

The John Templeton Foundation

User profile

Steve Fitzmier is the Director of the Planning and Evaluation team of the John Templeton Foundation, a private foundation based in the United States.

First established in 1987, the Foundation funds more than \$100 million in research and public engagement grants.

Goals and Challenges

“At the core of the Foundation’s mission is a desire to both fund high quality research and to generate greater public engagement with the research we support,” says Steve.

“While analyzing metrics such as citations can be helpful to assess impact, these methods provide an incomplete picture.”

Thus, Steve and his colleagues in grantmaking and Communications were looking for a cost-effective and reliable way of identifying, reporting and analyzing the online attention being given to research funded by the Foundation.

Implementing Altmetric for Institutions

Steve and his team were familiar with Altmetric from seeing the data in use across other platforms. They also had the opportunity to see a presentation at an industry conference which helped them understand more about the platform and further clarified how it could suit their needs.

“The wide acceptance of Altmetric information across different platforms helped inform our decision that Altmetric had both the existing client base and potential to support us now and into the future.”

Of particular importance was the quality of altmetrics data provided and the range of sources tracked. Being able to drill down and audit the original mentions and shares of each research output meant that Steve and his team will be able to get a better understanding of why people are talking about the work they fund, and what they think of it.

Altmetric for Institutions has been configured for multiple Foundation stakeholder needs, enabling them to group research outputs by grant and program area. This means that they can easily track and report on the attention for individual projects, as well as filtering by project leader and subject area.

“The prospect of a service that cost-effectively aggregated public engagement with research we care about was compelling, on the basis that it would give us a fuller, more detailed picture than what we pull together ourselves.”

Monitoring early attention

One of the main benefits of using Altmetric for Steve and his team will be the ability to see how the research they fund is being received and more widely disseminated and shared as soon as it is published - at the moment they rely mainly on citations and media coverage either reported by grantees or a news clipping service.

The data from Altmetric will help them understand how effective their current outreach strategy is, and identify areas where improvements can be made.

They also anticipate that having the additional insight into who is sharing and discussing their work will enable them to identify new channels and communities with which to engage, ultimately raising awareness of future research.



Reporting

Integrating Altmetric data in ways that help the Foundation more effectively accomplish its mission is a big part of what the Foundation aims to do, and having so many useful indicators of engagement in one place via the Altmetric platform will be a valuable time-saver for them.

Altmetric data will be used by Foundation staff in grantmaking and in Communications so they can get a better sense of the broader impacts of the research they're funding, and will help them improve their future grant making process and communication strategy.