

Growth of Literature on Bradford's Law

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the literature produced on Bradford's Law from 1934 to June 2012. The study compiled 936 documents produced by 1,123 authors, working in sixteen languages to communicate the results of their research, with English the leading language, followed by Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese. The study reveals the fifteen most productive authors, all of which work in English in both academic journals and conference settings. This literature is growing exponentially ($R^2 = 0.974$), at a rate of 5.4% per year and doubling in size every 13.2 years.

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Keywords: Bradford's law; Exponential growth; Bibliometrics; Infometrics; Scientometrics.

RESUMEN

El crecimiento de la literatura sobre la ley de Bradford

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Se analiza la literatura producida sobre la ley de Bradford desde 1934 hasta junio del 2012. Se encontraron 936 documentos producidos por 1 123 autores diferentes. Estos autores utilizaron 16 idiomas para comunicar los resultados de sus investigaciones; el inglés fue el idioma dominante, seguido del chino, español y portugués. Se identificó también a 15 autores como los más productivos, quienes publican sus investigaciones en inglés, en la forma de artículos en revistas académicas, y las presentan en congresos del área. Esta literatura crece de forma exponencial ($R^2 = 0.974$), a una tasa de 5.4 % al año y duplica su tamaño cada 13.2 años.

Palabras clave: Ley de Bradford; Crecimiento de la literatura; Bibliometría; Informetría; Cienciometría.

INTRODUCTION

The term “literature” refers to the subset of documents published on a given topic. Generally these documents are scientific modalities such as journal papers, book chapters, papers read at conferences, pamphlets, monographs, books, academic theses and grey literature, etc. The term can convey diverse levels of granularity; for example, it may refer to a body of general literature, as in the literature on chemistry or of the field of chemistry; and it can also be employed to specify a narrower range of documents, such as the literature on the greenhouse effect. What is held as knowledge in a given scientific field, however, extends beyond the formal literature; and even though most of this knowledge issues from this literature “we must look at knowledge of any given field as consisting of three layers. First, there is original research carried out by researchers that is subsequently published. Then there are the systematic or conceptual reviews that come in response

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