

## Correspondence

### The importance of metrics in evaluating scholarly journals and papers

Evaluating the quality of scholarly journals is the essence of scientific communication—it is extremely important to identify low quality information. A “basket of metrics”, as Colledge and James call the multiple types of measurement that all merit systems should be based on, is important for objective quality control that has to avoid misuses and manipulations.<sup>1</sup> The paper analyses a new possibility of measuring the merit of journals and papers—usage metrics that are based on usage data created when online scholarly information is used.

Colledge and James present the results of a survey of the international research community to find out how often usage metrics are utilized; the most valuable usage metrics, and the willingness of researchers to include usage metrics in their research evaluation. Usage metrics offer new, added value to scholarly communication, but should be combined with other metrics. Some journals publish usage metrics, but not all the users are aware of their potential. One of the results shows that the most common obstacle for those who do not use usage metrics, or who use it infrequently, is a lack of awareness. Researchers, librarians and all involved in scholarly communication have to be educated about new ways of measuring research quality and impact.

The paper also mentions altmetrics, although not as the centre of its interest. Altmetrics use new possibilities of Web 2.0, such as social networking sites and similar services, to

measure research impact. The future of altmetrics is still unpredictable, but today more and more journals and databases publish altmetric data, eg number of tweets about a paper or number of shares on Facebook. There is a general terminological confusion when discussing usage metrics and altmetrics. Some researchers and information specialists consider usage metrics as a subset of altmetrics, while others argue the distinction between the two terms, stating that usage metrics is much older, even than citation metrics. This confusion shows how new the fields of usage metrics and altmetrics are. It is important to discuss those topics. Constructive discussion could help to create new and reliable methods of measuring impact and quality in scholarly publishing.

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#### References

- 1 Colledge, L, James, C. A basket of metrics... *European Science Editing*. 2015. 41(3):60-64
- 2 Glänzel, W, Gorraiz, J. Usage metrics versus altmetrics: confusing terminology. *Scientometrics*. 2015. 102: 2161–2164, DOI: 10.1007/s11192-014-1472-7

**EQUATOR/EASE session  
28 September 2015, 14.00 – 18.00**



**European  
Association of  
Science  
Editors**

### How to publish ‘fit for purpose’ research papers and make your journal stand out

**The ‘Why, Who, What and How’ expert practical session for editors on reducing number of unusable research articles**

**Session 1: Chair - Joan Marsh (Format: Talks and discussion)**

<b>Why:</b> the state of medical research literature	Doug Altman
<b>Who</b> should be involved in improving research publications – researchers, research organisations, funders, editors, peer reviewers, publishers	Liz Wager
<b>What</b> can be done by editors to influence the other players and in changing the ways of their own work	David Moher
<b>How</b> to implement effective interventions	Ana Marusic

**Session 2: Chair - Trish Groves**

**What has been done and can be done in journals: case studies and discussion**

EQUATOR: Reporting guidelines and other resources for editors	Iveta Simera
Implementing reporting guidelines: example of speciality journals	Jason Roberts
BMC threaded publications and other initiatives	Daniel Shanahan
EASE SAGER Reporting Guideline: Sex and Gender Equity in Research	Shirin Heidari
Discussion: How to start, barriers and facilitators	