Altmetrics in Institutional Repositories: New Perspectives for Assessing Research Impact

1 Introduction

The aim of this project is to find out if and how Institutional Repositories (IR) are using alternative metrics or Altmetrics (besides usage statistics and citation counts) as a value-added service to showcase their content impact and give some hints on how this tool can be used to supplement the traditional research performance assessment exercise in an institution. Altmetrics can provide a measure of impact for all non-journal scholarly works available in Open Access (OA), like usage statistics, but it can go further by contextualizing the readership of an author's research output. The increasing importance of Altmetrics indicators led to its inclusion in the traditional research performance assessment exercise in an institution.

This project promises to be useful for repositories managers in that it gives some examples of good practices of implementation of Altmetrics along with other metrics in IRs which can help to increase the content, inspire repository managers to work in the same direction.

2 Methodology

For the purpose of this project, the following data were collected from the 2014 edition of the Ranking Web of Repositories, regarding the top 100 IRs:

- results of Altmetrics
- usage statistics
- citation counts
- institutional level statistics
- type of statistics generated (usage, citation, Altmetrics)
- statistics provider
- IR software
- IR size and country of origin

The fact that Altmetrics sources were included in the “Visibility” indicator of the 14th edition of the Ranking Web of Repositories, suggested that some top IRs could have included Altmetrics to supplement their existing “statistics package”. Even though the sample used is only 6% of the total repositories in this Rank, the main purpose of this study was to find out some examples of Altmetrics implementation in IRs that could inspire repository managers to work in the same direction.

3 Results

The most important findings of this project are that the majority of IRs (72%) exhibit usage statistics at global and/or item level (download counts, page views and geographic provenance). But only few provide citation counts (9%) and Altmetrics (9%).

The most used repository software platforms in this study - DSpace, EPrints and Digital Commons - currently deliver usage statistics that can be hidden (only viewed by administrators) or made available to the public. These platforms also supports citation counts (in the case of DSpace and EPrints, a plug-in is available if the institution has a subscription access to the SciVerse Scopus API) and Altmetrics reporting.

4 Conclusions

The libraries, mainly those involved in research and learning support activities, must be familiarized with the tools available to implement and disseminate Altmetrics.

A great number of IRs show only usage statistics with the possibility to hide them or make them public. This project can offer some useful guidance by helping to understand the data and the potential usage by researchers. This will allow library managers to tailor their services to the needs of their institutions.

5 References


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