

The University of Manchester

User profile

Scott Taylor is part of the Research Services team at The University of Manchester Library. Scott's team provides research tools to the entire institution with the aim of identifying new tools or innovations that could most benefit their researchers.

Institutional goals

- Having gone through the process of manually searching for and compiling evidence of 'broader engagement' for the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF), the research services team at Manchester wanted to make it easier for their researchers to find this evidence by providing them with online attention in one consolidated source.
- Scott's team was also looking for new ways to monitor outreach and public engagement activities across their departments and faculty. To do this they wanted a reliable system that would offer insight into qualitative data, not just numbers, and give them the chance to position themselves as a forward-thinking institution.

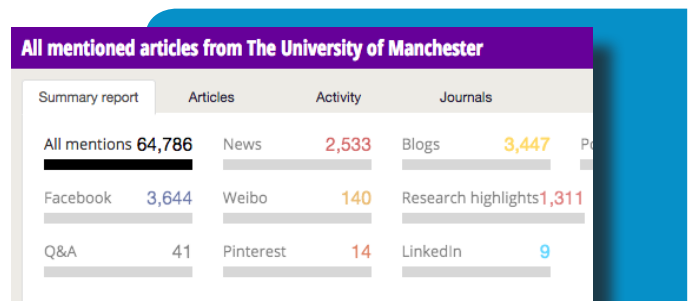
Key Stats

- 64,786 mentions of Manchester research to date
- 335 references in public policy documents
- Over 2,000 mentions in the last month alone

Implementing Altmetric for Institutions

The University of Manchester was one of a handful of institutions that agreed to be development partners by testing Altmetric for Institutions just prior to the official product launch.

Altmetric for Institutions was first launched at Manchester to a select group of administrators and faculty across several disciplines. The objective of this targeted launch was to give Scott and his colleagues the chance to explore all of the data and reporting functionality offered by the platform, and to develop a better understanding of how they would later use the product across the entire institution.



Gathering evidence and context

Researchers and administrators are facing increasing demands from management and government reviews to provide evidence of the broader impact and value of their work.

Altmetric for Institutions is already being utilized by Manchester Research Services team as the key resource for determining the online attention of each of their institution's research outputs – an at a glance summary helps them identify notable, but perhaps little-cited, items within their own portfolios – a big step in making it easier to provide evidence of these non-traditional impacts.

A key benefit, Scott reports, is that the tool provides a link to the full-text for each of the mentions, making it possible to review and understand the context of each data point.

He says that it is this level of qualitative data, instead of just counts of coverage or mentions, and the user experience it offers, which make the information particularly valuable to them.

Faculty are able to easily extract the material to include in impact reports or funding applications to add context and background to their submissions.

Driving academic engagement

The academic engagement teams intend to use the Altmetric data to demonstrate to faculty the effects of their outreach activity. The team is busy setting up automated alerts so they can easily keep an eye out for additional coverage to highlight to authors and department heads.

“Altmetrics data for existing articles can help our academics identify key contacts to target in future to ensure their work reaches the relevant audiences.”

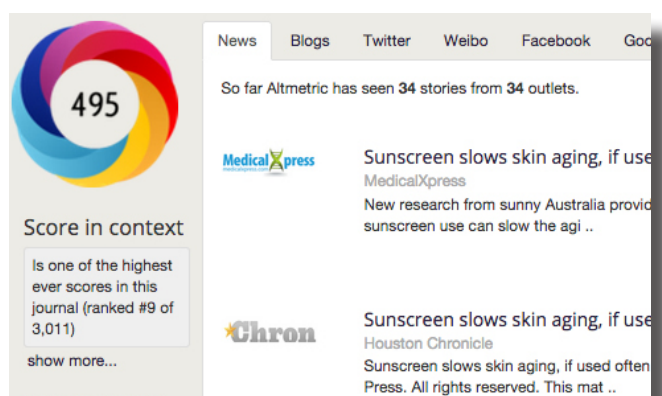
The platform can also be used to identify patterns and key sources of attention to help researchers form more effective strategies for future engagement. The team envisages that the ability to more easily monitor and track the effects of outreach activity will encourage researchers to continue to develop their efforts in this area.

Identifying interesting content

As well as their original institutional goals, Manchester are finding the data useful for a number of other applications – including its possible use in identifying journals which see a lot of attention, complementary to citation data.

“We can instantly see which journals have generated a lot of high-impact coverage over the last year.”

Scott and his team believe that being able to see the amount of attention and conversation surrounding a specific research output, such as an article, may be particularly helpful for their undergraduates to identify readings of interest.



Future plans

Scott and his team now plan to roll out the Altmetric for Institutions platform more widely across all disciplines and faculty within the institution.

They are working in conjunction with the Altmetric team to provide training and education to their research staff to ensure a good understanding of what the altmetrics data can, and cannot, demonstrate, and will continue to explore how the data can be best incorporated into their reporting structure.