How to get published and make an impact (commentary to accompany PowerPoint Slides)

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Introduction

Let's start with some numbers about today's publishing landscape. More research than ever is being published. This means it is really important to attract readers to your work and demonstrate why it is important.

You've probably heard a lot about 'impact' and it is more and more important for researchers to find ways to get their work noticed, not only by colleagues, but across industry, policy makers and the general public.

Today I'll walk you through how to get published in an academic journal and how to make sure your research has an impact.

Overview of presentation

I'll cover the following key areas:

- Pre-publication: how to find the right venue for your research and prepare your manuscript for submission. We'll look at what the process entails and how to prepare your title, abstract and keywords

- Post-publication: how to promote your research and demonstrate its impact and wider relevance using social media, press releases and Altmetrics

Stages to go through before you submit

Here is an overview of the stages to aim to go through before submitting your article.

So once you have chosen the journal you want to submit to, make sure you read some back issues so you can familiarise yourself with what it covers and the style.

When you've written your first draft, we'd highly recommend workshopping your paper, or setting up an academic writing circle with friends. This is also a good way to build your network and maybe pave the way for future collaborations. Do show your draft to your supervisor as well.

It's worth bearing in mind your target audience and what level of knowledge you can take for granted. If it's aimed at the lay reader then it might be helpful to show it to someone from outside your discipline.

I would say, though, that even if you are writing for quite a niche audience: don't hide behind jargon – try to use clear, concise language

After submission, the next stage is peer review, possible revisions and acceptance before your paper is submitted. I'm not going to dwell on peer review in this presentation as I think it will be covered elsewhere today.

Choosing the right journal

What is the journal's reputation in your field?

What is the peer review policy?

Is the journal listed in any indexing services, e.g. the Arts & Humanities Citation Index?

Think. Check. Submit. is a useful set of tools to help you check that you are submitting your article to a respected journal from a reputable publisher. You can find more information at thinkchecksubmit.org.

Assuming it's a legitimate journal, the overriding question in your mind should be 'Is this journal a good fit for my research?' and 'Is this the audience I want to be reaching?'

What makes a good title

Once you publish, you of course would like people to be able to find and read your work. This begins with the basics, the first elements of your article that potential readers will see: the title and abstract.

Here we have a fairly non controversial quote from one of our Editors

Title styles and format can vary somewhat depending on subject area and individual writting style.

However, there are some tricks to keep in mind when composing your title:

- Simple advice: keep it short and to the point.

- Avoid redundant or cliché word/phrases.

- Avoid jargon or abbreviations.

- Highlight your findings, not your process.

- Make sure it stands out-creatively or in terms of clarity.

- Make sure to include specific keywords that capture the subject of your article.

Writing an abstract

Why are abstracts important?

Abstract should tell the reader what the article is about. Not all disciplines provide the results and conclusion-so if you are unsure check articles in your field to see what is included.

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Here are some basic tips

- It is difficult to write a decent abstract before you actually finish the paper as the abstract is an overview of the content.

- If you end up revising your paper after you have written the abstract, make sure to review and revise the abstract as well.

- Make sure you know the parameters for the particular journal you are submitting to-most have word counts and perhaps guidance on format/structure.

- Think about who your potential audience and write it for them.

- Choose the language carefully, think about the keywords and how someone might search for your work. Think interdisciplinary in terms of language.

- Remove any unnecessary words, focus on the essential information.

- Read it out loud and have others read it for fluency. If your abstract is difficult to read it is unlikely that people will click through to the article.

Keywords

Authors can provide keywords that will be included with the metadata for their article. They act as flags in searches to help readers find your work.

Simple but effective promotion tools

Here are some simple but effective ways of drawing attention to your work.

 Email signature: You can easily use your email signature to tell everyone you've just been published – adding a line of text and a link to the article.

Website link: If you have a profile page on your institution's website, a personal webpage or sites for any projects you are involved with, please include a link to your article. The more links there are to your article, from a range of websites, the higher it will appear on search engine results.

If you are on any networking sites or discussion lists then do make the most of those. Post a short message to any listservs you are a member of, letting people know that the journal's latest issue, which includes your article, is now available. The easiest way to do this is to register for the table of contents alert for the journal so you can forward the email once you have received it.

Blog – if you're already writing a blog then do make the most of that.

Create a professional social media presence

One of the fastest growing areas of self-promotion and one of the most effective is social media. Here are some reasons to prioritize using social media.

Identify the audience you want to reach (fellow researchers, practitioners, general public).

Consider academic networking sites such as Academia.edu and ResearchGate, SSRN (Social Science Research Network).

Consider a press release

These days journalists get a lot of their news from Twitter. There is still a place for press releases and we certainly still have success. Of course this threshold of being newsworthy is high.

Flag your article up as soon as it's been accepted, before publication.

What makes an article newsworthy?

As I mentioned earlier, a press releases is another great way to enhance your research profile. Using your publisher and institution's network of media contacts to get your research into the press.

Above are the top six themes that make an article relevant for a press release criteria:

1. Major discoveries in the field – does the research represent a major step forward for research in the field?

2. Timely – trending issues in the news

3. Impact on the public – affecting everyday life

4. Human interest – does the research have people at its heart and appeal on an emotional level?

5. Quirky topics – unusual findings, something people may not have heard of before

6. Recommendation for change in practice – could it impact current practice in an industry or profession and lead to a recommendation for change?

Altmetrics

Altmetrics are article metrics – so your article's downloads, citations and Altmetric mentions (can find these on 'My Authored Works' on TFO if T&F published author). Together these are able to tell you the reach of your research.

Altmetrics track:

- **Social media** like Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Pinterest and blogs

- **Traditional media** whether mainstream (*The Guardian*, *New York Times*) or science specific (*New Scientist*, *Scientific American*). Many non-English language titles are covered.

- **Online reference managers** like Mendeley and CiteULike

- Policy mentions

Different colours in the 'donut' shows what the mentions are made up of (blue for Twitter, red for news media etc).

The score is based on three main factors:

Volume: more mentions, higher score. But only count 1 mention from each person on the same media (ie, you won't see an increase in score if you constantly mention your article on twitter)

Sources: Some media is weighted more-ie newspapers contribute more than a blog which is valued higher than a tweet.

Authors: Tweets being pushed out highlighting articles by journal editors or publishers will not be weighted as much as practitioners sharing articles with each other.

Altmetrics are quicker to accumulate than citation-based metrics: By virtue of being sourced from the Web and not from journals and books, it's possible to monitor and collate mentions of work online as soon as it's published.

They can capture more diverse impacts than citation-based metrics and can complement citations in that they help you to understand the many 'flavours' of impact that research can have.

You can engage with your readers/sharers in realtime.

Use the Altmetric details page to identify coverage and wider dissemination of your research that you can evidence in CVs or funding applications.

See who is talking about your research – identify potential new collaborators and build relationships with key influencers.

Monitor other research in your field, and know how it has been received amongst a broader audience.

Manage your online reputation – respond to commentary about your work and actively engage with the conversation.

Guidance, news and ideas for authors

Author Services website: offers support, guidance and tips for T&F authors (and anyone else!).

Offers support from pre-submission (so formatting templates for instance) to post-publication and every step in-between.

Advice on copyright, ethics, choosing a journal, checklist before submitting, how to tweet your research, what to expect during peer review plus more.

Most visited pages:

- Copyright and you
- Formatting guide and templates
- Making your research have impact – top 10 tips

Website and social media. Follow us for tips and insights and post us queries – would love to hear from you!