

CASE STUDY

Scopus[®]

Enabling greater productivity in pharmaceutical R&D



GLOBAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY IMPROVES RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY

A health economist and a patent counsel discuss how they use Scopus to be more productive and secure the rights to intellectual property.

“Scopus has improved my productivity by at least 15%. I can find answers to specific questions fast—Scopus lets me leave my office on time!”

– Health economist, global product strategy department

“Scopus offers more functions like Exclude/Limit and the ability to search for authors and affiliations which are not in other biomedical databases, making Scopus much more convenient.”

Patent Counsel,
intellectual property department

The need for efficient information management

The pharmaceutical industry is renowned for the low rate of success in bringing new chemical entities (NCE) to market. Many 1000s of NCE need to be screened to discover one worthy of entering human studies, and failure in expensive clinical trials is also common. All improvements in research productivity are (often literally) of vital importance in seeking to fulfill carefully selected, unmet medical needs.

Many pharmaceutical companies have large R&D departments that support a product pipeline with a global market. However, the need for information retrieval and management is not exclusive to drug discovery and many other specialists within pharmaceutical companies depend on efficient information searches.

Two such specialists working within a global pharmaceutical supported by Elsevier are a health economist and a patent counsel. Both are involved in pharmaceutical development and describe how Scopus is integral to their work in strategic marketing and defense of products.

Citation trail increases productivity

The health economist works in the global product strategy department. His responsibilities include looking at pipeline products and benchmarking against those in the field, studying new investigations on existing products, evaluating pharmacoeconomic studies and quality

of life issues and the engagement of the best external vendors based on their submitted proposals.

“Scopus has improved my productivity by at least 15%. I can find answers to specific questions fast—Scopus lets me leave my office on time! The search function and the integrated article retrieval allow more productive time for working with articles and less time looking for them. To learn about a new therapeutic area, all I need to do is search for the disease, select ‘review’, click on ‘cited by’ and I’m there.” Such literature searches serve as springboards for health economics analysis to make sound strategic recommendations.

For monitoring the current literature on existing products, broad coverage ensures optimal data gathering to assess implications for products in development. “I save a lot of time by using the ‘re-cited’ column to figure out what the most important articles are.”

Targeted searches are used to uncover new health economic arguments from the literature that can support products or counter other studies to create robust health economics documents. “I can view a citation trail to see how a topic is developing. This is particularly important in the field of health economics, which is evolving rapidly.”

When selecting vendors from similar proposals, locating specific referenced articles and following the citation trails can determine which proposal is the most feasible and which agency to choose.

Robust functionality to support highly specific searches

The patent counsel works in the intellectual property (IP) department. She is tasked with drafting patent requests, conducting patent searches and defending denied patent applications with a view to resubmission. Patent applications (e.g. a filing to the European Patent Office) need to demonstrate the inventiveness of the application compared with prior art.

To draft the patent application, prior patents and scientific literature must be searched to determine whether the potential drug is novel and has industrial application. Scopus' simultaneous patent and literature searches save time.

Patent applications may be denied on the basis of cited literature that suggests the application is not novel. The patent counsel's task is now to find more literature to describe the art prior to the filing date in support of the invention.

Highly specific searches for keywords and specific time periods are required to support resubmissions. "Scopus offers more functions like Exclude/Limit and the ability to search for authors and affiliations which are not in other biomedical databases, making Scopus much more convenient."

Scopus: the integral partner

Scopus helps this global pharmaceutical company realize real efficiencies, resulting in timesaving of at least 15%. The flexibility in searching multiple sources and easy-to-use interface are results of listening to partners—an on-going collaboration between the pharmaceutical industry and Elsevier.

Preference for Scopus over other sources

Why do these profiled specialists and their colleagues prefer Scopus to other sources? Some of the explanations were:

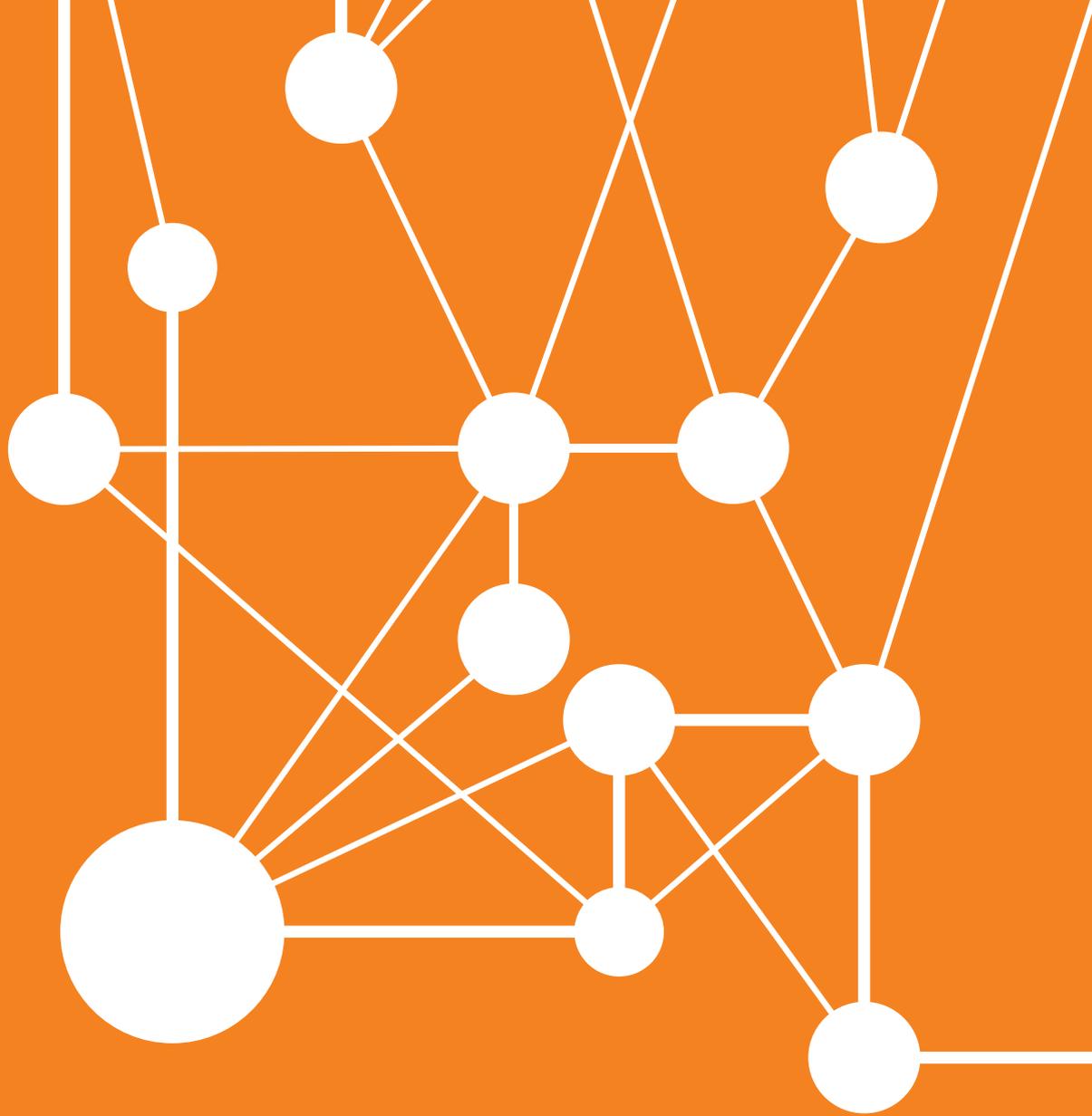
Depth of information: "Scopus enables me to dig deeper into the data than other biomedical databases.. You just do the search once and then drill down using the "limit to" and narrow the results until you have the results set you can really work with."

Current and comprehensive: "There's almost no time lag from when the original articles were published. The broad coverage gives me a confidence level because it reduces the danger of missing something. Other databases often don't provide an efficient way to narrow down, increasing the chances that you might miss something."

Precise searching: "Compared to other databases, Scopus gives you more control over how it searches for specific information. Plus you can limit by year. I can see where the articles were first published and where the articles have been cited—which creates a sort of history."

Simultaneous searches: "Switching from one source to another saves me a significant amount of time. I don't even use other biomedical databases anymore."

Easy to use: "Scopus enables me to carry out searches that I would have given to our Scientific Information Department in the past. I think Scopus has all the features of being a true end-user tool for users like me and not for scientific information experts who work with complicated codes and thesauri."



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