Applied Altmetrics: How university presses, academic publishing services and institutional repositories benefit.

blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2015/11/09/altmetrics-university-press-publishing-services-institutional-repository/

Academic institutions are increasingly looking for ways to demonstrate the value and breadth of their publishing activity. Danielle Padula *and* Catherine Williams *look at how one university, the University of Michigan, have incorporated altmetrics data as an author service to help academic colleagues articulate institutional-wide successes.*

A key benefit of altmetrics for younger or smaller publishers is that, unlike the Thomson Reuters' Impact Factor, there are no criteria applied to make a title eligible for altmetrics. Beyond assigning a unique scholarly identifier (such as a DOI or handle.net identifier) to each individual output, publishers are not required to demonstrate any of the benchmarks required for obtaining an Impact Factor (such as publishing regularly and typically being around for about three years before they will be considered for inclusion).

Increasingly, it's not just journal articles to which publishers are interested in applying altmetrics. Some publishers are rolling out similar data to other forms of content. For example, Michigan Publishing has applied altmetrics data to reports and grey literature.

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Charles Watkinson, Director at University of Michigan Press, has been particularly innovative in his thinking on the adoption of altmetrics across their content. As an institutional publisher, he states, they not only place a focus on supporting the academics who publish with them, but there is also a need to demonstrate the value and worth of their publishing activities back to the institution that funds them. Using altmetrics to evidence engagement of their research amongst a broad audience plays a big part in this, and helps the publishing team articulate their successes back to their internal stakeholders. The case study below outlines Michigan Publishing's approach to altmetrics.

Altmetrics at Michigan Publishing: A Case Study

The situation

As part of one of the world's leading research libraries, the staff of Michigan Publishing are responsible for a large portion of the publishing activity within the University of Michigan. Their activities include book publishing through the University of Michigan Press imprint, an open access journal-publishing program, and the institutional repository, Deep Blue, which hosts a wide variety of grey literature outputs such as technical reports, white papers, and electronic dissertations. Substantially supported by the University (and as a fully open access publisher), Michigan's team members are keen to consistently demonstrate their support for furthering the disciplines in which they publish, which include a mixture of humanities and the social sciences. A second key priority for Michigan is demonstrating the value of their activity to the publicly-funded parent institution that supports them. As such, they are constantly looking for ways to help researchers not just further progress in their field, but also to maximize the broader influence and awareness of their work in a way that can be captured and given context.

The solution

Michigan saw that incorporating altmetrics data across their platforms could provide valuable feedback for their authors, as well as data that could be used to report on the reach and influence of their publishing activity internally. Starting with their journals, with the intention of expanding coverage to other outputs later on, Michigan has begun to use the Altmetric badges to track and report on the online attention their publications receive.

Image credit: David Fulmer **University of Michigan Library Card Catalog (CC BY)**

Roll out

First incorporated on their journal articles, Michigan has now rolled out Altmetric data on their open access book program, Digital Culture Books, and on the institutional repository, Deep Blue. They hope to find ways of including other content over the next few years, especially the monographs they publish through University of Michigan Press. A particular aim across all this activity is to provide authors whose impact is often underrepresented via traditional measures (books, for example, do not get an Impact Factor) with a much more granular picture of how their work has been interpreted and reused. Through altmetrics, Michigan can deliver these faculty members examples and

evidence that can be used to demonstrate their influence and the reach of their research.

Feedback so far

Particularly internally, Michigan Press has seen a really positive response to the inclusion of Altmetric data. The management committee values being able to have a wider view on the impact of their publishing program, and the staff within the press are using the data to identify success stories and to help build future outreach strategy. Feedback from authors is also proving positive, with many reporting that they regularly check-in on the altmetrics for their own work and that of their peers.

This article is an excerpt from [The Evolution of Impact Indicators: From bibliometrics to altmetrics](#) *, a collection on the state of research impact co-produced by Scholastica and Altmetric.*

Note: This article gives the views of the authors, and not the position of the Impact of Social Science blog, nor of the London School of Economics. Please review our [Comments Policy](#) *if you have any concerns on posting a comment below.*

About the Authors

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