

An evaluation of Bradfordizing effects in multiple social science databases

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The background of the research is that distributed search across multiple databases will automatically generate large and heterogeneous document sets for subject specific questions. As a result, users have to deal with a huge amount of documents from different scientific domains, and also for specific research topics. The perceived expectations of users searching the web are that system architects should list the most relevant or important documents in the result list first.

The purpose of this paper is the application and evaluation of the bibliometric method Bradfordizing¹. Bradfordizing is used for generating core document sets for subject specific questions and to reorder result sets from distributed searches. The method will be applied and tested in a scenario of multiple social science databases (portal sowiport²). An evaluation of the method and its effects is carried out in a laboratory-based information retrieval experiment using a controlled document corpus and human relevance assessments.

The paper tries to answer the following questions:

- Is a re-ranking of documents according to the Bradford zones an added value for users?
- Are the documents in the nucleus of a Bradfordized list (core journals) more relevant for a topic than results in further zones?
- Can Bradfordizing be applied to other document sources than journal articles?

Keywords: Digital Library, Distributed Search, Evaluation, Informetrics, Bradford's Law of Scattering

¹ White, Howard D. (1981): 'Bradfordizing' search output: how it would help online users. In: Online Review 5, No. 1, pp. 47-54

² <http://www.sowiport.de>