Scholarly Communication Librarians’ Relationship with Research Impact Metrics

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What are altmetrics?

The **volume** and **nature of attention** that research receives online.

How often are people talking, what’s being said, and who is saying it?
Lots of speculation, little evidence
Survey Design

• Survey of **13,436 librarians** at 150 Carnegie-classified “R1” institutions in the US
  • Direct email (manually collected)
  • 707 respondents (5.3% response rate)
• Collected answers via Qualtrics
• Data analysis via Qualtrics and SPSS
Demographics
Years on the job

- Less than one year: 0%
- 1 - 5 years: 18%
- 6 - 10 years: 22%
- 11 - 20 years: 25%
- More than 20 years: 35%
What sort of duties do you perform regularly (1x/month or more) for your job? Check all that apply. (n=511)

- Collection development: 74%
- Instruction: 64%
- Assessment: 59%
- Reference services: 46%
- Scholarly communication support: 39%
Familiarity with Metrics
Among scholarly communication librarians as compared to other academic librarians
How familiar are you with the Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and the following measures of article-level impact? (all librarians)

- **Altmetrics**
  - 17%: 1 - I know nothing
  - 22%: 2
  - 34%: 3
  - 23%: 4
  - 4%: 5 - I'm an expert

- **Usage statistics**
  - 4%: 1 - I know nothing
  - 8%: 2
  - 23%: 3
  - 51%: 4
  - 15%: 5 - I'm an expert

- **Citation counts**
  - 3%: 1 - I know nothing
  - 7%: 2
  - 22%: 3
  - 52%: 4
  - 16%: 5 - I'm an expert

- **JIF**
  - 9%: 1 - I know nothing
  - 11%: 2
  - 25%: 3
  - 44%: 4
  - 11%: 5 - I'm an expert
How familiar are you with...?
Use of Metrics

How are scholarly communication librarians using metrics compared to other academic librarians?
Use of the *Journal Impact Factor*
Have you ever used journal impact factors for any of the following purposes?
(all librarians)

- To evaluate the quality of a journal: 41.04%
- Decide whether or not to purchase a journal subscription: 27.22%
- To recommend journals to faculty or students: 25.53%
- To determine where to publish: 21.86%
- To determine which journals to read: 10.16%
Use of the JIF: Comparison between Scholarly Communication Librarians and All Librarians

- To evaluate the quality of a journal
- Decide whether or not to purchase a journal subscription
- To recommend journals to faculty or students
- To determine where to publish
- To determine which journals to read

[Bar chart showing the use of JIF by different groups]

**Legend:**
- Blue: All
- Orange: Scholarly Communications
Use of Metrics
during consultations with faculty concerning publishing issues
When offering one-on-one consultations on publishing issues, how often do you address the following indicators of research impact with faculty?

- **JIF**
  - Never: 10.92%
  - Rarely: 9.51%
  - Sometimes: 34.15%
  - Quite Often: 30.63%
  - Very Often: 14.79%

- **Citation Counts**
  - Never: 10.95%
  - Rarely: 8.48%
  - Sometimes: 35.34%
  - Quite Often: 30.39%
  - Very Often: 14.84%

- **H-index**
  - Never: 27.56%
  - Rarely: 19.08%
  - Sometimes: 28.98%
  - Quite Often: 15.55%
  - Very Often: 8.83%

- **Qualitative Measures**
  - Never: 23.59%
  - Rarely: 23.94%
  - Sometimes: 31.34%
  - Quite Often: 15.85%
  - Very Often: 5.28%

- **Altmetrics**
  - Never: 29.43%
  - Rarely: 20.57%
  - Sometimes: 28.72%
  - Quite Often: 17.02%
  - Very Often: 4.26%

- **Expert Peer Reviews**
  - Never: 34.04%
  - Rarely: 30.50%
  - Sometimes: 20.92%
  - Quite Often: 10.99%
  - Very Often: 3.55%
Addressing altmetrics when offering one-on-one consultations on publishing issues with faculty

- Scholarly Communications: 22.00% Never, 16.67% Rarely, 28.67% Sometimes, 26.67% Quite Often, 6.00% Very Often
- Assessment: 26.15% Never, 20.77% Rarely, 30.00% Sometimes, 20.00% Quite Often, 8.08% Very Often
- Reference: 29.82% Never, 21.05% Rarely, 28.51% Sometimes, 16.67% Quite Often, 3.95% Very Often
- Instruction: 30.00% Never, 22.86% Rarely, 27.62% Sometimes, 15.24% Quite Often, 4.29% Very Often
- Collection Development: 26.15% Never, 20.77% Rarely, 30.00% Sometimes, 20.00% Quite Often, 8.08% Very Often

Legend: 
1 - Never, 2 - Rarely, 3 - Sometimes, 4 - Quite Often, 5 - Very Often
Use of Metrics
during consultations with faculty when understanding research impact for
	tenure, promotion, and grants
When offering one-on-one consultations on measuring and understanding research impact for tenure, promotion, and grants, how often do you address the following indicators of research impact with faculty?

- **Citation Counts**
  - Never: 15.90%
  - Rarely: 3.53%
  - Sometimes: 19.43%
  - Quite Often: 30.04%
  - Very Often: 31.10%

- **JIF**
  - Never: 16.25%
  - Rarely: 4.59%
  - Sometimes: 20.14%
  - Quite Often: 32.86%
  - Very Often: 26.15%

- **H-index**
  - Never: 26.60%
  - Rarely: 11.35%
  - Sometimes: 19.15%
  - Quite Often: 20.57%
  - Very Often: 22.34%

- **Altmetrics**
  - Never: 29.03%
  - Rarely: 18.28%
  - Sometimes: 26.16%
  - Quite Often: 16.49%
  - Very Often: 10.04%

- **Qualitative Measures**
  - Never: 29.29%
  - Rarely: 19.64%
  - Sometimes: 21.79%
  - Quite Often: 20.36%
  - Very Often: 8.93%

- **Expert Peer Reviews**
  - Never: 36.40%
  - Rarely: 21.91%
  - Sometimes: 22.61%
  - Quite Often: 11.66%
  - Very Often: 7.42%
Academic Librarians’ Use of Metrics for professional advancement
Tenure and Promotion

*Dossiers:* what metrics to include, what metrics have been included, and what metrics have been used to evaluate a colleague’s work
Types of research indicators included or used for tenure and promotion dossiers

- Citation counts: 60.00% (69.23% when evaluating a colleague's work for tenure and promotion, N=117)
- Journal Impact Factor: 35.65% (47.86% when evaluating a colleague's work for tenure and promotion, N=117)
- Qualitative measures of impact: 35.65% (41.88% when evaluating a colleague's work for tenure and promotion, N=117)
- Download and pageview counts: 36.52% (40.17% when evaluating a colleague's work for tenure and promotion, N=117)
- Altmetrics: 8.70% (17.09% when evaluating a colleague's work for tenure and promotion, N=117)
Publishing

What metrics are used to track articles/books/chapters and why
Which of the following types of impact metrics did you track for your article/book/chapter?

- Citation counts
- Download and pageview counts
- Qualitative evidence of impact
- Journal Impact Factor
- Altmetrics
- I did not track this type of information

- Scholarly Communication Librarians
- All Librarians
What did you use that information for? (N=289)

- To satisfy my own curiosity: 78.20%
- Annual reviews: 48.10%
- Tenure/promotion: 42.91%
- To gain administrative support for my work or research: 20.42%
- Grants: 5.54%
Conclusions and Takeaways - Familiarity & Usage

• **Familiarity** with the JIF and article-level metrics is affected by having regular *scholarly communication support* duties.

• Overall, the **use of metrics** is affected by having regular *scholarly communication support* duties.

• **Use of metrics** for professional advancement
  
  • Tenure & Promotion (T&P)
    
    • Metrics more likely to be used to evaluate a colleague’s work than for own dossier
    
    • “Intent to include” metrics is greater than “have included”
      
      • **Altmetrics** emphasized
    
  • Publishing - Use of Metrics
    
    • Curiosity trumps other reasons
Conclusions and Takeaways – Faculty Consultations

- **One-on-one consultations with faculty for publishing and T&P**
  - **Citation Counts** and the **JIF most likely** to be addressed
  - **H-index, altmetrics, and qualitative measures not as likely** to be addressed.
  - **Expert peer reviews least likely** to be addressed.
  - **Altmetrics** more likely to be addressed by **scholarly communication support** librarians in **publishing consultations**.
  - **All metrics** more likely to be addressed by **scholarly communication support** librarians in all instances of faculty consultations.
Conclusions & Takeaways - Altmetrics

• Overall, little usage and reliance on altmetrics

• Librarians with scholarly communication duties using altmetrics more

• “New” librarians may have more interest in using altmetrics in T&P dossier
A Look to the Future

• Investigate *liaison librarians'* familiarity and usage of metrics

• Additional *international survey* & *interviews* with U.S. librarians

• Interview faculty members from *other disciplines*

• Investigate relationships between *Open Access (OA)* and *altmetrics*

• Examine *T&P documents*
Thank you!

Questions?

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