

Data Quality And Methodology Key Concerns In Higher Education Rankings, According To Thomson Reuters Study

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Respondent feedback showed opportunity to increase usefulness of published ranking tables

PHILADELPHIA and LONDON, Feb 11, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Thomson Reuters, the authority on research analytics and decision support citation data for more than half a century, announced today the results of a worldwide survey of opinion leaders at key research institutions. The survey report, *New Outlooks on Institutional Profiles*, captures opinions from the global academic community on the most relevant indicators of organizational competence and quality, as well as which indicators they consider important and what they think is wrong with previous methods.

Key findings of the report include:

- Respondents generally felt that the current analytic comparison systems had recognizable utility. About 40 percent globally said they were 'extremely/very useful' and a further 45 percent said they were 'somewhat useful'.
- The data indicators and methodology currently utilized were perceived unfavorably by many and there was widespread concern about data quality in North America and Europe.
- Current analyses tend to favor English speaking nations. While English remains the international language for academic discourse its pervasiveness may obscure the changing geography of academic activity.
- 74 percent of respondents believe that institutions manipulate their data to move up in rankings.

New Outlooks on Institutional Profiles includes data from 350 respondents -- larger and more diverse than any previous survey. The results will inform the methodology around the Global Institutional Profiles Project, Thomson Reuters' new initiative to build a comprehensive database that combines peer review, scholarly outputs, citation patterns, funding levels, and faculty characteristics.

"We want to create the best informed and most effective resource to build profiles for universities and colleges around the world," said Jonathan Adams, director of research evaluation at Thomson Reuters. "This survey provides us with important information regarding the community's opinion on what data are relevant and how they should be prioritized throughout our process."

To read the full report, visit http://science.thomsonreuters.com/m/pdfs/Global_Opinion_Survey.pdf.

For more information about the Global Institutional Profiles Project, please visit <http://science.thomsonreuters.com/globalprofilesproject>.

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