Snowball Metrics

Statement of Intent

Snowball Metrics are standard indicators about research activity and performance that are valuable in supporting evidence-based decision making. The definition of Snowball Metrics was initiated in the United Kingdom to provide a framework for a small group of research-intensive Higher Education Institutions to work together with a commercial supplier. The goal of the initiative was to achieve a shared understanding and buy-in of a set of high-level measures of academic research, across the spectrum of inputs, throughputs and outputs (such as grant applications and awards, research income, and bibliometric indicators), to enable benchmarking across institutions.

Elsevier recognised this need, following the publication of the JISC-sponsored study on research information management[1], and took the role of commercial supplier within the Snowball Metrics project partners. Elsevier has supported the institutions currently involved in taking forward the recommendations endorsed by JISC and the sector. The institutional project partners and Elsevier have all contributed expertise, data and staff time to the initiative. All parties have provided their resources to the project for free with the aim of agreeing a set of benchmarking metrics and testing these in a working pilot that goes beyond what exists in the sector already, that being perceived as largely retrospective, out-dated and lacking in a holistic assessment of research.

The institutional project partners have now reached a consensus regarding the methodology for an initial group of Snowball Metrics. These methods have been tested by some of the institutional project partners to ensure that they can be generated with a reasonable amount of effort, that is not manually intensive, and the findings of the testing have been fed back into the methodology to optimise scalability. Comparisons of performance take place at the institutional level and across an agreed disciplinary framework, and are not carried out at individual level. Ease of metric generation and scalability is critical to ensure that these robust, commonly understood metrics can be readily updated to reflect the current status of an institution.

We, representatives from the Snowball Metrics project partners listed below, will publish the agreed and tested standard methodologies for the initial group of Snowball

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[1] **"Research information management. Developing tools to inform the management of research and translating existing good practice."**

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University of Oxford, University College London, University of Cambridge, Imperial Colledge London, University of Bristol, University of Leeds, Queen's University Belfast, University of St. Andrews, Elsevier

Metrics in autumn 2012, and make these available on **www.snowballmetrics.com** so that any organisation will be able to use the framework to generate Snowball Metrics.

None of the project partners, including Elsevier, will at any stage apply any charges for the methodology of agreed and tested Snowball Metrics that have been developed. Any organisation is free to use these methodologies for their own purposes, whether these are public service or commercial. Future modifications to published methodologies, national versions, and new agreed and tested Snowball Metrics will continue to be freely published by the Snowball project partners.

The first set of methodologies that will shortly be made available has been developed by the 8 Higher Education Institutions in the UK. We expect that these methods will apply equally well to all UK institutions and thereby begin to support cross-institutional benchmarking. We very much hope to receive input from members of the sector, both within the UK and elsewhere, as to the broader applicability of these methods so that Snowball Metrics that enable both global and national benchmarking can be developed: please use the Contact Us form available at **www.snowballmetrics.com**.

Snowball Metrics are and will continue to be created and owned by Higher Education Institutions. Elsevier is committed to supporting the need to develop and implement standard metrics globally for the support of institutional decision making and cross-institutional benchmarking, and to supporting the development of Snowball Metrics.

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