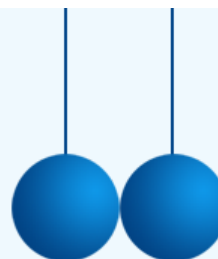


OPENUCT INITIATIVE

opening scholarship



Starting to assess the broader impact of your published work

27 May 2013

Academics, researchers and postgrad students everywhere know the drill of publishing an article: do the research, write the paper, submit it to a journal (or several, after it's initially rejected) and after dealing with reviewer comments and edits, you reach the proud moment when you see your research paper published. After this, to see how your paper has been received by the scholarly community, you wait to see the citations your paper accumulates over time.

However, citations can have a long lag time after publication. So, you may have to wait a long while to see who's been reading your paper and how they are using it in conducting and writing up their own research. And even then, the citations are only a part of the story. They can't give you an idea of how many people may have come across your article online and bookmarked it or shared it with colleagues, NGOs or their communities. The citations in academic publications leave you with no sense of how other readers, beyond the limited number academic community members who included your work in their reference lists, might be interacting with your work.



Using Altmetrics

Enter, [altmetrics](#) (alternative metrics or article level metrics, as it is also known). Altmetrics are an immediate and much broader way to view the impact of your work online. They can include mentions in blog posts, bookmarks, tweets, views and downloads, shares on Facebook and mentions in news articles. All of these can give you a much better idea of how your work is being used and the wider audiences it's reaching. You can also look at the altmetrics for your research outputs beyond journal articles – so the reach and impact of blog posts, white papers, policy briefs and more can also be assessed using these metrics. And looking at the altmetrics for the different articles piling up in your “to read” folder could also give you an idea of where to begin.

Tools of the Trade

[ImpactStory](#) is one altmetrics aggregating service you could try, and (lucky for us) it's free to use. This particular service looks at several sources for the altmetrics it displays: [Github](#), [PLoS](#), [CiteULike](#), [Scopus](#), [Wikipedia](#), [ScienceSeeker](#) (for mentions in blog posts), [Dryad](#), [Mendeley](#), [Topsy](#) (for Twitter data), [Delicious](#) (for social bookmarks), [PubMed](#) and [PMC](#), [Figshare](#), [Slideshare](#) and [Facebook](#). So, it draws on sources of traditional measures of impact (citations) as well as the non-traditional measures (e.g. mentions of your article in a blog post, the number of tweets and Facebook likes). One important thing to note is the focus on sources that would provide data on science-related outputs but humanities researchers should still definitely give this a try.

To see the ImpactStory of your work, you can [create a “collection”](#). You will need one or more of the accepted identifiers of each piece of work: the digital object identifier (DOI), the PubMed ID, the URL or the ORCID identifier. There is also an option to upload your list of publications in your Google Scholar profile via a BibTex file. You can also provide your Slideshare or Github IDs to add those outputs to your collection. While you can register with ImpactStory, this is not essential (at this stage) to create collection or view their altmetrics. So, once you've added all the necessary output information, you can click the “Make my profile” button, sit back and discover the online life of your work. For each item with metrics, you can expand the view to see detailed metrics for the articles.

While altmetrics is not a comprehensive measure of impact (not every share or interaction can be tracked: e.g. “dark social”, the web traffic which most analytics programs and services can't see), these tools provide a unique window into the world of what happens to your work after it's published online. You may just find your paper has had a secret life all its own!

Want to know more? Here are some recent articles introductory articles on altmetrics to get you started:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/12/17/scott-altmetrics-central-digital-whats-missing/>

http://www.asis.org/Bulletin/Apr-13/AprMay13_Mounce.html#8

<http://aoasg.org.au/altmetrics-and-open-access-a-measure-of-public-interest/>

<http://arxiv.org/html/1203.4745v1>

by SarahG

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