

OBITUARY



Photo by Zsuzsanna Glänzel

Hildrun Kretschmer (1947–2024)

Hildrun Kretschmer passed away after a long illness in November 2024. She was an outstanding researcher and among the first German scientists to devote their lives to scientometric studies. She became a well-known scholar of world-wide recognition in our field.

She was born in 1947 in East Germany and started her career in the field of social psychology but moved as early as in the late 1970s to quantitative studies of patterns and phenomena of research collaboration. One of her favourite research topics was the comparative study of social stratification in co-authorship networks of invisible colleges and institutionalised communities, where she could benefit from her knowledge in social psychology as well. Social equality in science reflected by gender and age structures of co-authorship and webometric networks have become more recent topics of her research. She was able to create and maintain an impressive co-authorship network reaching from the US over Europe to India and China.

She was not only active as researcher but she also turned theory into practice. She founded COLLNET, the Global Interdisciplinary Research Network for the Study of all aspects of Collaboration in Science and in Technology in 2000, alongside Liming Liang and Ramesh Kundra. This global interdisciplinary research network aimed to expand collaborative relations between Germany, India, and China internationally. Under her leadership, COLLNET grew into a thriving community, organizing annual conferences

and establishing the *COLLNET Journal of Scientometrics and Information Management (CJSIM)*.

The COLLNET Journal with Hildrun Kretschmer as Founding Editor, has made a considerable contribution in raising the public profile of the research achievements of the COLLNET community in its almost 20 year of publication. The maiden issue of the journal was launched on the eve of the 8th COLLNET conference held in New Delhi 2007 and has published peer reviewed articles presented at COLLNET conferences held in different parts of the globe, besides publishing original articles submitted by scholars from various countries.

Hildrun Kretschmer's vision integrated bibliometric and scientometric approaches with related fields to analyse international cooperation. Her work fostered a diverse network of experts, addressing challenges in data-intensive science and global scholarly communication. Hildrun's legacy continues to shape scientometric research by her engagement in the creation of the necessary institutions and infrastructures.

Hildrun Kretschmer co-founded WISELab at Dalian University of Technology (China) jointly with Liu Zeyan in 2005. WISELab has since become a flagship of Scientometrics in China, inspiring generations of young researchers and stimulating innovative research in the field. Her tireless commitment to mentoring emerging scholars and promoting scholarly innovation has left an enduring and everlasting impact.

Her personal international engagement in research, education and society found expression in her positions held at WISELab, at Henan Normal University, Xinxiang (China) and as the first President of the International Society for Informetrics and Scientometrics (ISSI) founded in 1994.

With her passing, our scientific community has lost one of its great personalities, but we also celebrate her outstanding and long-lasting contributions, as well as her impact on the worldwide Scientometrics community.

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