30 years of Information Research papers citing Professor Tom D. Wilson: a bibliometric analysis

Tanja Svarre and Birger Larsen

Abstract

Introduction. As part of the *Information Research* jubilee, we present an analysis of Professor Tom D. Wilson's impact on the journal from a citation and bibliometric perspective.

Method. Using Scopus, we identified *Information Research* papers that cite Wilson. We carried out a cluster analysis based on bibliographic coupling in VOSviewer and created a map showing the interrelationships between the papers and their resulting seven clusters. We then used ChatGPT to identify the themes of the clusters and finally compared citations to Wilson's most cited works in *Information Research* and Scopus.

Results. The analysis shows how Wilson's papers have contributed to a wide variety of studies with a focus on information behaviour. Papers cited in *Information Research* range from reviews to empirical work, and from health information to social media, as well as emotional and organisational perspectives on the use of information.

Conclusions. The variety of papers identified in seven clusters through the analysis illustrates the core role of Wilson's work, as an editor of *Information Research*, and as a researcher of information behaviour.

Introduction

The first issue of *Information Research* was published on 1 April 1995. It included papers on document clustering (Jones et al., 1995), curriculum development (Riding et al., 1995) and information systems strategy formation (Allen, 1995). Since then, more than 1,200 publications including conference papers have been published in the journal. Throughout the journal's history, Professor Tom D. Wilson has been a core figure, first as the initiator of the journal and then for many years taking on the role as editor. This paper takes a bibliometric approach to study Wilson's influence on the papers published in the journal through the years. Thus, we identify his most influential papers in the journal followed by an analysis of clusters formed by papers in the journal that have cited Wilson's work.

Methodological Approach

We used Scopus (https://www.scopus.com/), a major citation database to search for all indexed publications from *Information Research* (totalling 1,323). All searches were conducted on 20 February 2025, and limited to those that cited Wilson, were not editorials, and excluded publications where Wilson is an author himself, resulting in 281 records for analysis. We used VOSviewer version 1.6.20 (https://www.vosviewer.com/) to cluster and map these documents, analysing bibliographic coupling (Kessler, 1963), where documents that share a higher number of references were clustered closer together; high coupling strengths are widely regarded as a sign of semantic similarity (see, e.g., Ahlgren & Colliander, 2009; Vladutz & Cook, 1984). A total of 273 documents shared references, resulting in seven clusters, which we mapped in 1) a single overview map in VOSviewer and, 2) extracted the portions of each cluster in a distinct map. We used the free and interactive version 4.0 of ChatGPT (https://chatgpt.com/) to extract five keywords and to summarise each cluster in two sentences based on the publication titles. Finally, we isolated references to any of Wilson's work from *Information Research* papers and compared the resulting number of citations to the total number of citations in Scopus. Our aim was to identify any of his publications that have been of particular interest to *Information Research* authors.

Results

Citation Analysis

Seven Wilson papers received ten citations or more in *Information Research* (see Table 1). The most cited paper presents the nested model of information behaviour (Wilson, 1999). Other influential papers include Wilson's historical view and status of human information behaviour (2000), his paper on motivations for seeking behaviour (1981) and a paper on the interdisciplinary nature of information behaviour (1997).

Cited papers	Number of citations in *Information Research*	Number of citations in *Scopus*
Wilson (1999), *JDoc*, 55(3), 249–270	96	1398
Wilson (2000), *Informing Science*, 3(2), 49–55	79	1149
Wilson (1981), *JDoc*, 37(1), 3–15	68	924
Wilson (1997), *IP&M*, 33(4), 551–572	38	658
Wilson et al. (2002), *JASIST*, 53(9), 704-715	13	120
Wilson (2010), *Information Research*, 15(4)	12	76
Wilson (2006), *Information Research*, 11(4)	11	85

Table 1. Most cited Wilson papers in *Information Research*.

Cluster Analysis

The second part of the analysis is based on the cluster map presented in Figure 1, where seven clusters are formed in the co-citation analysis. On the map, the size of the circles is determined by the number of citations received in Scopus. In this study we focus on the four largest clusters, as they are formed by papers with stronger links between them and are thus more coherent compared to clusters five (purple), six (turquoise) and seven (orange). The four largest clusters are summarised by size and keywords in Table 2.

Cluster one, the largest cluster (red) on the map, consists of sixty-five papers. This cluster covers topics such as academic and professional research, represented by a paper on the information-seeking behaviour of graduate students (George et al., 2006). Järvelin and Ingwersen's (2004) paper on the directions of information-seeking research is general research on information-seeking behaviour, while Fisher et al.'s (2004) paper on migrant Hispanic farm workers illustrates the theme of cultural and societal influences on information behaviour. The health and medical area is exemplified by Courtright's (2005) paper on health information seeking.

Cluster two (green) includes topics on health, affect and emotions. Highly cited papers include Kim et al.'s (2007) paper on information overload of cancer patients, Heinström's (2000) work on personality and learning and Savolainen's (2015) study of emotional expressions on immigration in a Finnish discussion group. Bronstein and Knoll's (2015) study of female bloggers suffering from infertility is an example of social media studies also covered by the cluster.

Cluster three (blue) includes topics such as information behaviour in professions, represented by Demiryurek et al.'s (2008) study on dairy farmers and information, while health and lifestyle information seeking is covered by Morey's (2007) paper on health information in an African American community. Pálsdóttir's (2011) study of elderly Icelanders serves as an example of the cluster's focus on everyday information behaviour.

Cluster four (yellow) covers work and organisation-oriented topics such as knowledge management, decision-making and information culture. In this cluster, highly cited papers in Scopus include Bouthillier and Shearer's (2002) paper on knowledge and information management in organisations, Savolainen's (2017) review on knowledge sharing and communication and Popovič et al.'s (2009) work on the impact of business intelligence maturity on information quality.
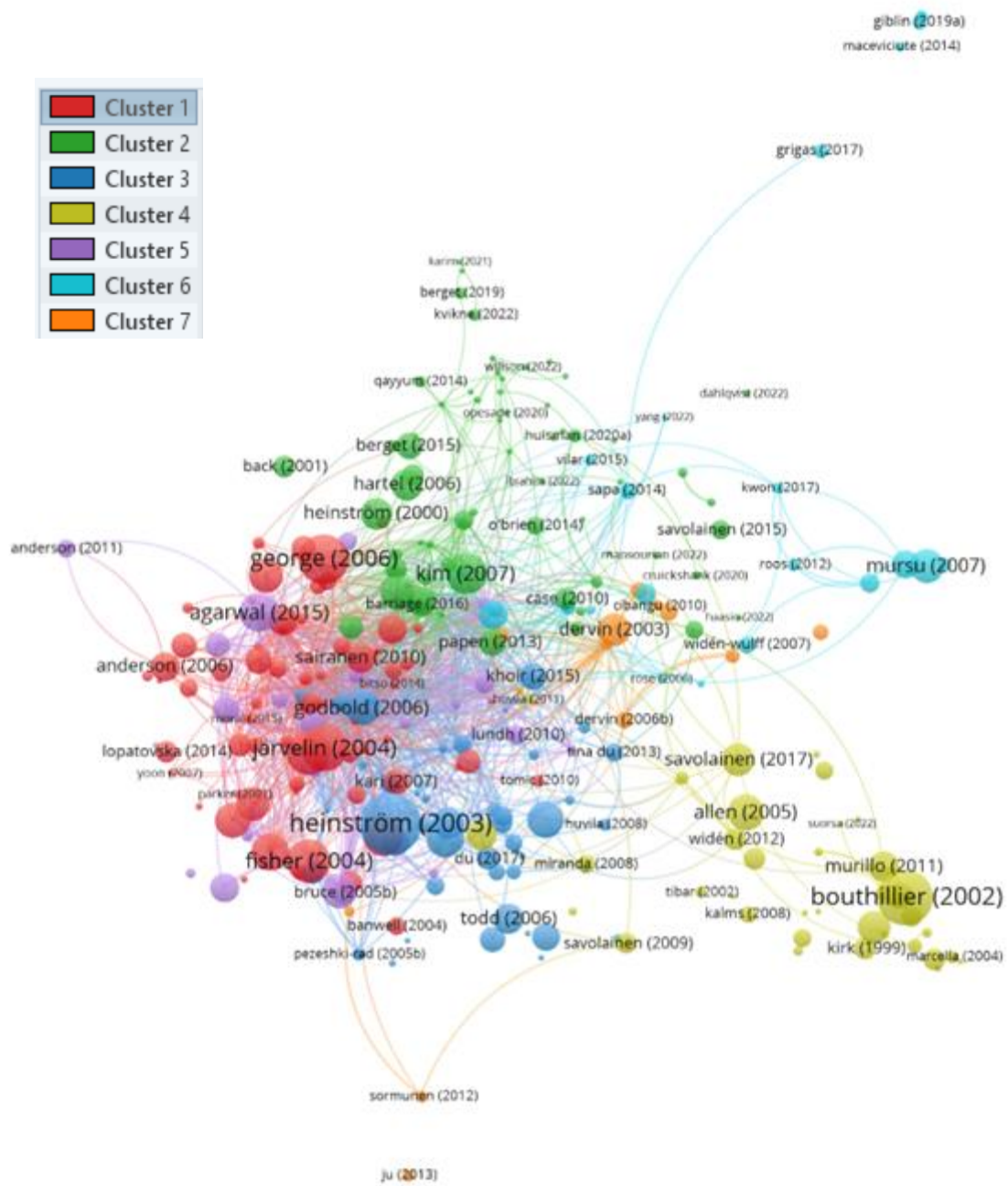
Figure 1. Cluster map of papers citing Wilson, represented by authors and year, based on document-level bibliographic coupling (Scopus data visualised using VOSviewer).

Cluster	Number of papers	Keywords
1 (red)	65	Information-seeking behaviour; social media & technology; health & medical decisions; academic & professional research; cultural & societal influences
2 (green)	63	Affect & emotions in information behaviour; health & medical information seeking; social media & online interactions; academic & digital research; trust & decision-making
3 (blue)	47	Everyday & workplace information behaviour; health & lifestyle information seeking; cultural & social influences; digital literacy & accessibility; information behaviour in professions & academia
4 (yellow)	39	Business intelligence & knowledge management; organisational information culture; managerial & workplace information behaviour; information sharing & collaboration; environmental scanning & decision-making

Table 2. The four strongest clusters based on document-level bibliographic coupling (Scopus data visualised using VOSviewer).

Concluding Remarks

This paper has focused on Professor Tom D. Wilson's contribution to *Information Research*. In his most influential papers, he has outlined the field of information behaviour and the information user (e.g. Wilson, 1981, 2000), addressed interdisciplinarity (Wilson, 1997), and coined the nested model of information behaviour (Wilson, 1999). The cluster analysis has shown how these and other papers by Wilson have served as a cornerstone for later studies on information behaviour. In *Information Research*, Wilson's work has laid the groundwork for empirical work on a variety of topics, such as health, the workplace, leisure and emotional aspects of information seeking. Together, these papers highlight the impact of Wilson's editorial leadership of *Information Research*, his research on information behaviour and his foundational contributions to both empirical and theoretical scholarship in the field.

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