International Symposium
"Global Rankings and the Future of Japanese Universities"

GLOBAL UNIVERSITY RANKINGS:
A GERMAN PERSPECTIVE

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Outline

• Timeline - German ranking projects
• Findings
• Outcomes
• Open problems

Timeline - German ranking projects

Stage 1: Inspiration
German scientists working and the German Foreign Office point out the significant discrepancy between the actual ranking of German universities and their perceived positions

Objective: Coordinated scientific project to enhance the insight into rankings
**Stage 2: Ranking project I:** (10.2013 - 05.2015)
Improving international ranking results of German universities - The TU Dresden and the University of Tübingen as pioneers in the international education marketing of Germany. (funded partly by the German Foreign Office)

**Objective:** Develop a catalog of measures to improve the ranking of German universities, with focus on the THE World University Rankings

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**Stage 3: Establishment quantUP:** (start 10.2015)
While the possibility of a second installation of the ranking project was unclear the Steinbeis Research Center quantUP was founded.

**Objective:** Establishing a neutral entity for continually analyzing ranking issues and providing rankings expertise internationally.
Stage 4: Ranking project II: (06.2016 - 12.2017)
Promoting transparency of international ranking results (funded partly by the German Foreign Office)

Objective: Create a catalog of measures for the QS and update measures for THE Rankings in response to the switch of the bibliometric database (from Web of Science to Scopus)

Stage 5: HRK Monitoring of Global Rankings: (start 01.2019)
The German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) establishes a position for monitoring global university rankings

Objective: Providing support to improve the internationally visibility of German universities
Findings

Problem: Academic Staff (THE)

“Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter”
(scientific employee)

≠

"Academic staff"

• carry out numerous research and teaching tasks
• only temporary employment
• often financed by third parties
• some still in training (PhD students)

• Only tenured professors or equivalent senior lecturers
Findings

Problem: Funding

ordinary budget
TU Dresden

Library
Sächsische Landes- und Universitätsbibliothek

Property management
Staatsbetrieb Sächsisches Immobilien- und Baumanagement

Services
cafeteria / student halls
Studentenwerk Dresden

Sponsorship
Gesellschaft von Freunden und Förderern der TU Dresden e.V.
Findings

Problem: Data provision

- Problem:
  - Data not provided systematically by universities
  - Differences in what form and by whom data is reported

- Reasons:
  - Insufficient awareness of the importance of data reporting at the universities (and lack of reporting personnel)
  - Ranking definitions often misleading, since modeled after Anglo-Saxon system
  - Ranking data ≠ Data for German statistical offices
  - Subject classification of the rankings ≠ Organizational structure

- Result:
  - Incorrect and / or incomplete data reporting can lead to serious disadvantages in the ranking

Problem: Bibliometrics

- Problem:
  - Not all publications contained in the databases
  - Publications sometimes not properly attributed to correct university

- Reasons:
  - Name variations (+ typos) of the university
  - Publishing policy especially in cooperations with shared positions (e.g., MPI)
  - Different publication cultures across academic fields (e.g., monographs, conference proceedings)
  - Publication in language other than English

- Result:
  - Publications are not visible! (= not considered in the ranking)
Outcomes

Outcome - Times Higher Education

TOP 400 | 200 | 100

University count

USA | UK | Germany | France | Italy | Netherlands | S. Korea | Japan | Swiss | China

2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018
Outcome - QS

Top universities by country and year:


Outcome - TU Dresden since 2012

- THE World University Rankings:
  - 2013: 291
  - 2014: 151
  - 2015: 151
  - 2016: 151
  - 2017: 151
  - 2018: 151

- QS World University Rankings:
  - 2013: 201-300
  - 2014: 226
  - 2015: 288
  - 2016: 191
  - 2017: 151-200
  - 2018: 191
Open problems

Problems - damping (QS)
"I often say that **when you can measure** what you are speaking about, **and express it in numbers, you know something about it**;

but **when you cannot measure it**, **when you cannot express it in numbers**, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely, in your thoughts, advanced to the stage of **science**, whatever the matter may be."

-- William Thomson, 1st Baron Kelvin

*Vorlesung "Electrical Units of Measurement" (3 Mai 1883)*