

U.S. scientific papers slip

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If current trends continue, the Asia Pacific region might outstrip the United States in scientific papers published by 2011.

In the 1980s, the United States accounted for about 40 percent of the science papers published in the world. The European Union accounted for 32.3 percent, and the Asia Pacific region 13 percent.

However, by 2004, the EU accounted for 38 percent of the total number of papers; the United States 33.3 percent; and the Asia Pacific region 25.3 percent, according to a study published in Science Watch, the newsletter of Thomson Scientific.

"It's important to note that, while the percentage of share of these countries may have fluctuated, the numbers of papers published in all regions have increased," said Henry Small, chief scientist of Thomson Scientific. "This makes it particularly difficult to attribute this trend to any purported U.S. shortage of scientists."

The United States published nearly 50 percent more papers in 2004 than it did in 1981, while the world total of papers increased by 56 percent, according to Small.

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