

## Academic librarians as professional providers of bibliometric services in research organizations

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### Objectives

A central group of actors who make use of bibliometrics are academic librarians. Historically, bibliometrics in libraries has been primarily used to facilitate collection development and journal evaluation. While traditional bibliometric applications continue to exist, a shift to using bibliometrics in supporting research assessment is discerned. Practitioners and scholars alike have begun to endorse evaluative bibliometrics as a promising new service area.

The present study aims to assess whether bibliometric services for research support and assessment at research libraries in Germany and the UK constitute a professional practice, using a sociology of professions framework by Andrew Abbott.

### Research Questions

Does the emerging trend to use bibliometric methods in German and British research libraries indicate the development of a new expert group of scientometric practitioners outside the research field?

This will be approached by answering the following questions:

- Are British and German academic librarians claiming a professional jurisdiction on bibliometric expertise in research support services and research assessment?
- How do they assert cognitive claims as scientometric practitioners?
- How do they socially gain and maintain control over bibliometric practices in their workplace, the research organization, and in the public?

### Theoretical Framework

Abbott defines professions as exclusive occupational groups "applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases". Professions strive in competition with other professions for exclusive control over an area of work by claiming jurisdiction on a professional task and their way of solving it.

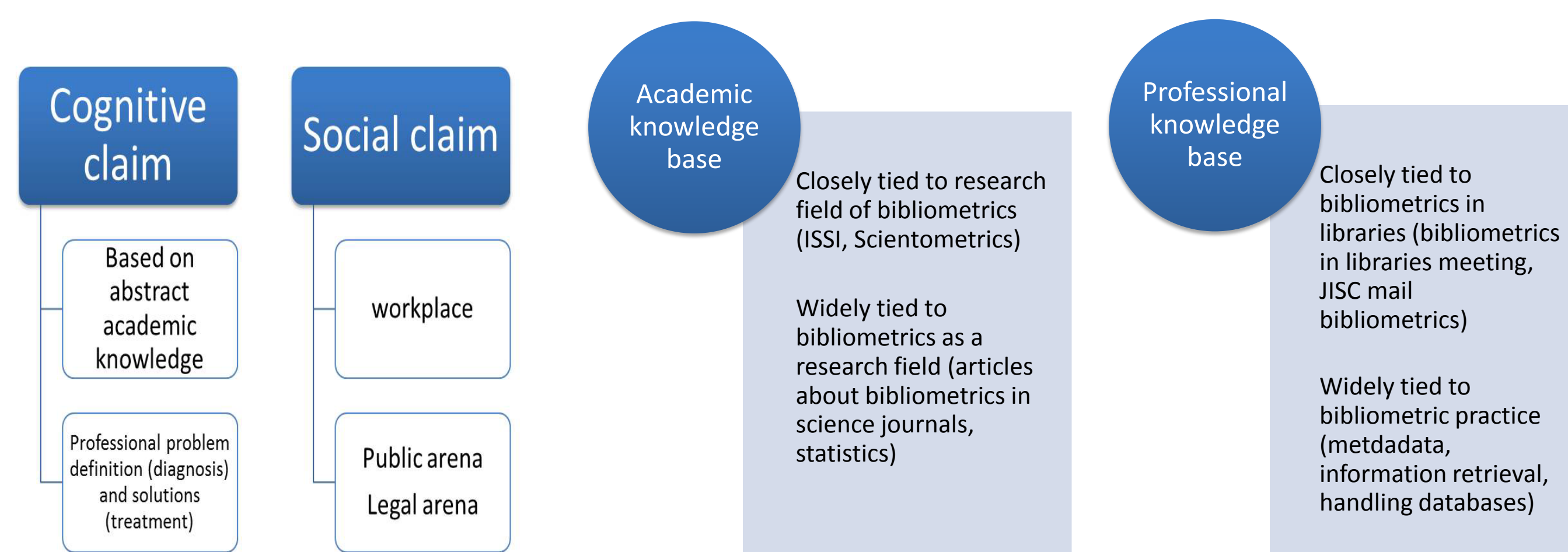


Fig. 1 Types of jurisdictional claims

Fig. 2 Types of knowledgebases for scientometric expertise in academic libraries

### Data and Method

To account for differences in national research evaluation and library systems, Germany and Great Britain are studied in a comparative perspective.

The collected data are analysed using qualitative content analysis. The procedure consists of a preparatory phase, the construction of a theory-guided category system which serves to extract relevant information from the data, a pilot coding phase and the main coding phase. Data are then analysed and interpreted.

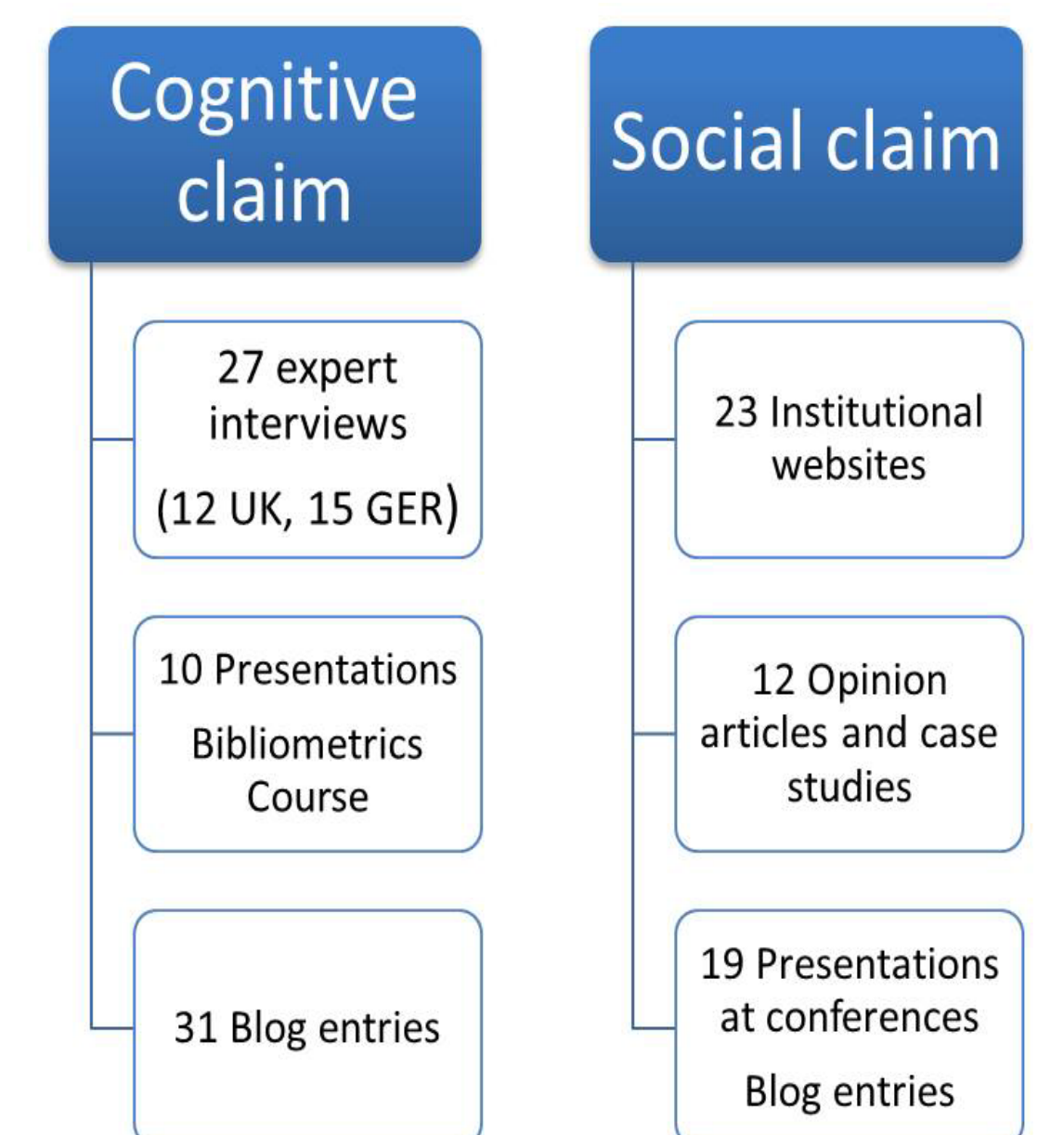


Fig. 3. Data material collected

### Preliminary findings

Bibliometric practices in libraries are not only informed by academic knowledge from the research field of bibliometrics but also from a professional, librarianship oriented knowledgebase. British librarians have set up librarianship oriented conferences for bibliometrics as a service area and thus actively build up their professional knowledgebase. This professional knowledge base may function as an intermediary knowledge system if the transfer from the academic knowledge base into professional practices is restricted. Academic librarians don't seem to put a full jurisdictional claim on bibliometric expertise but are willing to share it with research support and planning offices or the academics.

Fig. 4 Bibliometric training of information professionals in libraries

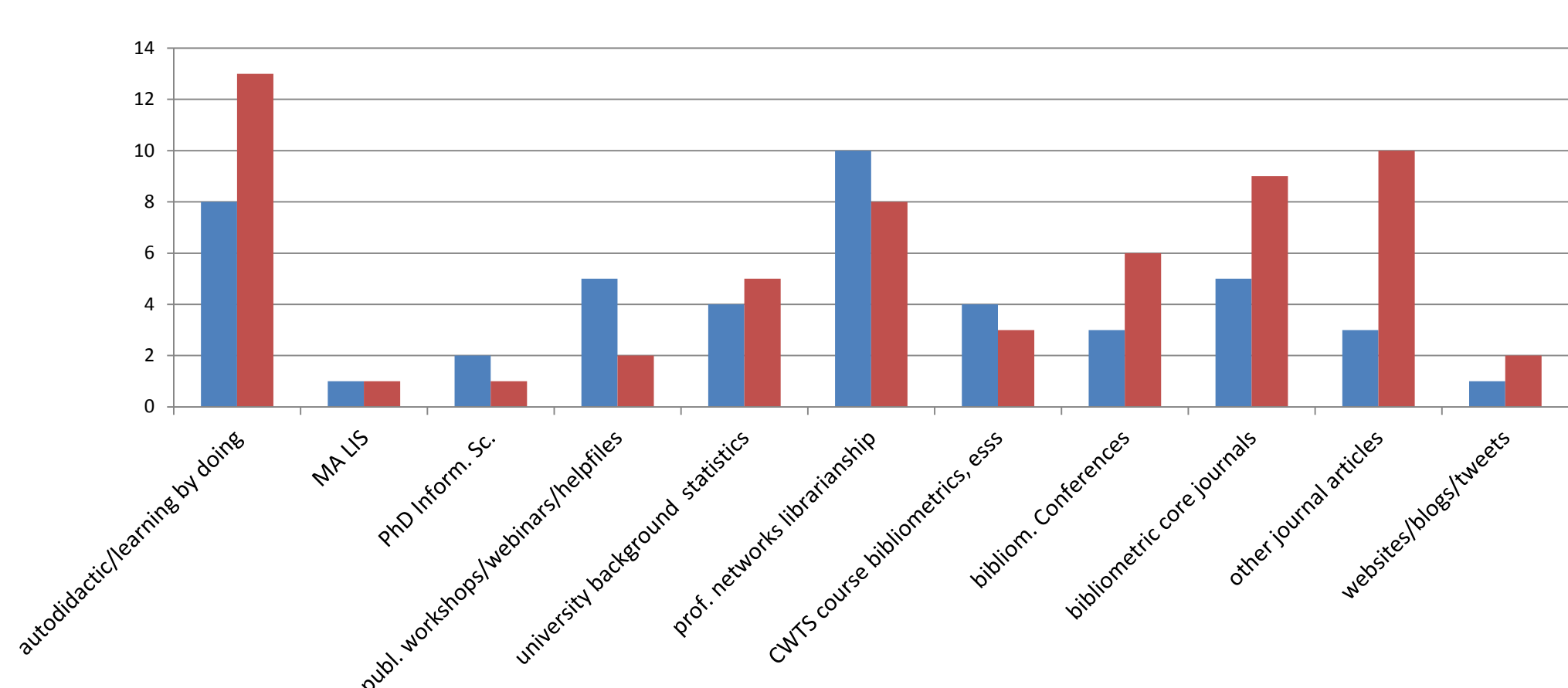


Fig. 5 Bibliometrics conceived as a library role

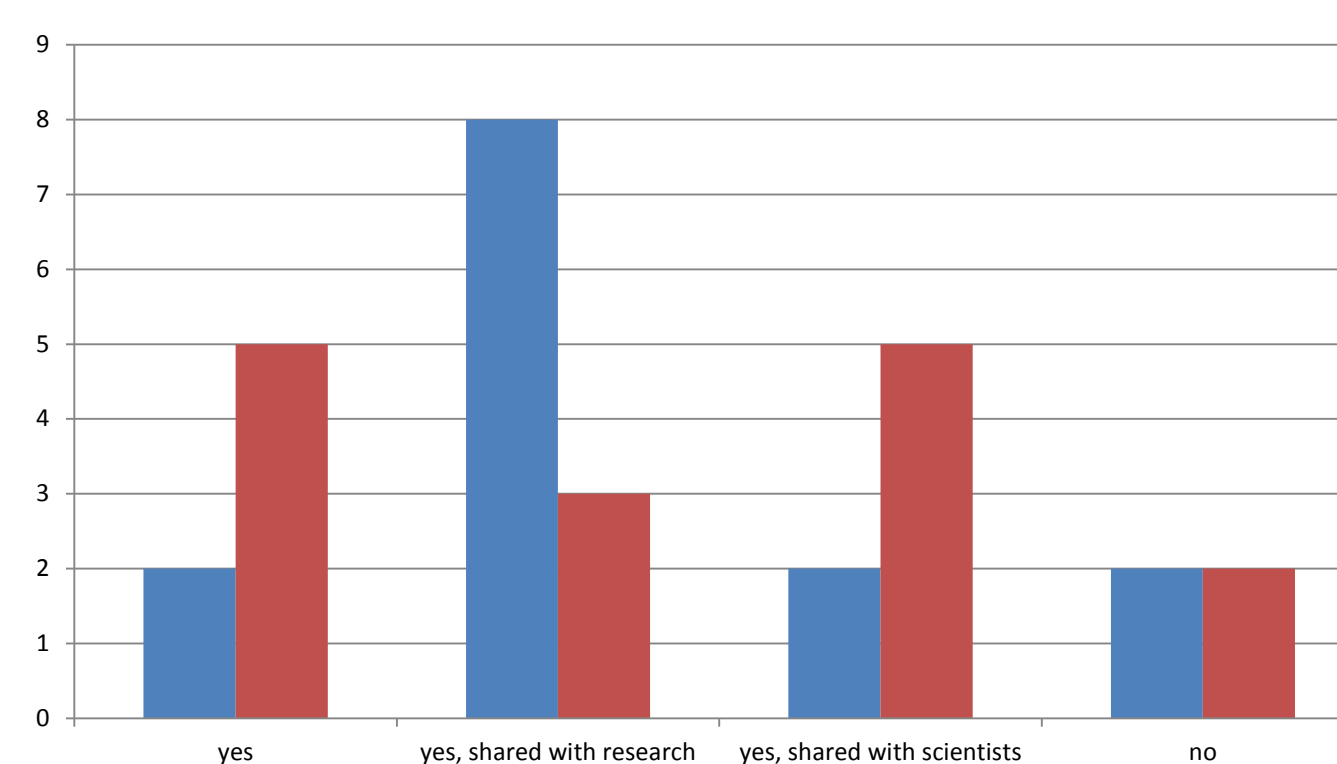
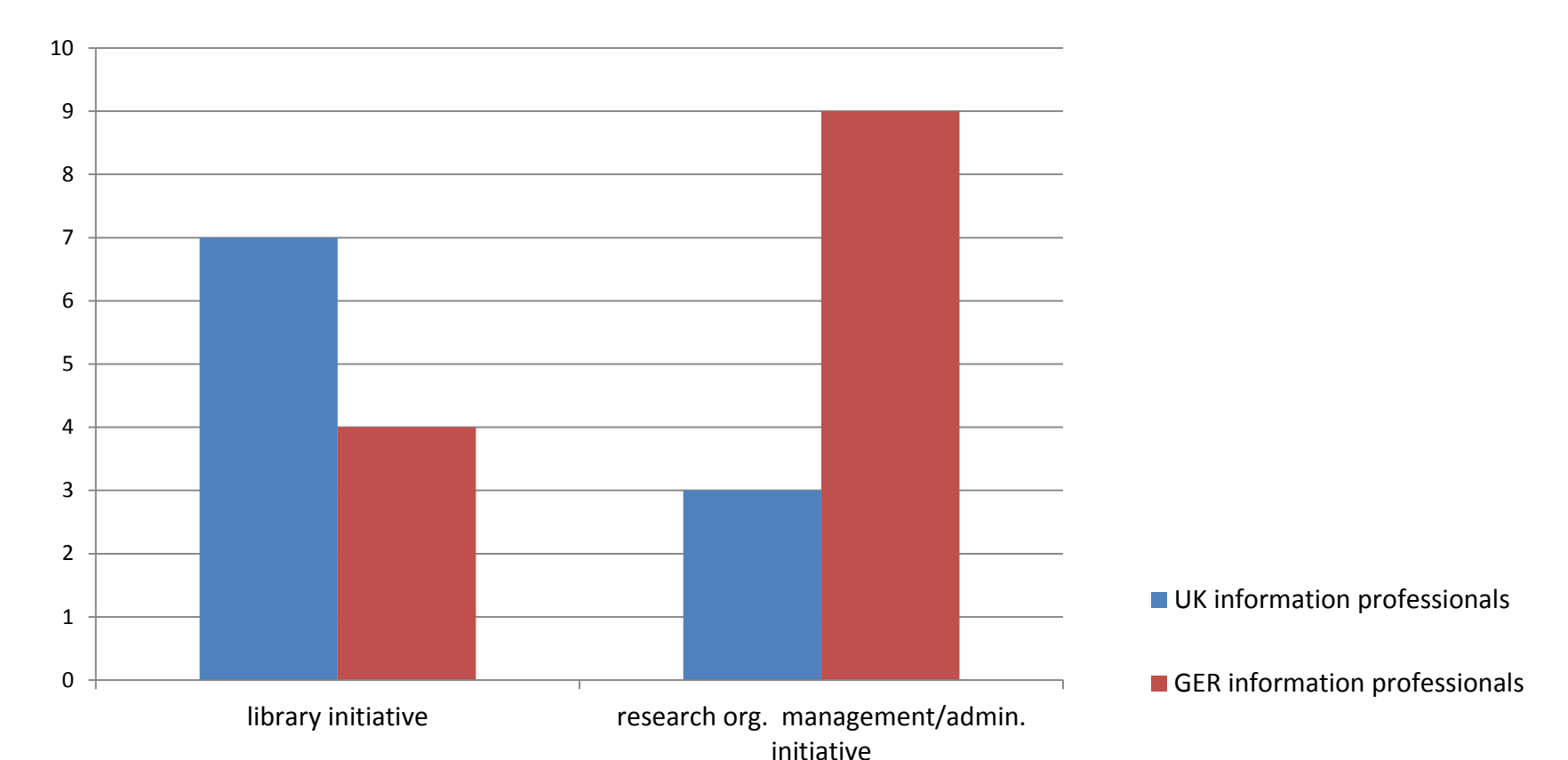


Fig. 6 Initiative for bibliometric services



### Future directions

Subsequent data analysis and interpretation will deal with the following aspects:

- What needs and problems are being diagnosed and treated with bibliometric methods (cognitive claim)
- How is the new library role promoted in the workplace and in the public
- How do social and cognitive claims interact

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