

Web of Science License to Expire

October 21, 2015

The critical situation with respect to the acquisitions budget of UNB Libraries has become very real with the impending expiry of our current multi-year license for *Web of Science (WoS)* on December 31, 2015. The Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) has negotiated a three-year renewal for its member libraries, but committed as we are to the research agenda, both as an institution and as a library, our financial situation is such that we simply cannot maintain this license. This is a tough reality for UNB as *Web of Science* will be a significant loss. That said, a larger concern is that this cancellation could be the first of many unless circumstances change.

Web of Science and Scopus

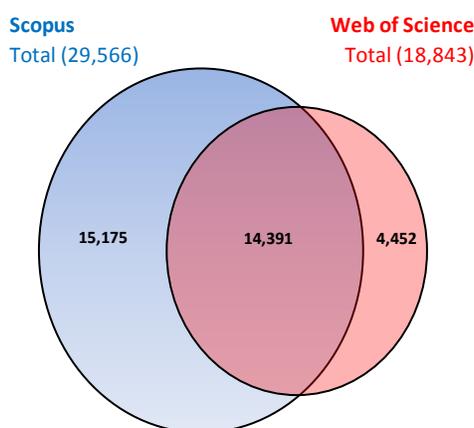
Web of Science is a multidisciplinary abstracting and indexing service which allows the user to search the scholarly literature of most academic disciplines (although it is strongest in the sciences, as its name suggests), and to track the impact factors of specific journals and research. *WoS* and *Scopus* (to which the library also subscribes) are the two key citation databases for academic research.

Web of Science is the original citation database and enjoys the name-recognition and popularity that often accompanies longevity. However, our own usage figures show that *Scopus*, which was launched by Elsevier a decade ago as a competitor to *WoS*, is catching up.

Calendar Year	WoS Searches	Scopus Searches
2008	73,763	18,419
2013	31,080	37,851
2014	49,267	32,050

Comparisons of *Web of Science* and *Scopus* generally conclude that they are both solid databases which complement each other nicely, and overlap significantly as the following graph illustrates.

JISC-ADAT Comparison, Scopus vs Web of Science Journal & Conference Proceedings - 2013



Scopus vs. Web of Science. (2015, October 7). *HLWIKI Canada*. Retrieved 18:38, October 21, 2015 from http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca/index.php?title=Scopus_vs._Web_of_Science&oldid=142514.

WoS reaches further back than *Scopus* to 1900, and we have purchased perpetual access to all of the *WoS* content to 2015. A recent review of *Scopus* showed content reaching back to 1966 although older content is continually being added.

Other comparisons: *Scopus* appears to cover conference proceedings and book chapters better than *WoS* and is a good source of patent information. *Scopus* is also able to satisfy accreditation requirements in Engineering, serving as a reasonable alternative to *Compendex* (formerly *Engineering Index*) which was cancelled earlier due to budget constraints.

Financial Considerations

The base library acquisitions budget is well below where it needs to be if we are to continue supporting teaching and research at the same level as we have done in the last decade. Exacerbating the problem is the foreign exchange situation which has caused us to lose \$500,000 since May 1 of this year alone, and more than a million dollars over the last fourteen months. We were grateful to receive one-time additional funding from University Administration to mitigate the problem in 2015/16, but what appeared at the time to be a sufficient contribution toward the bottom line is now proving to be less than what will be required.

WoS is one of our ten most expensive licensed resources. We simply cannot afford to sign on to a three-year renewal and commit tens of thousands of dollars a year for this product, particularly given that there is a viable alternate source for similar data, and that we have purchased perpetual access to the *WoS* back files. Cancelling *WoS* will mean that we have to rely on *Scopus* for the most current information and metrics, and *WoS* for some retrospective data.

Although the loss of *Web of Science* is regrettable, it is not irrevocable should our circumstances change, in the near or more distant future.

Contact Us

Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information, or to provide comment on this decision. We will be happy to receive any feedback you may have.

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