

Beyond traditional citations: Leap on clouds to capture virtual metrics!

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In this century, the volume of scholarly research output has increased and has become enormous and more complex than ever before because of its multi-dimensional features. Over the past few decades, there have been dramatic changes in technologies and it is more in communication models in this wired and wireless world. Dynamic applications of internet invaded the scholarly community as a strong foundation for enhancing the outreach of scholarly information in real time and it is faster than ever before.

The facets of digital formats triggered entrepreneurs and scientists to develop social media channels for users' community in variants and most of them are available free on the internet. Open access models have taken significant growth and changed the definition of scholarly publishing. Many government bodies across the world have changed their institute's publishing policies to enhance the visibility of their scholarly output to have transparency, accountability and accessibility. To compete with the changes in publication formats several metrics have been developed and experimented. The pace in which research communication is happening in this digital age, the entire scholarly community is desperate to see the impact of their work in real time models and now the *speed* of impact is on race.

Conventional metric tools based on citation counts take considerable time to compute the controlled

measurable data to evaluate the impact of a research. The buzzword – “Altmetrics” (alternative to metrics)^[1] is the new concept expanded the scope of computational figures and added to the main stream of metrics to capture the attention of “science” mentioned in the virtual world. Plum analytics, CitedIn, ImpactStory, ReaderMeter, ScienceCard, PaperCritic, Altmetric Explorer and Crowdometer are few new tools evolved based on the new concept. These tools [Figure 1] capture number of downloads of an article, “*science*” of an article discussed in media sites viz., Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Mendeley, Connotea, CiteULike and gives a score. These scores are made available on journal sites next to the article. This new kid in the block is getting attention from the scholarly community owing to the changing scenario of scholarly landscape. To augment this idea few publishers (NPG, PLoS One, IOP) have already embraced the concept. These applications provide immediate attention received by an article as “article-level-metrics” on real time models. The concept is in experimental phase and certainly there is a value addition to metrics which was not their earlier in conventional tools.

The concern is quality of data used by these tools. Social media services are volatile and are devised with transitory need. These media tools are developed to flash news/information in real time and they may fade away with time and new applications may emerge with newer versions.

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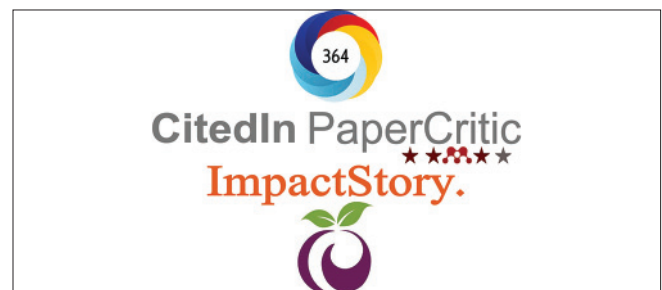


Figure 1: Altmetric tools

Is there any end to such galore of applications in this digital world? Capturing counts for indicators from these social media tools is relatively easy to game and fabricate. The usage of social media tools in developing regions is far low compared to developed regions. Moreover, these media sites are suppressed in many of the government organizations. In a situation of low usage of such tools in developing countries, will this concept work effectively and justify the data they capture from such regions?

REFERENCE

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