

Engaging your audience

Using altmetrics to drive faculty outreach and raise the profile of expertise within an institution

Lucy Lambe, Scholarly Communications Officer
London School of Economics and Political Science
l.lambe@lse.ac.uk
@lucylambe



The Library at the London School of Economics



LSE research profile and outputs



What are altmetrics?

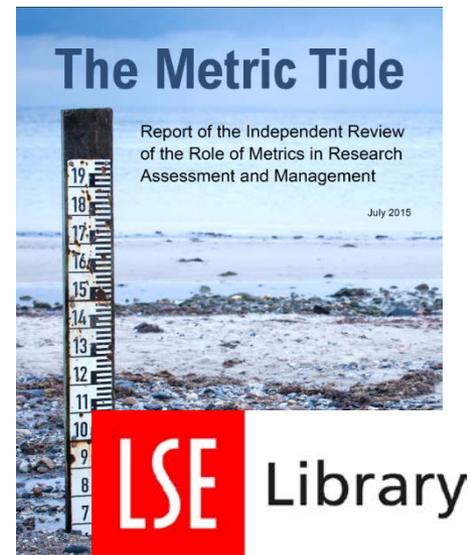
Altmetrics are alternative and non-traditional metrics that capture the online engagement relating to a specific research output. They provide a measure of the attention an item is receiving from sources such as the mainstream media, social networks, policy makers, and other scholarly and non-scholarly forums

But...

Altmetrics are not intended as either a replacement or improvement on traditional citation metrics

On their own, altmetrics do not accurately measure impact, but can provide some measure of the level of engagement your work has with the outside world

No metric on its own can effectively assess the **quality** of a research output – see the findings of the Metric Tide (2015)



Why do we use altmetrics at LSE?

Institutional strategy:

“We will engage with diverse communities to the reach, influence and impact of our research on public understanding and debate.”

“What does success look like? Our research impacts on national and global debates, it shapes strategies to address critical challenges in society.”

Why do we use altmetrics at LSE?

Aim of the School since its foundation: “the betterment of society”

LSE’s academics are good at getting their research and themselves in front of the right people – advisors to government, international organisations, charities. We want to know how good and where they could improve

Altmetric Explorer tracks policy documents for references to LSE research

Why do we use altmetrics at LSE?

Building on Success and Learning from Experience

An Independent Review of the Research Excellence Framework

July 2016

Recommendation 5: Institutions should be given more flexibility to showcase their **interdisciplinary and collaborative impacts by submitting 'institutional' level impact case studies**, part of a new institutional level assessment.

Recommendation 7: Guidance on the REF should make it clear that impact case studies should not be narrowly interpreted, need not solely focus on socio-economic impacts but should also include **impact on government policy, on public engagement and understanding, on cultural life, on academic impacts outside the field, and impacts on teaching.**

How we've been using altmetric data at LSE

Case studies

Case Study: Using data from Altmetric Explorer to engage with researchers

Traditional approach

- Staff newsletter (weekly)
- Research Briefing (monthly)
- Subject librarian training

A more targeted approach

- Compiled lists of specific mentions
- Sent to individuals and research centre admins

“I have found tracking RTs useful to see who is interested in my research ... It’s important to be able to give examples of non-academic reach, for example, to funders”

Dr Ernestina Coast
Associate Professor of Population Studies
Department of Social Policy

“Within my research centre we are putting a lot of effort into achieving better connections to and impacts on non-academic groups ... It is very good to hear about this ‘reach’ – and this is exactly what we need to be able to refer to when thinking about impact”

Professor Martin Knapp
Professor of Social Policy
Department of Social Policy

Case Study: Using altmetric data for a PhD by publication and networking as an ECR

Social Policy PhD student writing a thesis by publication

Tracking papers in the Altmetric Explorer to demonstrate impact at submission stage

Postdoctoral job applications – altmetric score can demonstrate attention

Useful to see who is talking about her research, then arrange to meet at conferences

Works both ways – another researcher found her Tweets about his work via Altmetric

Case study: Managing a department's social media accounts and blogging

Department of Media and Communications

Check Twitter and Facebook mentions and comment on posts mentioning their research

Policy documents have more of an impact for the department, but Tweets reach a larger audience

A grayscale photograph of two men in business attire sitting at a desk. The man on the left is wearing glasses and looking towards the right. The man on the right is looking down at a document. There are papers, a pen, and a printer on the desk.

Share blog posts or news items on their own Twitter feed

What's popular on social media informs what they should highlight on the departmental blog

Currently putting together an internal report to provide data for grant applications and to inform the decisions around next REF submission

Case study: Development of impact case studies

Research Office

Using Altmetric Explorer to discover unknown “big hitters” that are making impact

Provides a starting point for conversations between research office and academics

Policy documents are most important
for impact case studies

Promoting the Explorer in training
sessions

Case study: Adding altmetrics to bibliometric analyses for research centres

International Growth Centre

Library provides bibliometric analysis service to research groups and centres

Expressed interest in how their papers are being used beyond citations in journals

Particularly interested in mentions from policy documents and university syllabuses

Negative feedback?

Lack of time to learn a new tool and explore altmetric data

Put off by a lack of activity / low score

Some misunderstanding of altmetrics or a dislike of metrics in general

Future plans...

- DOIs for grey literature (e.g. reports, conference papers) to enable tracking
- Current work on statement on the responsible use of metrics
- Altmetric Explorer v2 released last month – requires new training materials

Questions

