Research Evaluation

Tony Bryant
Professor of Informatics
Leeds Beckett University
a.bryant@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
Not everything that can be counted counts. Not everything that counts can be counted.

- Research evaluation now commonplace
- Concepts of ‘value’, ‘impact’ and the like gradually being introduced and developed for the research environment
Audit Culture
The Audit Society

• Strathern’s term
  – Return on investment and Cost Benefit Analysis applied to ‘research’
  – Measure what is ‘easiest to measure’
  – ... and people find ways of adapting their behaviour and their analysis of the data to produce favourable results
‘Juking the stats’

The Wire

You can reclassify an assault, or you can unfound a robbery...

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=juking+the+stats&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=KXe_VN2RO8bSUvGqgfgN&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAg&biw=1245&bih=918#imgdii=_&imgres=_&imgrc=suJbVeFFyOboM%253A%3B9LVtV
TnaSfbzoM%38http%255A%252F%252Fampp3d.mirror.co.uk%252Fwp-content%252Fuploads%252F2014%252F01%252Fbody-disappear.gif%38http%255A%252F%252Fampp3d.mirror.co.uk%252F2014%252F01%252F24%252Fhow-the-police-manipulate-crime-stats-as-explained-by-the-wire%252F8460%3B269
Goodhart’s Law

‘When a measure that becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure’
UK – Research Evaluation

• Research Assessment Exercise [RAE]
  – 1992
  – 1996
  – 2001
  – 2008

• Research Excellence Framework [REF] 2014
  • http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_Assessment_Exercise#Earlier_Assessments
So what does count?

• Different disciplinary panels – different ideas

• Outputs
  – Publications – book, monographs, journal papers
  – Products

• Impact
  – Type of impact; Immediacy or Long-term; Who and Where?

http://www.resmi.eu/impact/
Journals

• Previously – fairly informal ‘ranking’ by repute, readership etc.
• Now – bibliometrics
  – Citations
  – Impact
  – Formal rankings
• Thomson, Scopus, SCImago, Eigenfactor and others
• Some of these are developed by the same organizations that publish some of the key journals
New context for publication in journals

- Bibliometrics establish new targets
- Internet – online publication
- Open Source
- Open Access
- New models – see my article to *Software Practitioner* March-April 2013 (attached)

https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/research/bibliometrics/
New models and New Issues

• Predatory practices
• Licencing and copyright
• Range of accusations and charges

http://www.slideshare.net/monicaberge
to-catch-a-predator-how-to-recognize-predatory-journals-and-conferences
New Challenges

• Establishing and maintaining high levels of trust and reputation
• Challenge for publishers, editors, editorial boards, reviewers, and authors