

What are Altmetrics? Transcript

Based on: <https://www.altmetric.com/about-altmetrics/what-are-altmetrics/> and <http://www.whatarealmetrics.com/>

What are altmetrics?

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Altmetrics, or alternative metrics, are metrics and qualitative data that are complementary to traditional, scholarly metrics such as citation counts, impact factors, and h-index rankings, which measure the impact of a journal article, book, or author. Altmetrics measure impact beyond traditional metrics, and can include (but are not limited to) citations on Wikipedia and in public policy documents; discussions on research blogs; mainstream media coverage; bookmarks on reference managers like Zotero, EndNote, or RefWorks; and mentions on social networks such as Twitter or Facebook.

Because they are sourced from the internet, altmetrics can tell you a lot about how often journal articles and other scholarly outputs like datasets are discussed and used around the world. For that reason, altmetrics have been incorporated into researchers' websites, institutional repositories, and journal websites. They may also be used by scholars in tenure and promotion portfolios, CVs and resumes, and grant applications.

Altmetrics have several advantages over traditional metrics. First, they are faster to accumulate than citation-based metrics. Unlike traditional metrics, which take time to accumulate, altmetrics are generated and gathered immediately from the internet. Altmetrics also capture more diverse impacts than traditional metrics, which only reflect impact within an academic context. In addition to capturing data within the scholarly community, altmetrics also reflect impact in the media and general public—providing a more holistic view of the impact of research. Finally, altmetrics apply to more than just journal articles and books. They also apply to other scholarly outputs such as data, software, performances, and presentations.

Altmetrics also have limitations, however. Like citation metrics, altmetrics can be susceptible to gaming, or artificial inflation. Also, altmetrics are still relatively new, and more research into their use is needed. Altmetrics also don't tell the whole story: they are meant to complement, not supplant, traditional metrics like peer-review and citations.

While acceptance of altmetrics is increasing, traditional, scholarly citations are still the most recognized proxy for impact in many disciplines. You can create a more comprehensive picture of your research influence by including both types of metrics together where possible.

For more information about altmetrics and otherscholarly metrics, visit the UH Libraries' Research Output guide, or contact UH Libraries.