Article Metrics: Cites, Clicks, Tweets and Shares

How does one measure the quality of Partnership articles? One traditional method has been by counting citations; however, the standard services for tracking article citations, such as ISI’s Web of Science or Scopus, do not cover the vast majority of open access journals. Google Scholar to the rescue!

Google Scholar Citations is a Web service that allows authors to track citations to their articles. By listing their articles in a profile, authors can be informed of the number and sources of all current citations to those articles in Google Scholar and, in addition, be notified each time a new citation is indexed. Authors can also make their citation profiles visible on the Web. Although not particularly well-designed for the purpose, Scholar’s citation tracking ability can also be adapted to count citations for a journal.

This editor’s experiment to produce Citation Counts for Partnership is now accessible from the journal’s navigation bar. All articles published since 2006 in the Innovations in Practice, Theory and Research, Conference Spotlight, Professional Development, and Viewpoints sections of the journal were included in the Partnership profile. Google Scholar reports that these 160 articles have collectively been cited 310 times to date. The most frequently cited Partnership article, with 43 citations, is “Open Access Initiatives in India – an Evaluation” by Leila Fernandez, which appeared in vol. 1, no. 1.

Although citation counts can provide a useful long term indication of an article’s importance, their principal disadvantage is that, due to the publication time lag, it can take two years or more for an article to receive its first citation. Both readers and authors are interested in more timely predictors of an article’s potential value. Hence the current interest in the rapidly developing field of altmetrics, “a new approach to determining the quality and popularity of research more quickly than ever before… by tallying online shares, saves, reviews, adaptations, and social media usage related to research outputs of all kinds…” (Konkiel).

Altmetric.com is a Web service that analyses data from Internet sources, including popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+, to produce a score for scholarly articles based on the number of times they are mentioned in these sources. Altmetric.com requires articles to have Digital Object Identifiers (DOI’s), which we have not yet implemented for Partnership but is being investigated by our host site, the University of Guelph. Guelph has also applied to participate in a trial of the Public Knowledge Project’s Article Level Metrics service for its suite of OJS journals, including Partnership. Stay tuned for further developments!

Partnership has been using AddThis Analytics for the past six months to track article activity and to allow readers to tweet, share, and like Partnership articles. During that period AddThis recorded 1,269 clicks and 446 shares on the Partnership site. The AddThis Top Trending Content feature highlights articles that are currently receiving
popular attention, and may or may not correlate with longer term interest and value. The AddThis Top Trending Content for *Partnership* for December 17, 2013 includes three articles from the latest issue:

- **Profile: Matthew Bingham** | Bingham
- **CAPAL: The Formation of a Professional Organization for Canadian Academic Librarians** | Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians
- **Empowering the physician-patient relationship: The effect of the Internet** | Jacobson
- **Web-based Citation Management Systems: Which One Is Best?** | Steelworthy, Dewan
- **MOOCs as a Professional Development Tool for Librarians** | Ecclestone

The world of altmetrics is continuously evolving. New products and services will undoubtedly emerge in this rapidly changing landscape. At the moment, none of the new metrics gives a complete picture of the significance of an article. However, together they provide a set of indicators to supplement the more traditional, but much slower, measure of citation counts and can help readers filter the explosion in scholarly publishing. At *Partnership*, we have a keen interest in applying all forms of article assessment as we evolve and progress as a professional journal.

David Fox
Editor-in-Chief

**Works Cited**
