Measuring Your Research Impact: Citation and Altmetrics Tools: Home

Overview of tools that can help you learn how your work is being received, used, and disseminated across scholarly platforms and social media networks.

Welcome!

This guide provides a brief introduction to tools that can help you measure the impact of your research by learning how your work is being received, used, and disseminated across scholarly platforms and social media networks.

Search Savvy Seminar, April 2015

These are slides from the April 2015 University Libraries' Search Savvy Seminar, "Who's Talking About (and Citing) Me? Tracking Your Work using Databases, Google, Web of Knowledge, and Altmetrics Tools."

Measuring Your Research Impact: Citation and Altmetrics

University Libraries Search Savvy Seminar
April 22 & 23, 2015

What's Wrong with the Journal Impact Factor?
Traditionally, scholarly impact has been measured through citations, specifically citations from journal articles to journal articles.

However, since citations to individual articles tend to be slow to accumulate, as a proxy, researchers, administrators, and funders have relied upon the aggregate impact of the journal in which an article appeared. This is measured by the Journal Impact Factor, now produced by Thomson Reuters.

Wikipedia defines the Journal Impact Factor as "a measure reflecting the average number of citations to recent articles published in the journal... In any given year, the impact factor of a journal is the average number of citations received per paper published in that journal during the two preceding years."

Unfortunately, the Journal Impact Factor is not an appropriate tool for assessing the impact of individual articles. Why?

- Most citations accrued by a journal are to a small number of the journal's articles; the article under evaluation may or may not be highly cited.
- Journal Impact Factors can be "gamed" by editorial policy, for example through requiring authors to cite other articles that appeared in the journal or by commissioning review articles which tend to receive a lot of citations.

For these reasons, a movement against the inappropriate use of Journal Impact Factors is gaining momentum. In 2013 the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) was released. It offered this general recommendation: "Do not use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions."

- Wikipedia, "Impact factor"
- San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)
  The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), initiated by the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) together with a group of editors and publishers of scholarly journals, recognizes the need to improve the ways in which the outputs of scientific research are evaluated. It is a worldwide initiative covering all scholarly disciplines.
What is the Alternative?

Fortunately, now that research and researchers have moved online and are no longer limited by the constraints of a print-based world, it is possible to measure the impact of scholarship in new ways. We can use **article-level metrics** to quantify how individual articles are being used and **altmetrics** tools to extend the measurement of impact beyond journal articles and beyond the academy.
Measuring Your Research Impact: Citation and Altmetrics Tools: Article-Level Metrics & Altmetrics

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What are Article-Level Metrics?

Article-Level Metrics are an attempt to measure impact at the article level. They can include traditional measures of impact such as citation counts as well as newer metrics like the number of times an article was downloaded.

Article-level metrics can also include altmetrics (see below).

While article-level metrics are by definition limited to scholarly articles, some of the tools discussed in this guide can help you identify citations to other individual research products, e.g. books or book chapters.

A growing number of journals and publishing platforms are making article-level metrics available. For example, article-level metrics are provided for every article published by the Public Library of Science (PLoS). Metrics include total article views and downloads; citation data from SCOPUS, Web of Science, CrossRef, and Google Scholar; bookmarks in Mendeley and CiteULike; and mentions on blogs, facebook, and twitter.

Other journals, including Nature, offer similar metrics from Altmetric.com, while journals published on the HighWire platform incorporate metrics from ImpactStory.

And URI faculty who have archived their articles in DigitalCommons@URI or SelectedWorks receive an email each month with the number of times each article has been downloaded.

- Wikipedia, "Article-level metrics"
- Article-Level Metrics: A SPARC Primer
- DigitalCommons@URI Author Dashboard
  Log in to see the download statistics for your articles in DigitalCommons@URI and Selected Works.
What are Altmetrics?

Altmetrics measure the impact not only of journal articles but a diverse array of online scholarly outputs such as books, book chapters, data sets, computer code, presentation slides, posters, blog posts, digital humanities projects, and websites.

In addition to scholarly impact, altmetrics also measure impact beyond the academy, for example through Wikipedia citations, media mentions, Delicious saves, tweets, and facebook posts. This ability to measure public impact is valuable to authors, institutions, and research funders in helping them gauge the real-world impact of their scholarship and the scholarship they support.

Altmetrics are also more immediate than traditional measures of impact like citations that take time to accrue.

Because altmetrics measure impact beyond the journal article, measure more types of impact, and are available right away, they can free scholars to experiment with and receive credit for new types of scholarly products.

- Wikipedia, "Altmetrics"
- altmetrics: a manifesto
- ACRL, "Keeping Up With... Altmetrics"
Measuring Your Research Impact: Citation and Altmetrics Tools: Finding Citations to Your Work

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Where Might Citing Articles Appear?

If you're looking to see who's cited your work, you need to consider the disciplines that might find your work useful. Your work is likely useful in your own discipline, but if your work might be useful to scholars in other disciplines, try the tools they might use for research. For example, if your research is primarily in Biology, but has implications in the Psychology field, you may also want to search PsycINFO in addition to Web of Science.

*Keep in mind that no one tool provides one-stop shopping. It's likely you'll need to explore multiple platforms.*

Need help?

Click on the black arrow to open the chat in a new window.

If we're not online, please email us at urilibrarian@gmail.com. Please allow 1-2 business days for a response.
Best Bets

- Scopus (Elsevier)  
  Multidisciplinary abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature with tools to track, analyze, and visualize article and literature use. Includes journal articles, books, book series, conference papers, and more. Alternative to Web of Science. Indexes close to 35,000 titles.

- Web of Science Core Collection (Web of Science)  
  Web access to ISI citation databases (Science Citation Index (1965-present), Social Sciences Citation Index (1965-present), and Arts & Humanities Citation Index (1975-present)). Contains citations to articles from over 10,000 of the most prestigious, high impact research journals in the world. Searching by cited reference allows the user to uncover the research that influenced an author’s work or to navigate forward in time to discover a paper’s impact on current research. Updated weekly.

- Google Scholar  
  One of Google's specialized search tools, Google Scholar focuses primarily on information from scholarly and peer-reviewed sources. By using the Scholar Preferences page, you can link back to URI's subscriptions for access to many otherwise fee-based articles.

Other Databases/Tools with "Cited By" Information

- PsycINFO (ProQuest)  
  Citations and abstracts of journal articles and books in psychology, including applied psychology, developmental psychology, and personality. 1806-. Updated monthly.
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Need help?

Get live research help from librarians at the Info & Research Help Desk using the box below.

Click on the green arrow to open the chat in a new window.

If we're not online, please email us at urilibrarian@gmail.com. Please allow 1-2 business days for a response.

Altmetrics Tools for Researchers

Altmetrics tools for individual researchers can help you:

- Compile citations, share and promote all forms of your scholarly output (writing, datasets, presentations, etc.)
- Bring together usage statistics from online sources such as citations managers, news outlets, digital repositories, and social media sites

Try these two easy-to-use tools:

- ORCID (free)
  - Creates a unique, persistent digital identifier that distinguishes you from other authors
  - Imports your citations from other online repositories into a researcher profile
  - Provides information to altmetrics tools like ImpactStory

- ImpactStory (personal subscription required)
  - Creates a researcher profile
  - Imports your citations from online sources, or lets you manually add them
  - For each citation, shows altmetrics statistics from social media, citation managers, repositories, and more
  - For an excellent profile example, see http://impactstory.org/CarlBoettiger
Altmetrics Tools for Institutions

Institutions can choose to embed altmetrics in their institutional repositories or researcher profiles. Two commonly used services are Altmetric.com and Plum Analytics. Both of these tools index a wide range of altmetrics.

URI faculty with scholarly articles in DigitalCommons@URI can now view altmetrics statistics, including saved citations (e.g. Mendeley), blog mentions, social media shares, and more.

From most faculty publications in the repository, click on either the "Altmetric" button for Altmetric.com statistics, or the purple button directly below it for a Plum Analytics summary. See the following article as an example:

Cottrell, Elizabeth and Katherine A. Kelley. Redox heterogeneity in MORB as a function of mantle source.

And, view a summary of URI's overall statistics from Plum Analytics: https://plu.mx/g/samples/uri
factor, internet resources, open access, scholarly communication

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Measuring Your Research Impact: Citation and Altmetrics Tools: Promote Your Work

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Maximize the Impact of Your Work

The availability of altmetrics and article-level metrics depends on your work being available online. Work that is openly available online (i.e. not behind a paywall) will be accessible to more people and will therefore have greater impact.

Why not make all of your scholarly output available?

- You can post datasets on figshare or Dryad. (See our Data Management guide for more information on managing your research data.)
- If you create computer code, make it available through github.
- You can share presentation slides on SlideShare or figshare (which also accepts posters).
- For articles, make sure you comply with the URI Open Access Policy and deposit your work in DigitalCommons@URI.
- You can create a faculty profile page using SelectedWorks.
- Finally, an ORCID ID will help identify you and your work online.

- DigitalCommons@URI
  Deposit your work in URI's institutional repository to make it available open access. Open access scholarship is more likely to be used, mentioned, and cited because it is available to everyone.

- Selected Works
  Set up a Selected Works profile page to list your scholarly products. Selected Works is similar to ResearchGate or Academia.edu except it has URI branding and is a non-commercial service offered by the URI Libraries.

- ORCID
  Register for an ORCID identifier. This is a unique author ID that distinguishes your work online from that of researchers with the same or similar names. ORCID helps altmetrics tools collect data on the use of your research.
## Demonstrate the Impact of Your Work

The tools presented in this guide empower you to tell your own story of the impact of your scholarship.

Scholars should heed the advice of DORA and stop relying on the Journal Impact Factor to measure the impact of their research, and they should push back against colleagues, administrators, and funders who still do so.

For those exploring new ways of demonstrating their research impact, Jason Priem, co-founder of ImpactStory, offers this advice:

> “First, try new things: publish new kinds of products, share them in new places and brag about them using new metrics... Second, take risks... publishing more papers may be safe, but scholars who establish early leadership in Web-native production will be ahead of the curve as these genres become dominant. Finally, resist the urge to cling to the trappings of scientific excellence rather than excellence itself. 'Publication' is just one mode of making public and one way of validating scholarly excellence. It is time to embrace the Web's power to disseminate and filter scholarship more broadly and meaningfully. Welcome to the next era of scholarly communication.”

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