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## Regional Content Expansion in Web of Science®: Opening Borders to Exploration

by Jim Testa, Director of Editorial Development

Thomson Reuters extends the power of its [Journal Selection Process](#) by focusing on regional journals. The goal of this initiative is to enrich the collection of important and international journals now covered in *Web of Science* with a number of superbly produced whose content is of specific regional importance.

Since its inception nearly fifty years ago by [Eugene Garfield, PhD](#), the primary goal of Selection Process has been to identify those journals which formed the core literature social sciences, and arts & humanities. These journals publish the bulk of scholarly research, and have the highest citation impact published today. The journals selected for the *Web of Science* are, in essence, the best publications that meet the broadest research needs of the international community of researchers. They have been selected on the basis of their high publishing standards, their editorial diversity of their contributing authors and editorial board members, and their citation frequency and impact. International journals selected for the *Web of Science* represent the highest standards in the world of scholarly publishing.

In recent years, however, the user community of the *Web of Science* has expanded beyond what was once a concentration of major universities and research facilities in the United States and Western Europe to an internationally diverse group including virtually all major universities and research centers in every region of the world. Where once the Thomson Reuters sales offices were concentrated in Philadelphia and London, local staff are now committed to the service of users in offices in Japan, Singapore, Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Taiwan, India, and Korea.

As the global distribution of *Web of Science* expands into virtually every region on earth, the importance of regional scholarship to our emerging regional user community also grows. Regional scholarship effectively extends the scope of the Thomson Reuters Journal Selection Process beyond the collection of the great international journal literature: it now moves to include the regional journal literature. Its renewed purpose is to identify, evaluate, and select the best regional journals that target a regional rather than an international audience. Bringing the best titles into the *Web of Science* will illuminate regional studies that would otherwise not be known to the broader international community of researchers.

In the Fall of 2006, the Editorial Development Department of Thomson Reuters began a monumental task. Under the direction of Maureen Handel, Manager of Journal Selection, subject editors compiled a list of over 10,000 scholarly publications representing all areas of social science, the arts, and humanities. Over the next twelve months the team was able to identify and select regional journals for coverage in the *Web of Science*.

### The Web of Science Regional Journal Profile

These regional journals are typically published outside the US or UK. Their content covers a wide range of topics of regional interest or that are presented with a regional perspective. Authors are primarily from the region rather than an internationally diverse group. Bibliographic information is provided for the exception of some arts and humanities publications that are by definition in native

literature studies). Cited references must be in the Roman alphabet. All journals selected on time and are formally peer reviewed. Citation analysis may be applied but the real regional journal is measured by the specificity of its content rather than its citation impact.

### Subject Areas and Their Characteristics

These first 700 journals selected in 2007 included 161 Social Science titles, 148 Clinical Medicine titles, 108 Agriculture/Biology/Environmental Science titles, 95 Physics/Chemistry/Earth Science titles, 61 Engineering/Computing/Technology titles, 61 Arts/Humanities titles, and 38 Life Science titles. Editors' exploration of each subject area surfaced hidden treasure.

#### Social Sciences:

The European Union and Asia Pacific regions yielded over 140 social science titles. Subject areas such as business, economics, management, and education have been enriched with regional coverage. Several fine law journals have been selected to provide balance in an area normally dominated by US journals. Because of the characteristically regional nature of many studies in the social sciences, this area provides a rich source of coverage that would otherwise not be available to the international community.

#### Clinical Medicine:

Several regional journals dealing with General Medicine, Cardiology, and Orthopedics have been selected. Latin America, Asia Pacific, and European Union are all well represented here. Research in Surgery is a growing area in regional journals. Innovative and other novel surgical technology is no longer limited to the developed nations; it now originates in China and India as well and has potential use internationally.

The spread of diseases such as bird flu and SARS eastward and westward from Southeast Asia is a high interest topic regionally and internationally. In some countries defensive practices and, if enough time elapses, vaccines. Future studies on these critical subjects will now be available in *Web of Science*.

#### Agriculture/Biology/Environmental Sciences

Many of the selected regional titles in this area include new or endemic taxa of plants and animals globally. Likewise regional agriculture or environmental issues are now known worldwide. Many titles are devoted to niche topics such as polar/tropical environment issues, or tropical agronomy. Desertification has heightened the volume of literature from central Asian countries. Iranian journals report voluminously on native, desert tolerant plants and animals that may soon be in demand by desert threatened countries.

#### Physics/Chemistry/Earth Sciences:

Regional journals focused on various aspects of Earth Science are now available in *Web of Science*. These include titles focused on geology, geography, oceanography, meteorology, climatology, paleontology, remote sensing, and geomorphology. The inherently regional nature of these studies provides a unique view of the subject and brings forward studies heretofore hidden.

#### Engineering/Computing/Technology:

Engineering is a subject of global interest. Regional Journals in this area typically present subject matter as researched by regional authors for their local audience. Mechanical Engineering studies are well represented, providing solutions to engineering problems arising from local geological, social, environmental, climatic, or economic factors.

#### Arts & Humanities:

The already deep coverage of Arts & Humanities in *Web of Science* is now enhanced by additional regional publications focused on such subjects as History, Linguistics, Archaeology, and Religion. Journals from countries in the European Union, Latin American, Africa, and Asia Pacific regions are included.

#### Life Sciences:

Life Sciences subject areas lending themselves to regional studies include parasitology, micro-biology, and pharmacology. A specific example of valuable regional activity is stem cell research. The illegality of stem cell studies in an increasing number of developed countries has moved the research to various Asian countries where there is great interest inside and outside of the region.

## CONCLUSION

The primary mission of the Journal Selection Process is to identify, evaluate and select international and regional journals for coverage in the *Web of Science*. These are the journals that have the greatest potential to advance research on a given topic. In the pursuit of this goal, ISI has partnered with many publishers and societies worldwide in the development of the Journal Selection Process. As an important by-product of the steady application of the Journal Selection Process, ISI is actively involved in raising the level of research communication as present objective standards described in the Journal Selection Process will now be focused on a more diverse and expansive body of literature. Our hope, therefore, is not only to enrich the editorial content of *Science*, but also to expand relations with the world's primary publishers in the achievement of a mutual goal: more effective communication of scientific results to the communities we serve.

This essay was compiled by James Testa, Senior Director, Editorial Development & Production. Special thanks to Editorial Development staff members Maureen Handel, Mariana Bolch, Chonka, Lauren Gala, Anne Marie Hinds, Katherine Junkins-Baumgartner, Chang Liu, Luisa Rojo, and, Nancy Thornton for their critical reading and comments.

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