Slaying "I" Monsters: The Pros and Cons of Using SSCI as a Benchmark of Productivity

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There’s a Global Health Issue

I first noticed it in Singapore

But more so in East Asia

It is Particularly Acute in Taiwan

And in South Korea
No, it is not Psy...  
(that is a different type of virus)  
(Gangnam Style)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0&feature=kp

No, it is no longer SARS...

Nor is it H1N1...

Or H5N1 (i.e., Bird Flu)...

It is the use of:  
Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)

And...  
Science Citation Index (SCI)
As well as...
Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI)

For much decision making.
Per one of my students from Singapore:
“SSCI is very important in Singapore. In order to ramp up the University ranking, the key way to stay in the university is to publish. If SSCI is important for the University ranking system, then it will be important in competitive Singapore. =)” (Quoted from June 14, 2014)

What is it?
(My friends in Taiwan call it the “I-Monster”)

Audience Poll #1:
Have you seen this I-Monster around?

Slaying “I” Monsters

Audience Poll #2:
Who wants to help catch and slay a few monsters?
Time to List the Pros and Cons

Part I: Pros of SSCI (SCI & A&HCI)

Pro #1. Provides Goals and Targets to Strive Toward (i.e., a focus)

Pro #2. Provides a common Lingo

Pro #3. Measure or Benchmark for Performance (e.g., monthly, quarterly, or annual reports)

Pro #4. Scholarly Accomplishments to Analyze, Compare, Celebrate
Pro #5. International Comparisons

Pro #6. Sense of Pride, Identity, or Emotional Lift

Pro #7. Boosts Journal Quality

March 27, 2013
Disciplinary action:
How scientists share and reuse information is driven by technology but shaped by discipline, Nature
http://www.nature.com/news/disciplinary-action-1.12668

March 27, 2013
Investigating journals:
The dark side of publishing (The explosion in open-access publishing has fuelled the rise of questionable operators), Declan Butler, Nature
http://www.nature.com/news/disciplinary-action-1.12668

March 27, 2013
Sham journals scam authors:
Con artists are stealing the identities of real journals to cheat scientists out of publishing fees. Declan Butler, Nature
http://www.nature.com/news/sham-journals-scam-authors-1.12681
April 7, 2014
Scientific Articles Accepted
(Personal Checks, Too)
Gina Kolata, The New York Times

Pro #8. Higher Level Articles

March 27, 2013
Open access:
The true cost of science publishing (Cheap open-access journals raise questions about the value publishers add for their money). Richard Van Noorden, Nature
http://www.nature.com/news/open-access-the-true-cost-of-science-publishing-1.12676

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http://www.nature.com/news/open-access-the-true-cost-of-science-publishing-1.12676

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http://www.nature.com/news/open-access-the-true-cost-of-science-publishing-1.12676

Pro #9. Community of Bonded and Supportive Scholars
Part II: Cons of SSCI (SCI & A&HCI)

I-Monsters in Taiwan

One person later pointed out that the "I" monster in Taiwan not only includes SSCI but also SCI (Science Citation Index) and A&HCI (i.e., Arts & Humanities Citation Index)...this three-headed "I" monster or beast "has totally slayed Taiwan's merit and value system for Taiwanese scholars and professors."
"Some universities even have adopted an "I" point system, i.e., the promotion and merit of a professor are based on the number of points accumulated by publishing a certain number of "I" articles. One very "strange" requirement in Taiwan's academia is that a doctoral student is not able to graduate without accumulating enough "I" points."

By the way, when I was in Taiwan last month, I was told by several senior professors who were not participating in the "I" club that the higher education system in Taiwan has become an "I" system. This "I" system has been breeding more and more "I" monsters that need to be slaughtered. Instead, it is the 160 or so universities located on that small "I"sland that are being strangled. Remember those scare tactics in "Monster University."

Con #1. Research Publication takes Priority over Value Creation

Con #2. Research-Practice Gap Widens
(lack of caring or concern about true impact or reality)
Audience Poll #3:
Is there any hope?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIFJLMyUwrg
As a result, there is a sense that they care little for the implementation of their research findings and ideas. And the gap continues to widen between researchers and practitioners with each passing day, month, and year. Is there any hope Obi Wan Kenobe?

Con #3. Publications Skewed toward those with Technology Backgrounds

Con #4. Greed Factor
(e.g., chasing bonuses, raise, etc.)

Con #5. Values Messed Up
(i.e., publications more important than the actual results)

Con #6. Easy Journal Syndrome

Con #7. Distinguished Title and Status Goals
(i.e., lack of genuine interest in field)
Con #8. Limited Journal Selection

Con #9. Traditions Lead to More Traditions (narrow topics, stagnant field)

Con #10. Field Becomes Narrowly Focused (periphery shortchanged)

Con #11. Journal Editorial Board Dominance

Con #12. English Dominance

Con #13. Narrow-Minded Recruitment Practices
**Con #14. SSCI is Corporate**

**Personal Pause #2:**
Half-way done with cons...who has a comment now?

**Con #15. Impact Factor Ranking Manipulations**

**Con #16. Creativity and Spontaneity is Shortchanged**

**Audience Poll #4:**
Read any good books lately?
A = Yes
B = No

**Book #1. Invent to Learn:**
Making, Tinkering, and Engineering in the Classroom
Sylvia Libow Martinez & Gary Stager (2013)
http://www.inventtolearn.com/
Invent to Learn:
Making, Tinkering, and Engineering in the Classroom
Sylvia Libow Martinez & Gary Stager (2013)
http://www.inventtolearn.com/
Using technology to:
• Making,
• Tinkering
• Repairing,
• Inventing,
• Customizing
– the things we need brings engineering, design, and computer science to the masses.

Finding Your Element:
How to Discover Your Talents and Passions and Transform Your Life
Sir Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica (2013)
http://www.inventtolearn.com/
• Find your zone (deep in the throes of exploration and personal passion)
• Think differently (make fresh connections and analogies; avoid groupthink)
• Do something, develop your creative ideas
• Use your imagination, play with ideas
• Free and open exchange of ideas
• Encourage expression of personal ideas/feelings

Book #2. Finding Your Element:
How to Discover Your Talents and Passions and Transform Your Life
Sir Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica (2013)
http://www.inventtolearn.com/

Book #3. Out of Our Minds:
Learning to be Creative
By Sir Ken Robinson (2011)
http://www.inventtolearn.com/

Book #4. Makers:
The New Industrial Revolution (DIY Culture)
Chris Anderson (2012)
http://www.inventtolearn.com/

Makers:
The New Industrial Revolution (DIY Culture)
Chris Anderson (2012)
• People make products (and from home)
• Technology (e.g., 3-D printing) makes us all manufacturers
• Instant connections to potential customers
• Hold up things you personally design
• Desktop fabrication
• Do-it-yourself (DIY) industry
Tony Wagner (2012)
http://creatinginnovators.com/

Creating Innovators
Tony Wagner (2012)
http://creatinginnovators.com/
- Play
- Passion
- Purpose and life goals
- Open cultures of innovation and interdisciplinary problem solving
- Collaboration
- Intrinsic motivation

Book #6. Creativity, Inc.
Ed Catmull, President of Pixar Animation and Disney Animation
http://www.creativityincbook.com/

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http://www.creativityincbook.com/
- Give a good idea to a mediocre team, and they will screw it up. But give a mediocre idea to a great team, and they will either fix it or come up with something better.
- If you don’t strive to uncover what is unseen and understand its nature, you will be ill prepared to lead.
- It’s not the manager’s job to prevent risks. It’s the manager’s job to make it safe for others to take them.

Con #17. Lack of Passion and Interest

Con #18. Elitism Reigns Supreme
(and the less important and inferior are known)
Con #19. Rats in a Cage
(i.e., do “this” and then “this” and then “THIS!!”)

Remember the Outer Limits?
“We control the vertical and the horizontal”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CtjhWhwZ18

“There is nothing wrong with your television. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission. If we wish to make it louder, we will bring up the volume. If we wish to make it softer, we will tune it to a whisper. We will control the horizontal. We will control the vertical. We can roll the image, make it flutter. We can change the focus to a soft blur or sharpen it to crystal clarity. For the next hour, sit quietly and we will control all that you see and hear. We repeat; there is nothing wrong with your television set. You are about to participate in a great adventure. You are about to experience the awe and mystery which reaches from the inner mind to – The Outer Limits.”

Con #20. Industrial or Factory Model
(external or extrinsically determined goals; limited freedom to venture into the unknown)

Con #21. “I feel strange”

Con #22. Journal Editors Feel Strange

Con #23. Productivity Slaves
Taiwan may be moving away from “I” Points

By the way, according to one of my sources, "The NSC announced last year that they would not use "I" as the main indicator for reviewing research proposals. They are working on a more balanced review process, not solely relying on RPI (Research Performance Index), also based on "I" points."

He continued: "As a result, the government has lost its credibility. This is partially due to the fact that the raging "I" monsters have spread on this small "I"sland wildly. I really doubt what they can do to rectify the "I" system so deeply rooted in academia."

Con #24. Student Issues

Con #25. Limited Teaching Exposure and Experience

Con #26. SSCI Preparedness Training Programs

Con #27. Personal Growth and Development Curtailed
(i.e., negative impact on sense of self, identity, self-actualization, etc.)
Personal Pause #3: Now who would like to comment or ask a question?

Audience Poll #5: Should the system be changed?

A. Yes
B. Maybe
C. No

Again, this talk covered...

1. An explanation of the issue
2. 12 Pros of SSCI
3. 27 Cons of SSCI
4. Audience perspectives

Audience Poll #5: Is there an I-Monster ("I" (i.e., SSCI, SCI, and A&HCI)) under your bed or in your closet?

Questions?

Slides at: TrainingShare.com
Papers: PublicationShare.com
Books: http://openworldbooks.com/
New Free Book: http://tec-variety.com/
Email: curt@worldisopen.com
cjbonk@Indiana.edu

Are you sure?