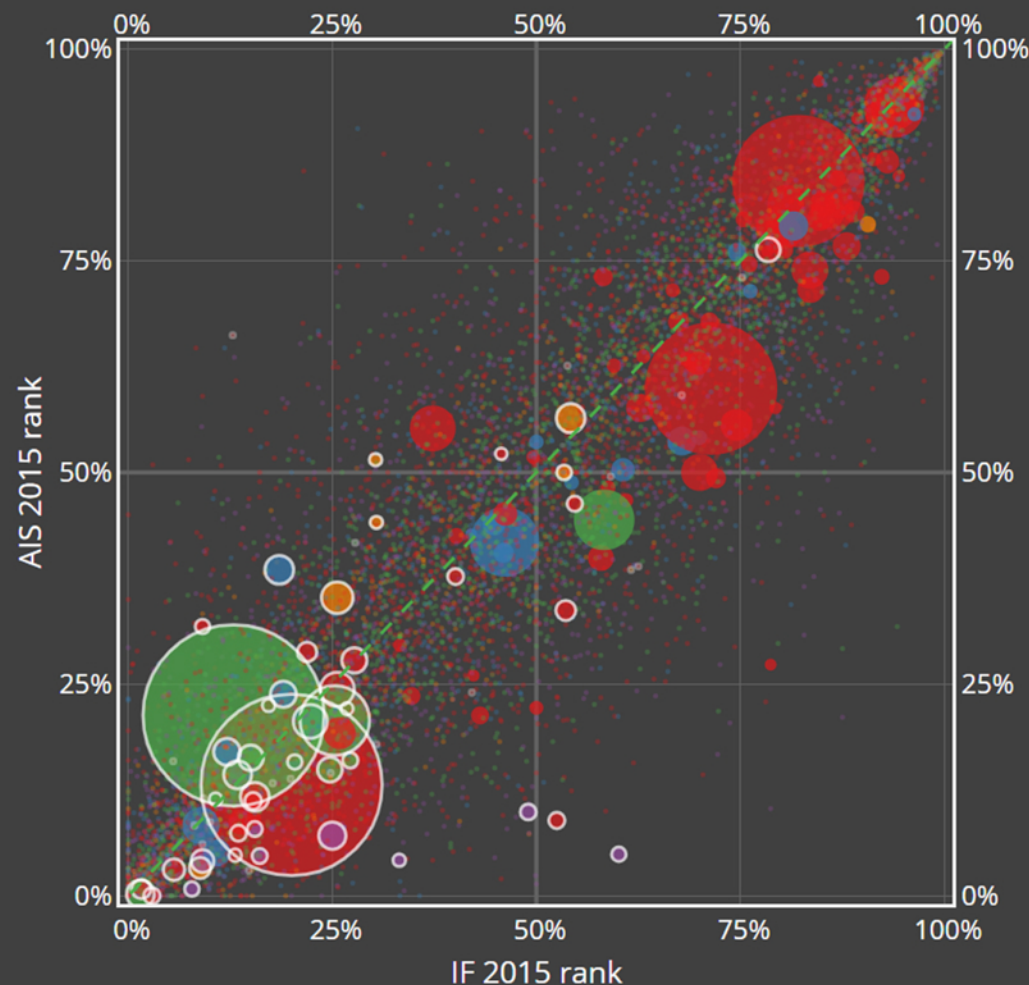


# NEW ON-LINE TOOL FOR RESEARCHERS

IDEA, the academic think tank at CERGE-EI, has launched a new, interactive application to help researchers find their way in the universe of academic journals. The new tool "A Comparison of Journal Citation Indices" enables researchers to quickly assess the academic importance of journals in more than 200 disciplines of research. The tool also enables users to highlight journals published in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and to identify the journals in which Czech academics most frequently publish. The tool compares citation indexes, which are a key criterion in the Czech government's evaluation of research organizations. Researchers struggling to find their way in a forest of periodicals thus no longer need to puzzle over which journals may be most ideal to submit their work to. The new IDEA application is publicly available here: [ideaapps.cerge-ei.cz/AIS\\_IF](http://ideaapps.cerge-ei.cz/AIS_IF)

- Since 2017, the AIS (Article Influence Score) index of academic journals has been the key indicator in the Czech government's evaluation of research organizations. The AIS provides a very reliable indication of the average impact (or influence) of articles published in a given journal. Moreover, the AIS valuation index is strongly correlated with the journals' academic reputation and importance; in other words, how the academic community views them. Within the government evaluation system, the AIS index has replaced the better-known, previously used IF (Impact Factor) index. The advantage of AIS over IF is that it better reflects the academic reception of more important journals, takes into account a longer period of time, and is resistant to purposeful attempts to increase citations.

## A comparison of Journal Citation Indices



- Journals' current AIS and IF index values can be found in the international database Web of Science (WoS), but it is not freely accessible. Furthermore, the relative value of a journal's score within its particular discipline (that is, its ranking or percentile) is more informative than the absolute value of its index score. While the relative ranking of journals by IF score can be found in the WoS database (under JournalCitationReports), it is very complex for the average user to discover a journal's ranking according to the AIS index. Doing so not only requires accessing the WoS database, but also working with extensive data covering all journals.

- Knowing a journal's relative AIS index value is useful both for retrospective assessment of research results and also at the outset, when the researcher is not yet sufficiently familiar with the importance and reputation of the various journals in a particular field in which he intends to submit an article for peer reviewed publication. These situations most frequently arise among early-career researchers and doctoral students, especially those who may not be receiving strong guidance from their supervisors.

- Assessing the quality and significance of basic research outputs is a challenging task. From the perspective of the final result, peer-review assessment – assessment by other researchers – is ideal.

However, this form of evaluation, if it is to be good and reliable, is extremely costly in terms of human resources, time and money. Savings in any of these areas may result in a peer-review evaluation that does more harm than good. Hence the appeal of citation indexes like AIS and IF lies in the fact that they offer a fast, cheap and relatively reliable alternative. On the basis of a journal's relative ranking within its field, one can estimate the quality and significance of the research published in it. In other words, it enables us to indirectly utilise, free of charge, the costly peer-review process that each journal's editors engage in when selecting articles for publication. Highly reputed journals engage in more demanding peer-review processes and set the bar higher in terms of the quality and significance of research output they are willing to publish.

- It is nevertheless important to remember that high quality and important articles can appear in journals with low AIS or IF index values. And, indeed, that we may come across rather unimportant articles or even articles whose findings are flawed in journals ranked highly according to these indexes. Yet the likelihood of this happening is low, and when a large number of articles are considered, such as for an entire research institution, the likelihood of drawing erroneous conclusions from AIS or IF data decreases further. The final decision requires knowledgeable human judgment.

