



**Awot Gebregziabher**  
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**Librarians all around the world are using Altmetric on a daily basis to support their researchers - helping them to understand and showcase the reach and influence of their scholarly work.**

We spoke to Awot Gebregziabher, a Junior Librarian for Science & Engineering at the University of Cape Town (UCT) to find out about her experience of doing just this.

Awot is part of the bibliometrics team at the university - which aims to support UCT researchers by providing research impact evidence for their publications in time of need.

After first learning about Altmetric from a colleague in 2015, Awot looked further into the data and the tools available. Today, she says, the Altmetric Explorer really helps them to see ‘who is exposed to and using our researchers’ publications’.

### **Digging in to the data**

When pulling out Altmetric data for researchers, Awot focuses on both the quantitative and the qualitative information available - pulling out stats on the number and types of mentions (whether they are from news, social media etc), and examining the underlying data to pull out ‘real engagement’ in sources such as news, policy and patents. This data is collated into a spreadsheet and then shared with researchers in a 1-1 discussion.

She notes that ‘Mendeley reader demographics are also particularly interesting - they show you in good detail who is saving the research to their Mendeley library, and help you start to understand who the research is most of interest to’.

Tweets, she further indicates, are most often ‘shout-out type mentions’ - so although there is some engagement there, she is more interested in wider discussion.

### **Support beyond STEM**

When it comes to major databases that provide traditional citation based metrics, their content coverage is predominantly on the STEM disciplines. This puts researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities at a disadvantage in accruing citation based metrics on said platforms that are not fully representative of their disciplines. Altmetrics however, Awot reports, help to fill

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this gap - providing these under-served disciplines with evidence of the influence of their research that might otherwise be missed.

She says that ‘across all fields, altmetrics add more dimensions than traditional metrics alone’, she continues, “researchers find it interesting to see how far their work has reached and the influence it seems to be having”.

### **Looking ahead**

In terms of future use of Altmetric, Awot is keen to continue to explore the attention insights available to deliver even more useful information to researchers.

Automation and the easy extracting of data, she highlights, are critical to this - and having all of these online conversations captured in one place has already made this task much more efficient than it otherwise would have been.