Using Altmetric Explorer to develop Dissemination Plans

A Guide for Researchers & Institutions

Altmetric

In order for relevant audiences to find, discuss, and further share your work, you must approach dissemination strategically.

Leveraging Altmetric Explorer is one way to inform your dissemination plan.

You can use the Explorer to learn:

1) where engagement with research in your field is happening online,

2) who is talking about research, and

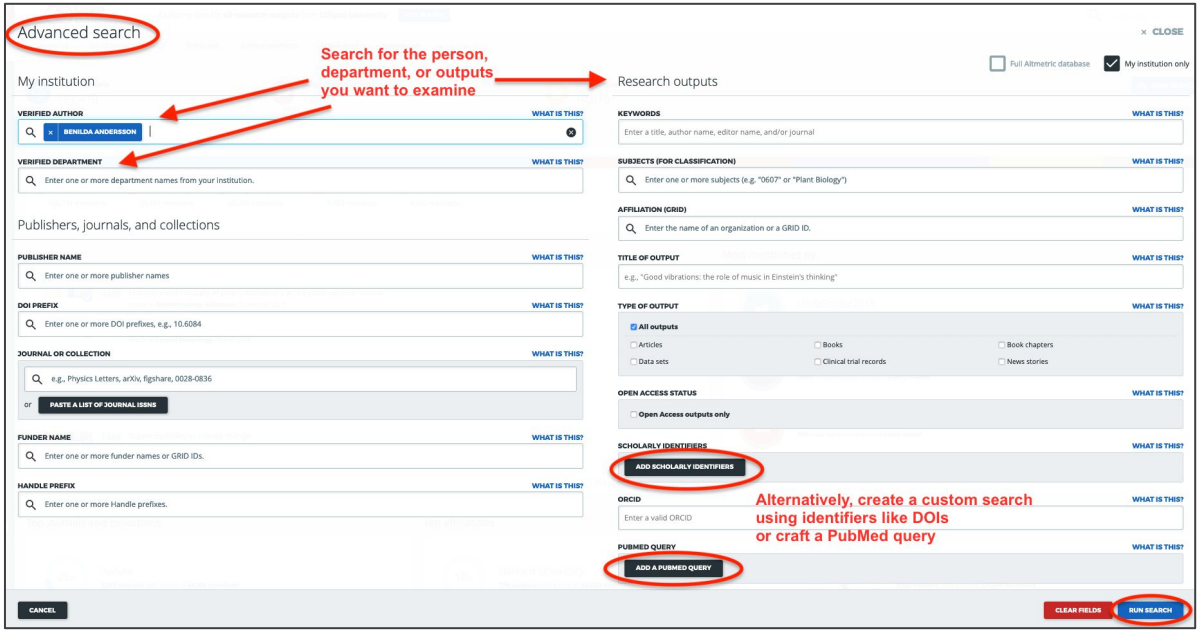
3) which journals are publishing research that receives the most online attention.

Step 1: Identify relevant Field of Research codes

In Altmetric Explorer, most outputs are classified using Field of Research codes, or FoR codes. These codes are assigned at the output level, not the journal level, making this a powerful and specific classification system.

First, use the advanced search to find relevant research by searching for the person, department, or outputs you want to examine.

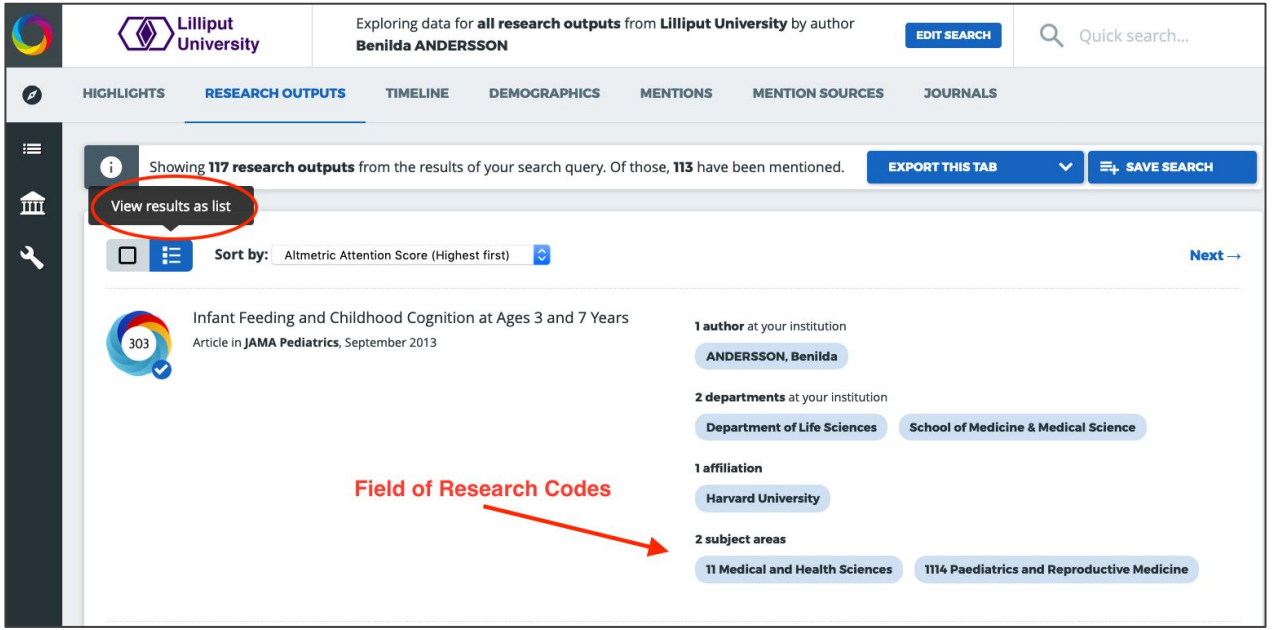
Or, you can upload a set of identifiers or craft a PubMed strategy.



Step 1: Continued

Once you run your search, toggle to the Research Outputs tab and view the results as a list. This provides at-a-glance information about the subject areas these outputs are classified in using FoR codes.

Make note of which subject areas seem most relevant or occur most frequently.

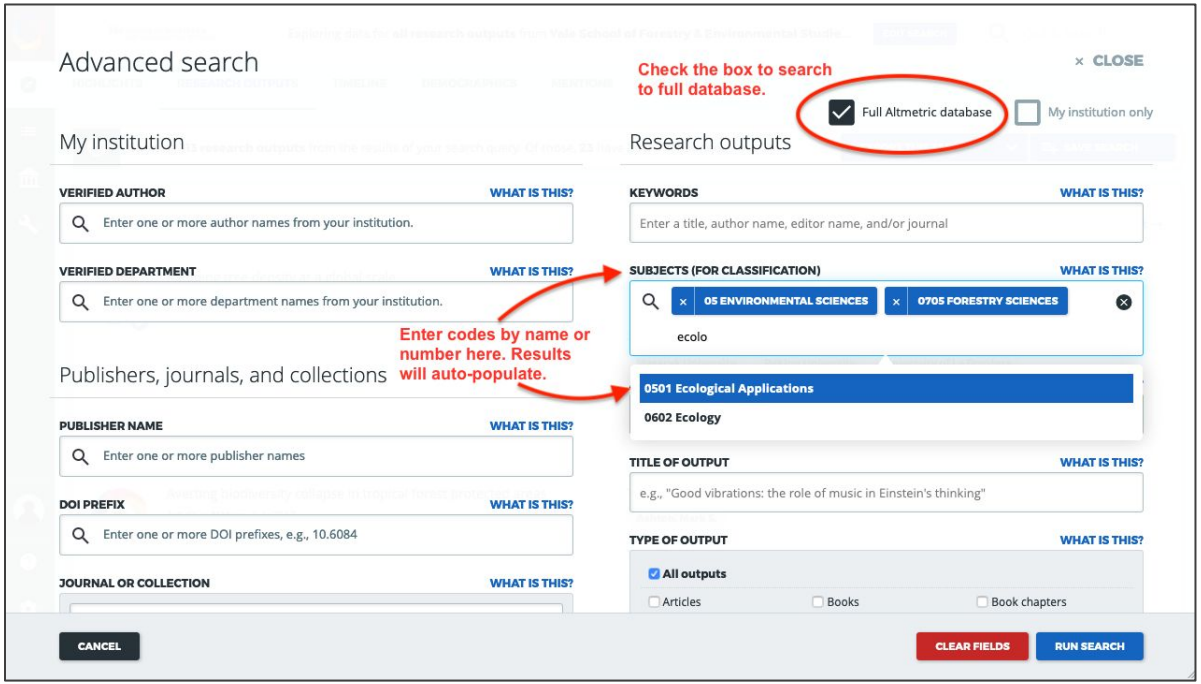


Step 2: Craft a search strategy using FoR codes

Next, you will use the FoR codes you identified in Step 1 to create a new search strategy.

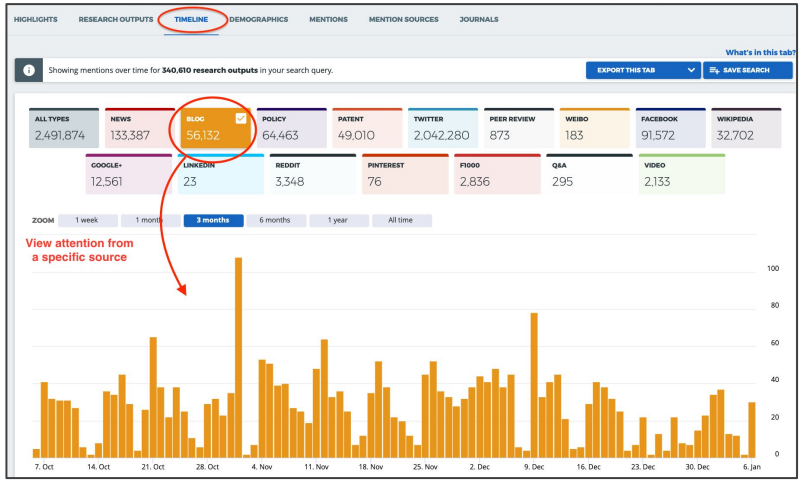
Go back to the Advanced Search, clear your previous search, and check the 'Full Altmetric database' box. Simply begin typing the code(s) in the 'Subjects' search bar; suggestions will auto-populate. Enter multiple codes if appropriate.

You can now begin to examine how research in this particular area is discussed online.



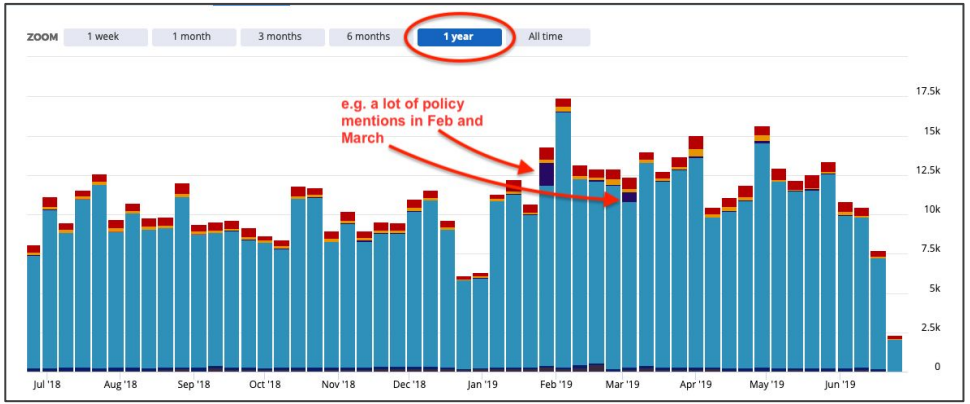
Step 3: Explore the Timeline tab

Try starting in the Timeline tab to get a visual of where the most voluminous attention is occurring and which sources you might be interested in exploring further in Step 4.



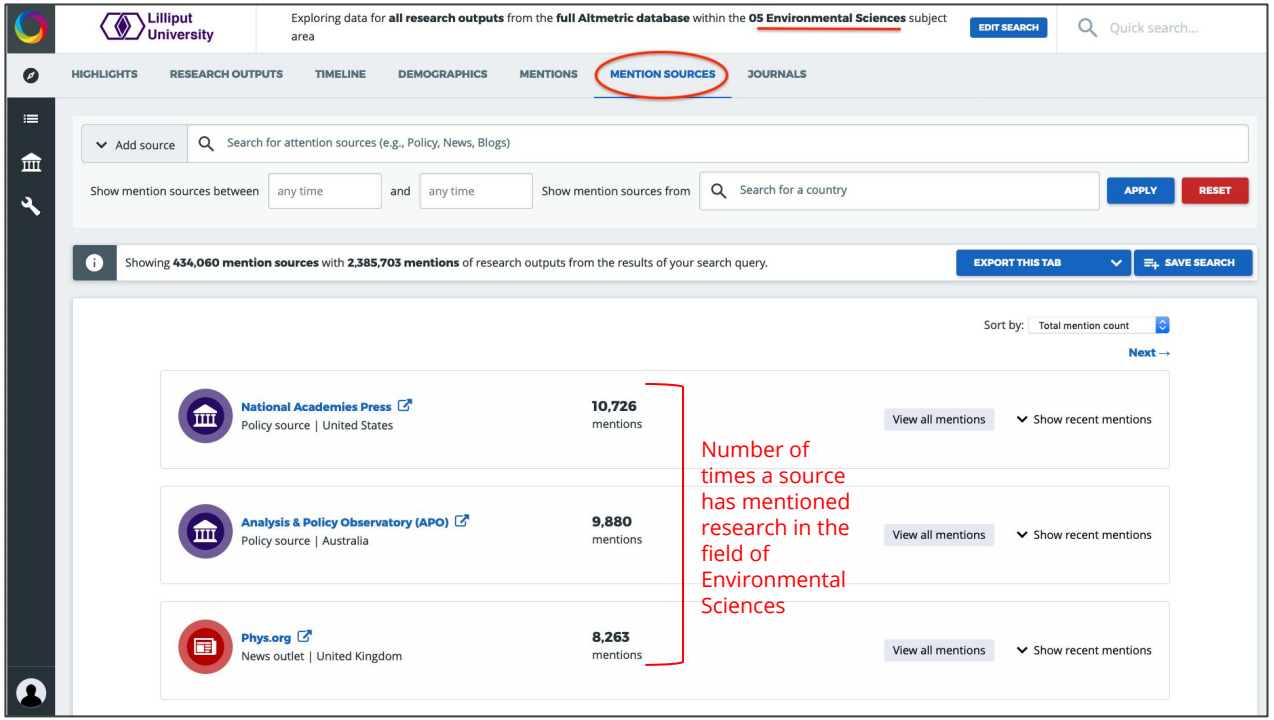
Experiment by limiting to different source types

Experiment with different time limits



Step 4: Explore the Mentions Sources tab

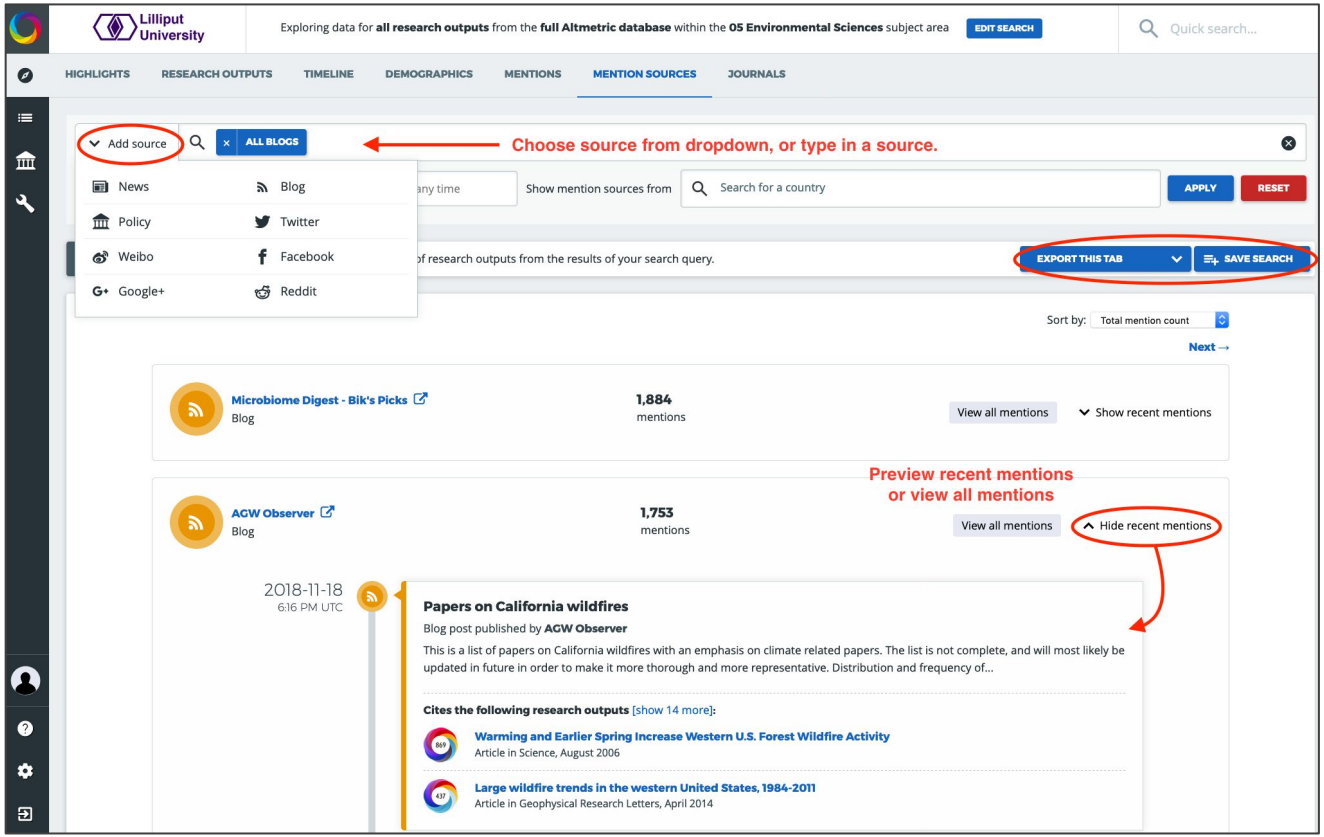
The Mention Sources tab makes it quick and easy to see exactly which sources and people (e.g., specific tweeters, news outlets, policy sources, and more) have mentioned research the most. In this example, we are looking at research in the field of Environmental Sciences.



Step 5: Add filters, explore mentions, export to CSV

In the Mention Sources tab, you can filter by source type. Choose a source from the dropdown menu, or you can type in a particular source of interest, such as World Health Organization, Washington Post, or even a specific Twitter handle, e.g. @altmetric.

You can also limit by date or show mentions from a specific set of countries. Remember, you can always save a search or export data to a CSV.

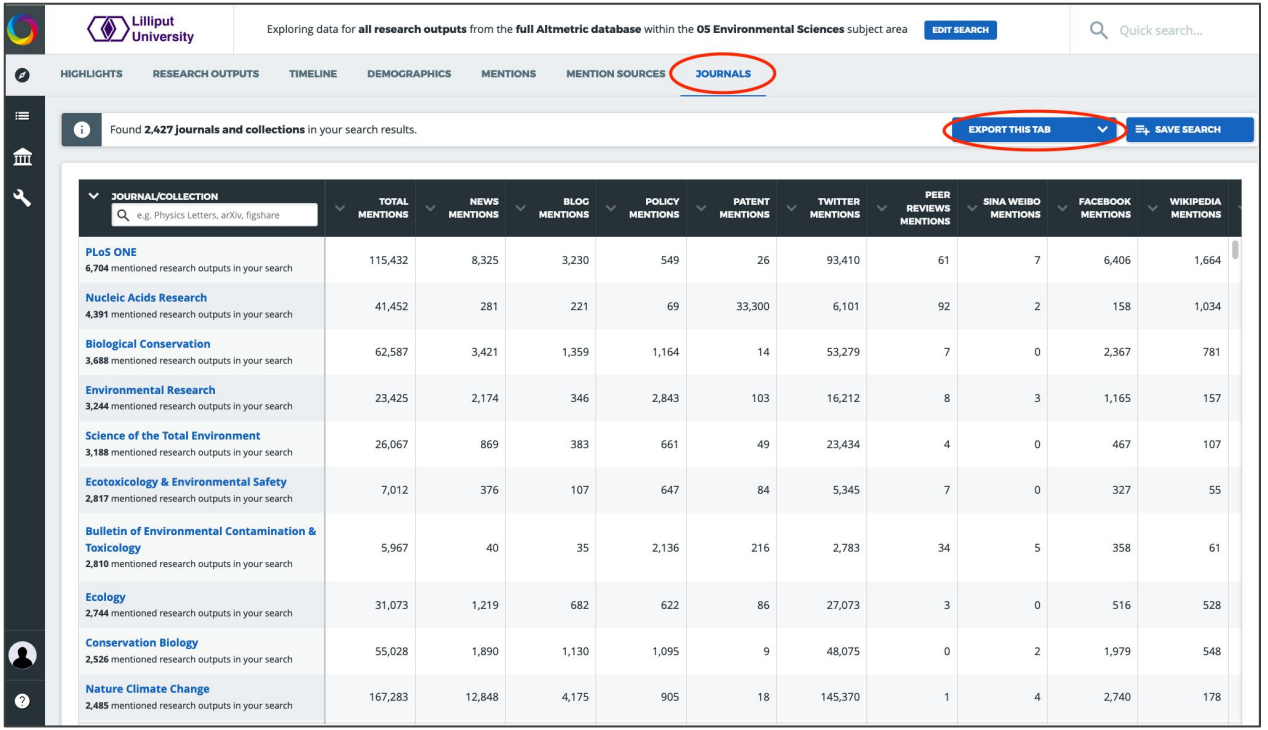


Step 6: Explore Journals tab

Finally, you can explore the Journals tab to see where this research is being published and which journals get the most attention online.

Simply toggle to the Journals tab in Altmetric Explorer and experiment with sorting by different mention types, e.g. policy, patent, news, etc.

The left-hand column lists the journal titles and will change as you sort in different ways. Consider exporting to CSV for further analysis.



JOURNAL/COLLECTION (e.g. Physics Letters, arXiv, figshare)	TOTAL MENTIONS	NEWS MENTIONS	BLOG MENTIONS	POLICY MENTIONS	PATENT MENTIONS	TWITTER MENTIONS	PEER REVIEWS MENTIONS	SINA WEIBO MENTIONS	FACEBOOK MENTIONS	WIKIPEDIA MENTIONS
PLoS ONE 6,704 mentioned research outputs in your search	115,432	8,325	3,230	549	26	93,410	61	7	6,406	1,664
Nucleic Acids Research 4,391 mentioned research outputs in your search	41,452	281	221	69	33,300	6,101	92	2	158	1,034
Biological Conservation 3,688 mentioned research outputs in your search	62,587	3,421	1,359	1,164	14	53,279	7	0	2,367	781
Environmental Research 3,244 mentioned research outputs in your search	23,425	2,174	346	2,843	103	16,212	8	3	1,165	157
Science of the Total Environment 3,188 mentioned research outputs in your search	26,067	869	383	661	49	23,434	4	0	467	107
Ecotoxicology & Environmental Safety 2,817 mentioned research outputs in your search	7,012	376	107	647	84	5,345	7	0	327	55
Bulletin of Environmental Contamination & Toxicology 2,810 mentioned research outputs in your search	5,967	40	35	2,136	216	2,783	34	5	358	61
Ecology 2,744 mentioned research outputs in your search	31,073	1,219	682	622	86	27,073	3	0	516	528
Conservation Biology 2,526 mentioned research outputs in your search	55,028	1,890	1,130	1,095	9	48,075	0	2	1,979	548
Nature Climate Change 2,485 mentioned research outputs in your search	167,283	12,848	4,175	905	18	145,370	1	4	2,740	178

Leveraging Altmetric Data

So what do you actually do with this information? How can it inform your dissemination strategy? Disseminating research beyond just the publishing process is new to many people, so let's take a look at some ideas and examples.

Twitter

- Twitter is a hotbed for research communication in some fields, but not all! Use Altmetric data to see if Twitter will help you reach your intended audiences.
- Discover Twitter accounts that are actively and frequently posting in your field. Create an account and follow these potential influencers. Engage with them, i.e. re-tweet their content and comment on their posts. They'll be more likely to follow you and reciprocate.
- Find and connect with potential collaborators, e.g. experts, public groups, patient advocacy groups, societies, funders, government officials, etc.
- See which journals have an active Twitter presence (and therefore might help you in the dissemination process).

Leveraging Altmetric Data

News

- Stay on top of where research in your field is being discussed in mass media.
- Work with your communications office or marketing department to reach out to relevant media sources.
- Discover new or niche news outlets discussing your field.

Blogs

- Using Altmetric data, find popular blogs in your research area and start by reading them to get an idea of what blogging looks like in your field.
- Write lay summaries of your work. Blogs don't necessarily have to be filled with creative prose. You could create a blog that contains summaries of your work that is intended for broad consumption. This can make your work more accessible to the public, funders, etc.
- Bloggers need a vacation too! Offer to write a guest blog post or to collaborate with a blogger on a post.

Leveraging Altmetric Data

Journals
While social media, blogs, and news outlets are great ways to share your work far and wide, the primary method of dissemination is still via journals, but not all journals receive the same amount of attention online.

Use Altmetric Explorer to gain insight into which journals are most frequently cited in policy documents, patent applications, and other sources. This can help you assess which journals provide author support and aid you in deciding where to submit publications in the future.

Continuing the Conversation
Strategic dissemination can seem like a daunting task, but Altmetric Explorer can help you save time by making it easier to discover and subsequently engage in these conversations.

If you'd like to discuss this guide and learn more, contact Patty!

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