

# A Preliminary Study for the Creation of a Greek Citation Index in the Humanities and the Social Sciences (GCI – H&SS)

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**Abstract:** *This preliminary study aims at examining the major policy issues regarding the formation of a Greek Citation Index. The National Documentation Centre in 2011 has undertaken the task and it is at the stage of establishing policies and setting the goals, the parameters and the collaborations for the currying out of the project. The study examines issues such as:*

- a. *the selection of humanities and social sciences as a start of point for the citation index,*
- b. *the need to set the goals and objectives of the index in view of the use of impact factor for the assessment of academics and the issues arising from such practices*
- c. *the comparison of international to national production of citation indices*
- d. *the mechanism needed to establish policies regarding the use of standards, selection of material, the compliance with repository policies and open access practices*
- e. *the need to assess the situation within the framework of language (and alphabet) differences, demographics and audience, scientific production within the need to make Greek scientific publications available to the international scientific community and finally*
- f. *the decision regarding the creation of an independent national citation index or incorporate it as a part of one of the international citation indices (ERIH, Web of Science, Scopus)*

**Keywords:** *Citation index, Humanities,*

indexes, especially on the most widely known Citation Index by the Institute for Scientific Information (Thomson Reuters)<sup>3</sup> and Scopus (Elsevier)<sup>4</sup> and the European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH)<sup>5</sup> along with some national efforts with main example the Indian Citation Index (ICI)<sup>6</sup> and the Spanish Citations in Economics (CitEc)<sup>7</sup> carried out by the Valencia Economic Research Institute. In that respect a literature review was carried out along with a web search and applied inquiries on the major citation indices available today on line<sup>8</sup>.

Goals, policies on inclusion of published research, issues on impact factor, major concerns on distribution and use were examined within the Greek parameters imposed by language barriers, readability and usability.

## **B. The project's framework**

The National Documentation Centre, got a grant from the EU Funded Program “Digital Plan” with the title “National Information System for Research and Technology- Social Networks – Digital Content produced by users: Documentation”. One of the main activities of the project is the creation of the “Greek Reference Index”. The project has just started in March 2011 and this study is the preliminary findings regarding the undertaking.

The project was launched with a focus on the humanities and the social sciences as it was evident that the lack of any resources on those disciplines made the project even more imperative. Greek scientists, due to the nature of their disciplines publish their work in international journals which are indexed either in the Web of

## **I. PURPOSE**

This preliminary study aims at exploring the major issues regarding policies for the creation of a Greek Citation Index in the Humanities and the Social Sciences (GCI – H&SS). It also serves, as a guideline for decision making and the implementation of the GCI – H&SS.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### **A. Methods**

An initial investigation was carried out to determine the international practices on the formation of citation

<sup>3</sup> Social Science Citation Index (2011). Thomson Reuters. [http://thomsonreuters.com/products\\_services/science/science\\_products/a-z/social\\_sciences\\_citation\\_index/](http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/science_products/a-z/social_sciences_citation_index/)

<sup>4</sup> Sciverse (2011). Elsevier. <http://www.info.sciverse.com/Home>

<sup>5</sup> European Science Foundation (2011). European Reference Index for the Humanities <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/erih-european-reference-index-for-the-humanities.html>

<sup>6</sup> Indian Citation Index (2011). The Knowledge Foundation. <http://www.indiancitationindex.com/ici.aspx?target=aboutICI>

<sup>7</sup> Citations in Economics (2011). Valencia Economic Research Institute. <http://citec.repec.org/faq.html>

<sup>8</sup> See Table 1

Science or Scopus. Contrary to that, researchers in the humanities and especially those with subjects related to Greek history, literature and culture publish mostly in Greek journals which are not indexed locally and are not part of international indices. At this point it should be mentioned that there are no Greek indexing services available. Therefore, the need to focus on humanities and the social sciences was evident as the lack of an index on materials, not indexed anywhere, would cover a definite scientific and informational need.

### C. Process and methodology

As a first step the fields of humanities and social sciences were depicted and prioritized by weighing the needs of use, volume of production by Greek scholars and subjects of “Greek” interest such as Greek literature, Greek civilization and Greek history.

Secondly, a pilot search was conducted for determining the Greek scientific periodicals published in the humanities and the social sciences. The preliminary search yielded 45 journals on the humanities and 40 on the social sciences. It was evident that these journals represented the top scientific production and their publishers were mostly research institutes and universities.

The need to go further and locate locally produced and commercial scientific publications lead to the development of a strategic plan based on the following axes:

- search of Greek bibliographic databases including the National Library’s catalogues, academic libraries’ union catalogue and subject bibliographic databases developed by the National Documentation Centre
- search of publishers’ catalogues
- university and research centre publications and related activities
- search through the repository databases
- and web search targeting mostly e- journals (McVeigh, 2004)<sup>9</sup>

A selection process was developed based on:

Step 1: determination of publication type

During this first process a policy was formulated excluding reprints, non scientific newsletters and works of popular science.

Step 2: data collected through bibliographic description such as publisher, frequency, volume of publications, endurance through time and type of publisher are to be input on a form and publications will go to the third step for further description

Step 3: full description of publication

<sup>9</sup> Marie McVeigh. Open Access journals in the ISI Citation Database: Analysis of impact factors and citation patterns. Thomson Scientific. October 2004. <http://science.thomsonreuters.com/m/pdfs/openaccesscitations2.pdf>

- Data regarding the status of the publisher, his yearly production, his collaborations with scientific institutions and his length of presence on publishing are to be documented.
- Size of publication, nature of works included, their length, frequency of publication, indexing, distribution and availability are also to be documented
- Publishing policies focusing mostly on peer reviewing processes, percentage of acceptances and standardization of references are also to be recorded.

Based on the above a weighing indicator is to be developed based mostly on the frequency that each criterion is met and by the corresponding number of publications. A “priority” list will be formulated that will indicate the succession of publications for the indexing process.

At this point, a discussion on developing a scaled categorization for publications was extensively discussed but after examining the pros and cons the idea was discarded. The benefits of such a list would be only for an internal management for the index whilst this could bring about an arbitrary categorization and pose a threat of mistrust for the index in the scientific community.

The collection of data is set to be done online through the National Documentation Centre’s web page where all information regarding the project and the relevant form to be filled will be posted.

Special committees per discipline are to be formed to evaluate the data collected per publication and approve its incorporation in the Citation Index.

### D. Major issues and concerns

Some of the major issues discussed regarding the inclusion of publications in the Greek Citation Index include:

- Inclusion of past issues of journals and retrospective indexing. In this respect the policy is to start from the current issues and go on retrospectively starting from the most recent ones and going backwards
- Setting a cutoff date for submissions of data by publishing bodies for inclusion in the index. This policy, though convenient for the time management of the project, is still under consideration as it entails the danger of leaving out several worthwhile publications
- Inclusion of dissertations. This is a process normally done by universities as a measure of scientific quality. However, the NDC is the official body of gathering and cataloguing all Greek dissertations and has an extensive database of dissertations produced in Greek

Universities and/or dissertations produced by Greeks abroad. In this respect, it seems that a Citation Index carried out by the NDC is almost expected to include the dissertations.

- balancing the representation of sciences and
- balancing between influx and lack of sources

An issue that is also under discussion is the production of indicators based on data gathered from the citation index such as impact factor, aggregated impact factor and immediacy index. Given the interest in scientometrics (Harnad, 2008)<sup>10</sup> and webometrics (Björneborn and Ingwersen, 2004)<sup>11</sup> this is a highly expected product of the project and the academic community is looking forward to it. In spite of the long discussion and often abusive use of impact factor in Greek academic selection of faculty members, the value of the impact factor indicator stands in itself as a means of scientometrics. On that note we point out that, Greek academic journals in the humanities being secluded by language the barrier and the restrictions imposed by the lack of indexing end up having citations that are characterized by:

- Their truthfulness
- Their thorough investigation
- The lack of standardization (formats such as Harvard or Chicago Manual of Style), though they present full data
- The lack of wide-ranging citations
- Extensive referrals to foreign publications (this is mostly due to the availability of sources such as databases and indexes)

In that respect we believe that the data gathered from these publications will reflect a “real” impact factor (EASE 2008)<sup>12</sup> to journals. Difficulties, such as the lack of standardization can be overcome easily.

Finally, another major issue that is on the top of the agenda for the National Documentation Centre is the creation of an independent “Greek Citation Index” or to make it as a part of an international effort such as ERIH, SSCI or Scopus. From the preliminary steps of this

<sup>10</sup> Harnad, S. (2008) Validating Research Performance Metrics Against Peer Rankings. *Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics*, 8 (11). Ανακτήθηκε 9/7/2011 <http://eprints.ecs.soton.ac.uk/15619>

<sup>11</sup> Lennart Björneborn and Peter Ingwersen (2004). "Toward a basic framework for webometrics". *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 55 (14): 1216–1227. Retrieved 8/7/2011 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/asi.20077/>

<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting the statement of the European Association of Scientific Editors regarding the use of impact factor, a great discussion is debating not the production but rather the use of impact factor. European Association of Scientific Editors (2008). **EASE statement on inappropriate use of impact factors.** [http://www.ease.org.uk/artman2/uploads/1/EASE\\_statement\\_I Fs\\_final.pdf](http://www.ease.org.uk/artman2/uploads/1/EASE_statement_I Fs_final.pdf)

effort contact has been made with the European effort of ERIH, where a contribution to the index is on the way. This however, does not exclude the possibility of creating a national index that contributes to the European (ERIH), very much like the model of Europeana Library and Europeana Local Library.

Index	Proprietor	Includes	Available through
Google scholar	Google	All	Google
Science Citation Index	Thomson Reuters	6,500 journals 150 sciences 1900 onwards	Web of Sci / Web of Kno
Social Science Citation Index	Thomson Reuters	2,474 journals 50 sciences 1956 onwards	Web of Sci
Arts and Humanities Citation Index	Thomson Reuters	1.300 journals 16 sciences of the humanities 1980 onwards	Dialog
Patents Citation Index Scopus	Thomson Reuters	7.8 million patents	Dialog
	Elsevier	18,500 titles Sciences, social sciences, health sciences, applied sciences, humanities, arts	Web / subscription
<b>ERIH</b>	European Science Foundation	14,000 journals Humanities	Web/ Free
Indian Citation Index	Knowledge Foundation	1,000 journals	Knowledge Foundation / subscription
Citations in Economics	VERI	All subjects 302,400 items Economics	Web/free

Table 1 Citation indexes

The major concern for creating an index which will be part of the international and commercial effort of ISI or Elsevier (SSCI and Scopus) is that the parameters imposed for journal inclusion are not always relevant or applicable to Greek scientific publishing. For example, significant journals do not follow standards for citations or their rate of recurrence is not regular having lengthy intervals between issues etc. These facts will have a

fatal effect on Greek scientific journals when put into the framework of citation indices such as Scopus or SSCI. Furthermore, language barriers have to be dealt with in any case, even in the case of a national index. NDC is planning a bilingual index so as to meet one of the main goals of the work to make Greek scientific production available to their international counterparts.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

#### Stating the goals and objectives of the Greek Citation Index

Based on the findings of the preliminary research, the initial scope and goals of the Index became more definite and precise. The initial scope of creating a tool for the use of Greek researchers and information professionals in the humanities and the social sciences was formulated and further specified to encompass:

- ✓ The enhancement of research
- ✓ The revealing of Greek scientific production - which is published in Greek language and not indexed- through the use of indexing metadata in English
- ✓ The application of bibliometric, scientometric and webometric methods
- ✓ The adoption of international indicators, such as impact factor, aggregated impact factor and immediacy index and their implementation within the Greek environment. Parameters arising from language, demographics and publishing practices of the country will be taken into account.
- ✓ The promotion of scientific works, their authors and their publishers
- ✓ The availability of the aforementioned material to the international scientific community

And specifically to create:

- ✓ A tool to be used by researchers in the humanities and the social sciences in order to draw from, verify and substantiate scientific references; to enhance collaboration among colleagues and institutions and to provide the basic means for scientometrics.
- ✓ A tool to be used by information professionals in order to enhance information retrieval in specific fields; to improve subject organization of scientific publications; to provide the basic means for measuring use of information sources, along with the boosting of the use of repositories, the exchange of data and the use of standards.

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