one-half of the total number of citations to LR).

Conclusions

Since its founding in 1927, LR has evolved from a UK-based journal aimed at the library profession into one that publishes academic research that has been conducted in many countries around the world and that has covered a wide range of topics across the LIS discipline. This paper has provided a bibliometric profile of the journal at an important point in its development, and highlights two areas in which the journal might change in the future. First, the data in Table 1 and Figure 1 suggest that there is considerable scope for further extending the journal's international character. Second, there have been relatively fewer papers on the computing and communication technologies that underlie modern information systems, with the journal focussing instead on the practical applications of such systems. This is exemplified by Table 3, where only the highly cited article by MacGregor and McCulloch has a strong technology focus, and by the title words in Figure 2. With the change of name and the ever-growing digitization of society it will be interesting to see how the journal's profile will change over the next few years given its broader remit.

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1989-2017		1989-2003		2004-2017	
Nation	Articles	Nation	Articles	Nation	Articles
UK	375	UK	241	UK	134
USA	104	Nigeria	59	USA	65
Nigeria	84	USA	39	India	37
India	59	Kenya	24	Malaysia	33
Malaysia	41	India	22	Nigeria	25
Iran	32	Tanzania	13	Greece	24
Kenya	30	Iran	12	Pakistan	23
Pakistan	30	Australia	11	Iran	20
Greece	24	Singapore	11	Canada	17
Australia	23	Ghana	10	Kuwait	17
Countries	69		44		63

Table 1. National contributions to *Library Review*

Institution	Articles	Citations
University of Strathclyde	86	623
Robert Gordon University	23	83
Manchester Metropolitan University	23	72
Moi University	22	51
University of Kuwait	18	175
International Islamic University Malaysia	17	62
University of the Punjab, Lahore	17	62
University of Ghana	16	76
University of West Attica	14	32
University of Ilorin	13	47
University of Botswana	13	122

Table 2. Institutional contributions to *Library Review*

Article	Citations
MacGregor, G. and McCulloch, E. (2006), "Collaborative tagging as a knowledge organisation and resource discovery tool", Vol. 55 No. 5, pp. 291-300	176
Keenan, A. and Shiri A. (2009), "Sociability and social interaction on social networking websites", Vol. 58 No. 6, pp. 438-450	77
Fidzani, B.T. (1998), "Information needs and information-seeking behaviour of graduate students at the University of Botswana", Vol. 47 No. 7, pp. 329-340	55
Abdullah N. and Gibb F. (2008), "Students' attitudes towards e-books in a Scottish higher education institute: Part 1", Vol. 57 No. 8, pp. 593-605	50
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Buchanan S. and Salako. A. (2009), "Evaluating the usability and usefulness of a digital library", Vol. 58 No. 9, pp. 638-651	35
Boekhorst, A.K. (2003), "Becoming information literate in The Netherlands", Vol. 52 No. 7, pp. 298-309	35

Table 3. The most cited articles published in *Library Review*

Journal	Citations
Library Review	252
Library Philosophy and Practice	151
Library Management	121
Electronic Library	106
Journal of Academic Librarianship	88
International Information and Library Review	85
Journal of Librarianship and Information Science	69
New Library World	69
Libri	66
Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science, *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*	53

Table 4: Journals citing *Library Review*

Subject area	Citing articles
Social Sciences	3315
Computer Science	1402
Business, Management and Accounting	528
Arts and Humanities	386
Engineering	196
Decision Sciences	191
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	138
Mathematics	124
Medicine	110
Psychology	49

Table 5: Citations to *Library Review* from journals in Scopus subject categories

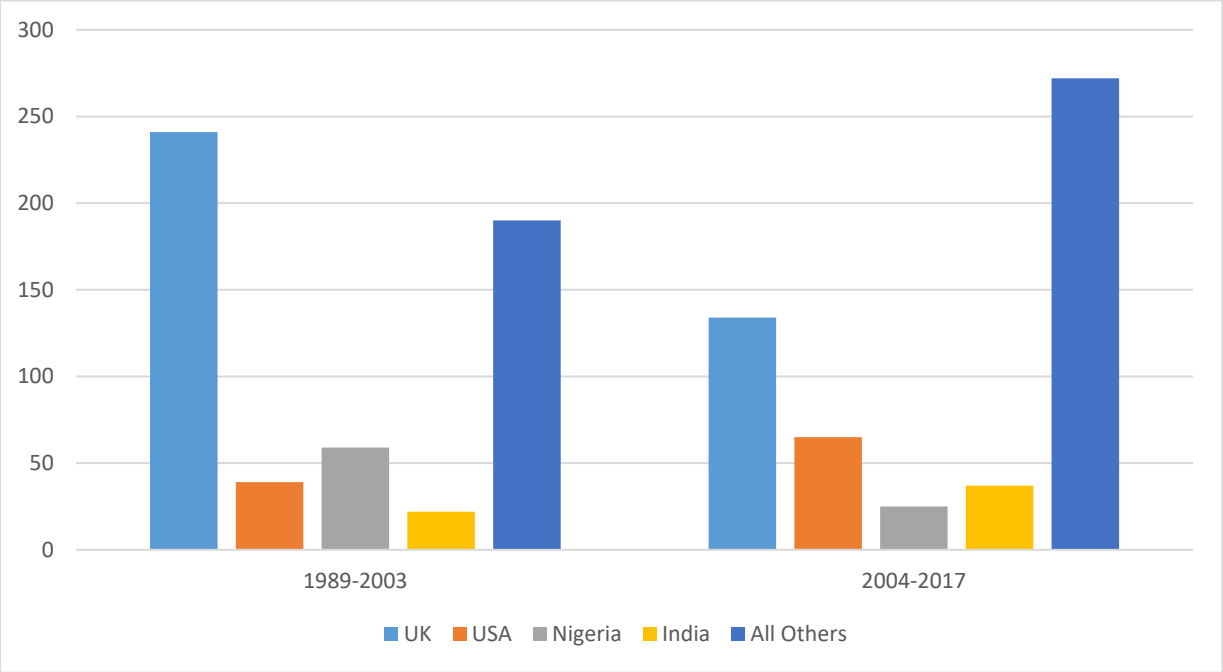

Figure 1: National contributions to *Library Review*

Figure 2: Tag Crowd for words occurring in 2004-2017 LR titles at least 50 times

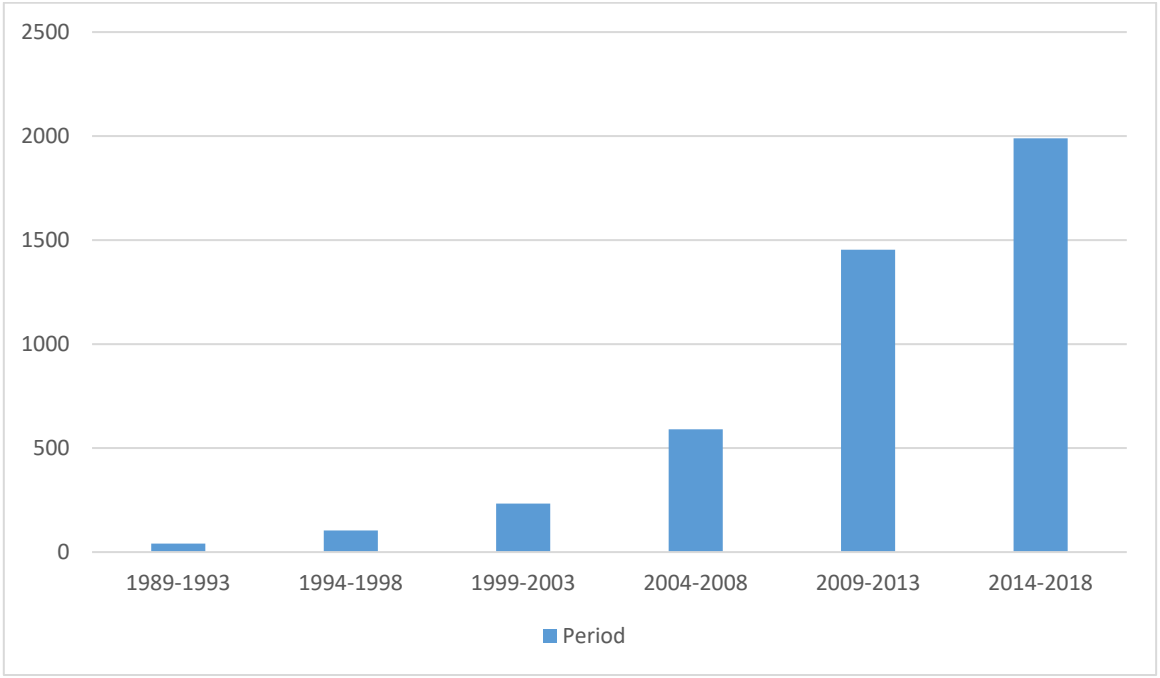

Figure 3: Citations to *Library Review* articles