Scopus

Case study: UC Irvine & UCI Health

From monitoring to measurable impact: *UCI's research story*

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Hector R. Perez-Gilbe
Research Librarian for the Health Sciences at UC Irvine

Background

In his role as Research Librarian for the Health Sciences at University of California, Irvine (UCI), Hector R. Perez-Gilbe juggles a multitude of tasks. When he's not fulfilling his responsibilities as library liaison for four of UCI's five health sciences programs, he's focusing on his collection development duties, teaching, sitting on committees, or contributing to special projects. He's also an active epidemiologist with a research focus on HIV and transgender women.

In all these roles, Hector draws on the support of Scopus, often in association with SciVal. In fact, for Hector, one of the great benefits of Scopus is that "we can work with a partner product like SciVal and greatly advance what we want to do."

In this case study, Hector runs through his key use cases for Scopus, from serving systematic reviews to supporting data-driven decisions. He also shares some of his top Scopus tips.

"I used to use another broad scope database, but the content is more limited, and I haven't been in there for months. I don't teach it anymore, I don't use it anymore. To me, Scopus is way more beneficial."

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Scopus tip #1:

"Find ways to motivate researchers and/or their assistants to contribute to collecting, cleaning and confirming their author profile data in Scopus. Showing them what you already have can be a great incentive — when they realize you don't have the full picture of their achievements, they are often willing to volunteer the missing information."

For Hector and his colleagues, Scopus has satisfied a need that has long been high on their wish list — the ability to ensure their author publication records are accurate and up-to-date. Scopus author profiles help researchers paint a comprehensive picture of their research. And as their publication data informs funding, promotion and collaboration opportunities, getting it right is crucial.

"It's something that we've been wanting to do for years, but it's always been put on the back burner because it's hard and absorbs way too much time," Hector explains. "In theory, it should be easy to capture a faculty member's full profile in one space, but it's not that simple, it really isn't. In fact, without the help of the researcher it is almost impossible."

Leveraging Scopus and SciVal for data cleaning

Hector has developed a simple, three-step approach to tackle issues around author profile data integrity using Scopus and SciVal in unison.

- **Step 1:** He cleans the data as much as he can in Scopus
- **Step 2:** He sends the data to the relevant researcher for further cleaning
- **Step 3:** He makes any final corrections in SciVal so that he can perform analyses whilst these changes are being processed.

According to Hector, one of the "biggest nightmares" for librarians is that while researchers excel at most aspects of their roles, research administration isn't always one of them. "Unfortunately, their priorities generally lie elsewhere."

For example, one of the issues that Hector and his colleagues regularly encounter is a lack of standardization in how researchers refer to themselves when publishing. Hector explains: "Sometimes they use their middle initial, sometimes they don't; sometimes they use a hyphenated last name, sometimes they don't. So, when you do a search, the results are not always clear. And that's frustrating if you're trying to create a bibliography for a department, for example."

For Hector, showing the researcher a visual record of their profile often proves an effective way to grab their attention: "...when they realize you don't have the full picture of their achievements, they are often willing to volunteer the missing information."

Hector has encountered similar challenges when searching on the institution name. "Some people use UCI, some use University of California, Irvine, some use School of Medicine, Irvine. You can't imagine how many different variations of UCI there are." However, this one has proved a little easier to solve, says Hector. "A big thank you to Elsevier. They have created the ability to group all the name variations together under one umbrella in Scopus and SciVal — that has helped a lot."

The power of working in partnership

According to Hector: "Because of the breadth of our relationship with Elsevier, we have more direct contact with them than any other vendor. Our consultant, Linda, is always available to help us out when we have problems, and she has been fantastic. I mean, it's routine for her to say, 'how are you guys doing? Do you need any help?'"

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Monitoring impact

Scopus tip #2:

"Departments are always interested in their impact. With the help of our Elsevier team, we have created departmental groups by grouping Scopus author profiles in SciVal. We compare these to similar institutions to understand what they're doing, who's performing better, who's publishing the most on a specific topic, etc."

For Hector, when it comes to understanding and measuring success, Scopus really comes into its own. "You can't compare other products to Scopus — no other output metrics offer the same kind of depth and coverage. They are fantastic because we can do so much with them; we can see how much research we put out, how successful it is, how we compare to similar institutions — it is the kind of information that administrators and the Office of Research seek all the time.... faculty, department chairs, college deans, they are always amazed when they discover what's possible."

Making data-driven decisions

Scopus tip #3:

"Consult Scopus before you start your research. You can discover who's working on what in your discipline and decide whether to reach out, collaborate, or ask to reuse resources they have already created and had vetted — that can save a lot of time."

Scopus has proved invaluable in Hector's own epidemiology research. When he and his team decided to do a study on transgender women of color in South Florida, their first step was to explore the existing published literature.

"We used Scopus to confirm who was doing HIV research in the transgender population — and where. It turned out that the majority of studies were taking place in San Francisco or New York, while research in the Miami area was limited. That convinced us to move ahead." Importantly, it also alerted them to similar studies, which resulted in Hector's team asking the San Francisco researchers for permission to use some of their survey questions. He recalls: "It was good for us, but it was also good for them, as it meant more citations for their paper."

According to Hector, another benefit of sharing resources is that it helps to make studies taking place across the country comparable "and that has great potential for systematic reviews."

Scopus data has also been informing collection decisions at UCI Health. For example:

- They can track which journals researchers are submitting to that aren't on the current subscription list and consider adding them.
- They can check whether they subscribe to high-impact journals in fields where their research output is high: "If we don't already subscribe to them, adding them to our collection might provide researchers with more research material and a new title to submit to."

"Scopus is very well-received here at UCI — it is growing in content, the social sciences component is becoming stronger and stronger. These developments are great for us as we don't have to go to other databases to fill in the gaps."

"Scopus has helped us build a clearer picture of what's happening in specific areas or disciplines of research."

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Supporting systematic reviews

Scopus tip #4:

"My undergrad is in agricultural sciences and I always talk to my students about the importance of 'harvesting' search terms. For example, they need to harvest more and better terms if they want their search strategies to improve. In fact, we often begin with Scopus and use the terminology we harvest there to search specialist databases."

While Scopus has always featured on the list of databases consulted for systematic reviews at UCI Health, in recent years, Hector has seen a shift in emphasis. "More and more, reviewers of systematic reviews want to see researchers looking further afield than traditional biomedical databases like PubMed and CINAHL. They are looking for evidence of a more multidisciplinary approach; for example, if we look at public health, there is a lot of sociology in there. Scopus provides that breadth of content."

About UCI Health

Part of University of California, Irvine (UCI), UCI Health is comprised of two elements:

- The UCI School of Medicine is ranked one of the top 50 U.S. medical schools for research by *U.S. News & World Report*. Each year, the school's 1,011 full- and part-time faculty and 850 volunteer faculty members educate more than 400 medical students and train more than 700 residents and fellows. The school has 24 departments, ranging from basic science research to clinical medical and surgical specialties.
- The UCI Medical Center is the principal clinical facility for UCI Health and the UCI School of Medicine's teaching and research programs. For 18 consecutive years, the medical center has been rated among the nation's best hospitals by *U.S. News & World Report*, and is among the top 50 U.S. medical centers for gynecology and urology.

The School of Medicine's close research, clinical and teaching relationship with the Medical Center has helped to position UCI Health as a regional and national leader in translational medicine.

Scopus

Scopus provides comprehensive, curated and trusted data—giving academic leaders the clarity and confidence to demonstrate impact and act decisively in an increasingly complex research landscape.

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