Professional Trends in Communication Scholarship

COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE FOR ONLINE SCHOLARSHIP

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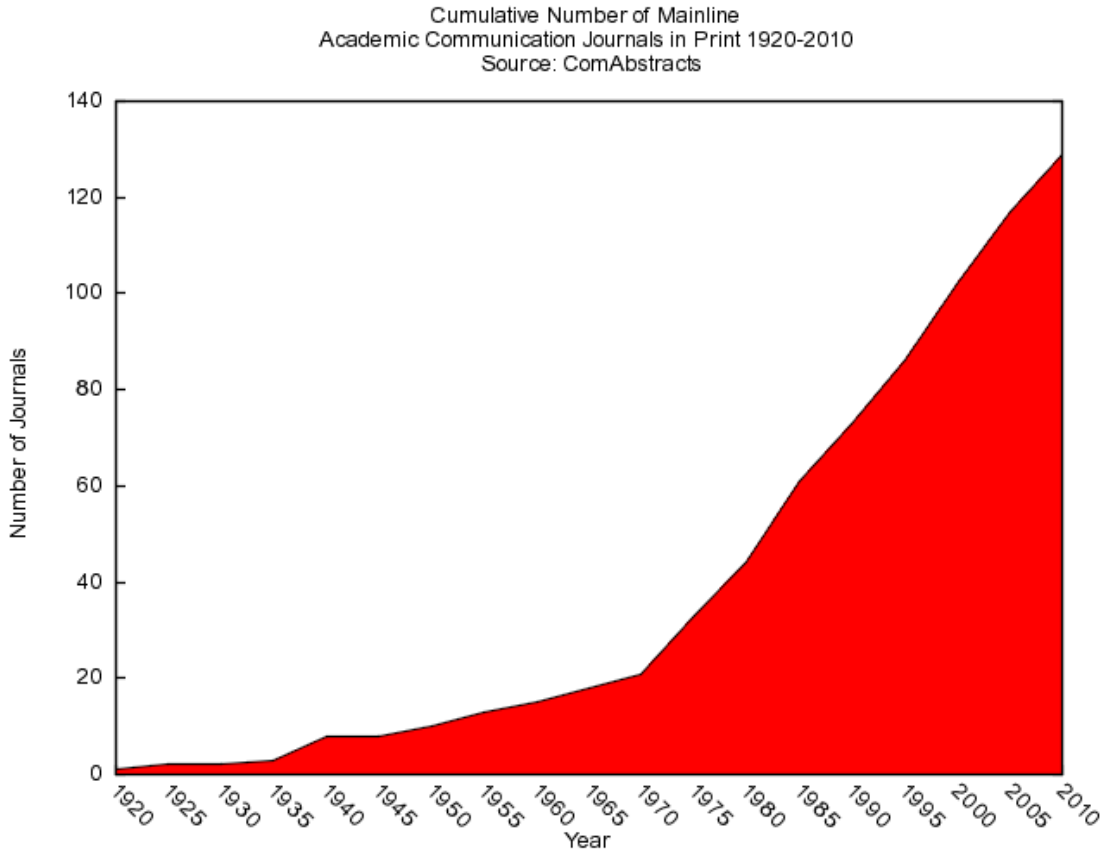
Accelerating Numbers of Communication Journals



The field's first continuing mainline journal, *the Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* (now QJS), published its first issue in 1915. For the next 50 years the field was served by less than 20 scholarly-journals. Today the academic communication field is served by no less than 130 journals and annuals. In the first 50 years of the 20th century the field added one new journal every two years. By 2005, the field was adding three new journals every year and some titles have expanded the frequency of publication from the standard four issues per volume to as many as nine. As of the 1960s, communication journals were publishing about 200 articles per year. The current rate of publication is nearly 3,000 articles per year.

Are female communication scholars under cited?

"MALES' PUBLICATIONS IN TOP COMM JOURNALS RECEIVE MORE CITATIONS THAN THOSE AUTHORED BY FEMALES"

Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Carroll Glynn's citation analysis of articles appearing in *Journal of Communication* and *Communication Research* between 1991 and 2005, reported in *Communication Research* (2013, 41(1), 3-26), looked for evidence of gender-based discrepancies in article citation patterns in these two top journals — the "Matilda Effect" in which the contributions of female scientists are under recognized.

Citation data from ISI Web of Science for 1,334 authors of 1,020 JoC and CR articles were examined. 47% were authored by women and 56% by men (sex could not be determined for the remainder).

Articles with at least one male author received significantly more citations compared to articles with female authors exclusively. As well, the more productive the female author, the more strongly the Matilda effect tended to apply. Sex of author accounted for as much as 10% of the variance in the number of citations an article received. Other factors investigated included the influence of perceived sex-type of the topical focus of an article, and the network density of female vs male citation networks. This may lead to "an inability for female scholars to forward themselves in their careers."

Children left out of communication research

As Michelle Miller-Day, Annie Pezalla, and Ryan Chesnut recently reported in the *Journal of Family Communication* (2013, 13(2), 150-165), few published studies in the mainline communication literature have focused on children younger than 18 years old during the last 10 years.

The authors performed a content analysis of 14 of the field's journals indentifying articles with a focus on children using searches on article keywords. Results revealed that children were represented in less than 4% of the articles they surveyed, much less than the 10% projected in previous work. Only 229 out of 6,231 articles examined in the study included children, and not a single article was found that assessed infants. Only 4 studies assessed children less than five years old.

Even within the *Journal of Family Communication* itself, less than 6% of articles assessed children.

Uses and impacts of technology and media by children between the ages of 5 and 18 was by far the greatest area of focus in those studies located, followed by topics relevant to health communication. The most commonly used method of assessment was written surveys.

The authors call for scholars to embrace a life-span developmental approach to communication.

Asia: A developing nexus

Studies addressing topics related to communication in Asia and Pacific Rim countries constitute one of the growing areas in communication research. And the research area is increasingly distinct. The area is now served by a number of journals, including *Asian Journal of Communication, Australian Journal of Communication, Chinese Journal of Communication,* and *Mass Communication Research.* The ComAbstracts database identifies 290 articles that focus on Korea, 721 that address China, 287 that address Japan, 124 that address Singapore, 129 treating Vietnam, 595 addressing Australia, 58 focusing on Indonesia, 269 focusing on Taiwan, and 136 addressing New Zealand. These numbers are comparable to those for individual European countries.

Comm research funding stable, 2000 — 2010

Timothy Levine (2012) looked for evidence of research funding for studies published in 22 communication journals between in 2000 and a decade later in 2010 (*Electronic Journal of Communication*, 22 (1)). Levine found no sign of significant increase in the number of funded studies. Overall, Levine found that 23% of published studies acknowledged some level of financial support. Approximately 40% of financial support came from Federal grants, 25% from internal university sources, 19% from non-U.S. foreign sources, 12% from private foundations, and 3% from state or local governments.

The research area with the largest proportion of funded studies was health communication (29%), followed by organizational (13%), comm technology (12%), interpersonal (11%), rhetoric (8%), culture (8%), and mass media (8%). Other areas were funded at less than 4% of studies.

Most funded studies appeared in *Journal of Health Comm, J. of Applied Comm Research, J of Computer Mediated Comm, HCR,* and *Health Comm.*

Shifting trends in the communication curriculum

Dale Bertelsen and Alan Goodboy (*Communication Education.* (2009), 58, 262-275) randomly sampled communication department course offerings at 148 U.S. 4 year colleges and universities. Their study compared current course offerings (as of 2009) to offerings reported a decade back. Strong gainers across the field included courses in interpersonal, group, organizational , health, gender, research methods, intercultural, and persuasion. Areas showing declining representation over the ten year period included advanced public speaking, oral interpretation, public address history, voice and diction, and coaching forensics. The declines in those areas were not as substantial as the gains in the gaining group. Courses offered at more than 80% of the sampled schools included interpersonal, group, organizational, persuasion, public speaking, intercultural, research methods, communication theory, and argumentation and debate.

Top MA programs exceed PhD programs in research output

The CIOS's ComAnalytics metrics track departmental contribution in the field's mainline journal literature by assigning publication credit to a department for any article a faculty member has published that appears in the ComAbstracts database. At the present time ComAbstracts includes records for approximately 74,000 articles from 140 journals, with coverage to 1915. The ComAnalytics system assigns each identifiable co-author full credit for an article. Books are not counted. Nor are book chapters or articles appearing in journals of other fields. Generally, ComAbstracts content is limited to scholarly articles, excluding book reviews, brief introductions, and the like.

The ComAnalytics database provides productivity metrics for programs broken down by faculty size and degree offerings. These data are available in the "benchmarks" section.

Not surprisingly, faculty at the communication field's research intensive doctorate-granting programs generate more articles in the discipline's mainline journal literature: an average of 90 publication authorship credits per department across Ph.D. degree programs in the U.S. and Canada.

However, for a small number of departments where the masters degree is the highest degree offered, the accumulated research record exceeds the mean level of productivity of the field's Ph.D. granting departments. In fact, in a few cases programs have accumulated a record of accomplishment that places them not only above the mean of Ph.D. granting programs but within range of the field's top 25 Ph.D. granting programs.

These programs are: Cal State University at Long Beach, University of Delaware, Cleveland State University, University of Hartford, Illinois State University at Normal, Depaul University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Arkansas, Western Michigan University, Wake Forest University, and San Diego State University. Close behind are George Washington, American University, University of Cincinnati, and Auburn University.

TOP Research Program

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ComAnalytics Data Can Support P&T, Merit Cases

ComAnalytics from the CIOS is a new database that provides career-span comparative data on faculty and department productivity. This data can provide useful information for faculty merit and P&T cases. The database tracks faculty publication in a majority of the field's mainline journal literature for virtually all full time faculty currently working in North American communication-related departments. This makes it possible to calculate baseline levels of publication activity in the field's literature for most publishing scholars in the field.

Naturally, there are other metrics that faculty will want to pay attention to as no system covers all elements of scholarly productivity and quality.

ComAnalytics

Recently, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* highlighted the growing use of alternative metrics in some science fields. These indicators, sometimes known as "altmetrics", provide additional information about the quality and impacts of scholarship in a more comprehensive and timely fashion than is possible with traditional measures such as journal impact factors and article citation counts. For the communication field, journal impact factors are not available for a majority of the field's journals and Thompson/ISI misidentifies communication journals, throwing off discipline wide statistics (including, for example, *Translator*, and *Public Understanding of Science*). Until the advent of Google Scholar, citation counts were only available for journals included in ISI. On the journal level, ComAnalytics publication counts are well correlated with ISI impact factors. On the department level, they are correlated with department prestige for most areas of the field and are better predictors of peer perceptions of department quality than metrics published in the recent NRC study.

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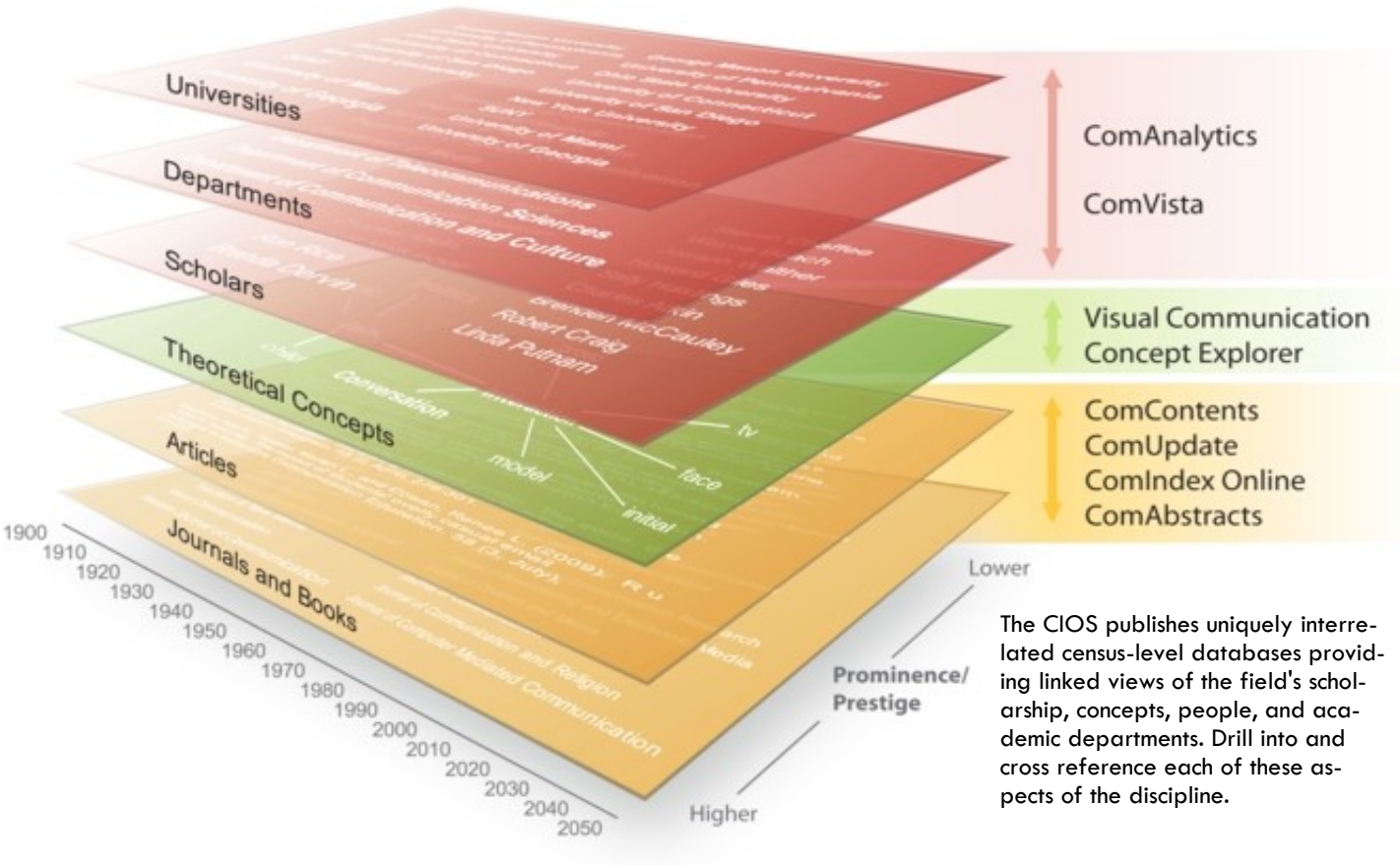

The CIOS publishes uniquely interrelated census-level databases providing linked views of the field's scholarship, concepts, people, and academic departments. Drill into and cross reference each of these aspects of the discipline.

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