

esss 2010: A review of the inaugural European Summer School for Scientometrics in Berlin

**Juan Gorraiz · Christian Gumpenberger · Wolfgang Glänzel ·
Koenraad Debackere · Stefan Hornbostel · Sybille Hinze**

Received: 6 August 2010 / Published online: 18 September 2010
© Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, Hungary 2010

The first esss (European Summer School for Scientometrics) took place at the Humboldt University in Berlin from 16 to 18 June 2010. The event was jointly organised by the University of Vienna (Austria), the Humboldt University (Germany), the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) and the iFQ (Institute for Research Information and Quality Assurance, Germany).

esss was launched as a response to the increasing demand for scientometric expertise in the field of bibliometric methodology and its applications, on the one hand, and to the insufficient educational opportunities on bibliometric techniques, on the other hand. The esss 2010 “pilot” started “small, but beautiful” and gave a premium foretaste of what to expect in the future.

The opening day (16 June) was dedicated to keynotes and lectures delivered by the organisers and invited international experts in this field. Wolfgang Glänzel (KU Leuven, Belgium) set the stage for the morning keynotes and provided a synopsis of the development of bibliometrics, followed by Anthony van Raan (Leiden University, the Netherlands) who shared his vast expertise on advanced bibliometric indicators for research evaluation. András Schubert (ISSRU Budapest, Hungary) then introduced the audience to the analysis of scientific networks, and Koenraad Debackere (KU Leuven, Belgium) finally presented concepts and tools driving innovation policy.

In the afternoon Wolfgang Glänzel first talked about bibliometric initiatives and the institutionalisation of the field in Europe. Henk Moed (Elsevier, the Netherlands) continued

J. Gorraiz · C. Gumpenberger (✉)
University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
e-mail: christian.gumpenberger@univie.ac.at

W. Glänzel · K. Debackere
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

S. Hornbostel · S. Hinze
Institute for Research Information and Quality Assurance (iFQ), Bonn, Germany

S. Hornbostel
Humboldt University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany

with insights in research assessment using bibliometric indicators. The evaluation topic was further pursued by Jonathan Adams who demonstrated successes and failures of bibliometric practices in research evaluation and national science policy. Judit Bar-Ilan (Bar-Ilan University, Israel) then discussed the options and the limitations of the internet for bibliometric analyses. Social Sciences and Humanities are widely perceived as the “problem children” in bibliometrics, thus Gunnar Sivertsen (NIFU STEP, Norway) presented the Nordic approach to the creation of appropriate data sources for these research areas. The last two presentations touched on the use in and consequently the direct influence of bibliometrics on research management at universities. Ulrich Schmoch (Fraunhofer ISI, Germany) talked about the impact of new public management on the scientific performance of universities, whereas Elke Williamson (University of Münster, Germany) introduced the audience to the way bibliometrics is used in the context of formula based funding with much humour.

Last, but not least the *esss* was officially inaugurated at the evening dinner in the university restaurant *Cum Laude* by representatives of all organizing institutions.

Two thematic modules were then offered on 17 and 18 June, each with introductory talks and seminars in the mornings and practical exercises in the afternoons. Module 1 was dedicated to “Journal Impact Measures” with lectures by Juan Gorraiz, Carmen López-Illescas (SCImago, Spain), Peter Vinkler (CRC-HAS, Budapest) and Wolfgang Glänzel, whereas module 2 dealt with “h-Indices”, presented by Stefan Hornbostel, Wolfgang Glänzel and Judit Bar-Ilan. The scope of module 1 was to provide an in-depth overview of the Journal Impact Factor with all pros and cons as well as to point out alternative journal impact indicators like the brand-new SNIP and SJR. In module 2 it became obvious that there is a plethora of h-indices to choose from, and that values for the same indicator depend on the data source on which the calculation is based on.

Special emphasis was placed on providing intensive the support for the participants during the hands-on sessions. The *esss* staff was available to answer questions or assist participants individually with the practical exercises.

In all, the first *esss* was a great success. The thematic modules were already fully booked 10 days after the registration had opened at the end of March with many waitlisted people. Some even wished to already register for 2011.

Around 90 participants from 13 different countries in Europe and even from overseas attended the opening day, a group of 25 (i.e. the maximum number of participants) then participated in the two thematic modules offered this year. The highly positive feedback is encouraging for all *esss* organizers who are busy with the successful continuation and further development of this initiative.

Moreover *esss* has been mentioned twice in the latest special issue “Science Metrics” of *Nature*. “...Setting a good example is the European Summer School for Scientometrics, ... It promises a science-based approach to tutoring on the merits and pitfalls of various metrics... . will also help to educate those who use metrics in evaluation ...”¹

esss 2011 will be hosted by the University of Vienna and is anticipated to take place within the first half of September.

¹ Assessing assessment. *Nature*, 465 (7300), 845.