

Journal Impact Factors [Ref. 1]

The *Journal Citation Reports* provides quantitative tools for ranking, evaluating, categorizing, and comparing journals. The impact factor is one of these; it is a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited in a particular year or period. The annual *JCR* impact factor is a ratio between citations and recent citable items published. Thus, the impact factor of a journal is calculated by dividing the number of current year citations to the source items published in that journal during the previous two years as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Calculation for journal impact factor [1]
A = total cites in 2005
B = 2005 cites to articles published in 2003-2004 (this is a subset of A)
C = number of articles published in 2003-2004
D = B/C = 2005 impact factor

The impact factor is useful in clarifying the significance of absolute (or total) citation frequencies. It eliminates some of the bias of such counts which favor large journals over small ones, or frequently issued journals over less frequently issued ones, and of older journals over newer ones. Particularly in the latter case such journals have a larger citable body of literature than smaller or younger journals. All things being equal, the larger the number of previously published articles, the more often a journal will be cited.

For more information, refer to following links

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_factor

[2] <http://scientific.thomson.com/free/essays/journalcitationreports/impactfactor/>