

Supplementary information to: The science that's never been cited

Description of methods used in News Feature published in Nature 552, 162–164 (2017);
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From Vincent Lariviere, University of Montreal, Canada:

Data for the figures shown in the feature were drawn from Clarivate Analytics Web of Science hosted (under license) at the Observatoire des sciences et des technologies (OST-UQAM). It covers the three main citation indexes: the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), Social Science Citation Index Expanded (SSCI) and Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), which were analysed for the 1980–15 period.

While 18,600 distinct journals are indexed at some point over the period, the number of distinct journals indexed on an annual basis oscillates between 6,121 (1980) and 12,527 (2015) over the period. On the whole, these figures were based on 31 294 345 documents — articles and reviews, which are considered to be citable items — and the 954,431,394 cited references they contain.

The matching of article citations was made using Thomson's reference identifier provided with the data, as well as using the author, publication year, volume number and page numbers. Disciplinary classification used is that of the National Science Foundation (www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind06/c5/c5s3.htm#sb1), which is complemented by OST classification for social sciences and humanities. Self-citations were defined as any overlap between the names of citing and authors and the names of cited authors.