

Journal Citation Reports Podcast

Journal Citation Reports is a Thomson Reuters database which helps identify impact factors of journals. It covers about 7500 journals and has a science and social sciences edition but data on the arts and the humanities is not included. The available data is reindexed each year and a new edition is made available annually.

To understand how journal impact factors work, let's look at the Australian journal, *Austral Ecology*, by way of an example. In the 2007 edition of Journal Citation Reports or JCR, *Austral ecology* has an impact factor of 1.674. The impact factor is calculated using a formula devised by Thomson Reuters: so looking at data from 2007, the no of citations to articles published in *Austral ecology* in the previous two years, that is, 2005 and 2006, is divided by the total number of articles published in *Austral ecology* in 2005 and 2006.

The Journal Impact Factor is a measure of the frequency with which the average article in a journal has been cited in a particular year. It helps evaluate a journal's relative importance but should not be looked at in isolation, that is, you need to compare the title of particular interest to others in the same field. So we need to find the other listed titles in the same category and compare our journal to the other titles in that list. *Austral ecology* sits in the broader category of Ecology and ranks 54 out of a total of 116 titles worldwide. This means it sits in the top half of the Ecology category internationally.

As the impact factor of each journal will vary from year to year, JCR allows you to view a graph for the impact factor trend over a period of 5 years.

JCR helps identify journals relevant to a particular area of research, and helps identify journals in which to publish. The higher the impact factor of a journal, the more the status of the journal.

At Charles Darwin University, you can access the *Journal Citation Reports* database by going to the Library home page and selecting "J" in the A-Z list of databases. Enter the database by clicking on Journal Citation Reports and once in, you're ready to start searching. First you will need to select the edition that you would like to search: whether the Science edition or the Social Sciences edition, and then the year of coverage. You can then View a group of journals within that edition either by subject category, or by publisher or by country. Alternatively you can search for a specific journal title, or browse the complete A-Z list of titles.

We can select Ecology and search by subject category. When you do this, the titles default to an alphabetical list - you can re-sort this list by impact factor and in this way obtain a ranked list of journals within the chosen category. In addition to the impact factor, other key information such as the immediacy index and the cited half-life of the journal is also available.

JCR allows you to mark the records of interest and print them off, or alternatively export them into your EndNote or your EndNote Web Library.