

Michigan Publishing

Defining the challenge

As part of one of the world's leading research libraries, the staff of Michigan Publishing are responsible for a large portion of the publishing activity within the University of Michigan. Their activities include book publishing through the University of Michigan Press imprint, an open access journal publishing program, and the institutional repository, Deep Blue, which hosts a wide variety of grey literature outputs such as technical reports, white papers, and electronic dissertations. Substantially supported by the University (and as a fully open access publisher) Michigan's team members are keen to consistently demonstrate their support for furthering the disciplines in which they publish - which include a mixture of humanities and the social sciences.

A second key priority for them is demonstrating the value in their activity to the publicly-funded parent institution that supports them. As such, they are constantly looking for ways to help researchers not just further progress in their field, but also to maximise the broader influence and awareness of their work in a way that can be captured and given context.

Adopting altmetrics

Michigan saw that incorporating altmetrics data across their platforms could provide valuable feedback for their authors, as well as data that could be used to report on the reach and influence of their publishing activity internally. Beginning with the journals with the intention of expanding coverage to other outputs later on, Michigan have begun to use the Altmetric badges to track and report on the online attention their publications receive.



The screenshot shows the article page for "Lincoln's Suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus: An Historical and Constitutional Analysis" by James A. Dueholm. The page features an altmetric badge with a score of 59. The article is from Volume 29, Issue 2, Summer 2008, pp. 47-66. The permalink is <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.2629860.0029.205>. The article abstract is: "In the 143 years since the end of the Civil War, historians have examined Abraham Lincoln and his conduct of the war in great and at times excruciating depth. Lincoln's power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus was extensively explored during the Civil War, but since then his suspensions have escaped detailed scrutiny despite the controversy they provoked, their widespread and effective use to combat malignant opposition to the war, and their uncertain grounding in the Constitution."

Roll-out

First incorporated on their journal articles, Michigan has now rolled out Altmetric data on their open access book program, Digital Culture Books, and on the institutional repository, Deep Blue. They hope to find ways of including other content over the next few years, especially the monographs they publish through University of Michigan Press.

A particular aim across all this activity is to provide authors whose impact is often underrepresented via traditional measures (books, for example, do not get an Impact Factor) with a much more granular picture of how their work has been interpreted and reused. Through altmetrics, Michigan can deliver these faculty members examples and evidence that can be used to demonstrate their influence and reach of their research.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Journal of Electronic Publishing (JEP). The header includes the JEP logo, the text "the journal of electronic publishing", a search bar, and navigation links: Home, Search, Browse, About, Editors, Subscribe, Submit, Contact, and a social media icon. Below the header, there is a "RETURN TO SEARCH RESULTS" link and a "Highlight matching search terms" button. The main content area features the title "White Paper: The Deep Web: Surfacing Hidden Value" and metadata: "Volume 7, Issue 1: Taking License, August, 2001" and "DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0007.104". There are links for "Permissions" and "EPUB" and "Print" buttons. A circular altmetric badge shows the number "9". A tooltip box displays the following altmetric data: "Blogged by 1", "On 2 Facebook pages", "Referenced in 1 Wikipedia pages", and "1 readers on CiteULike". Below the tooltip, there are links for "See more details" and "Close this". A quote from J.A.T. is displayed: "This White Paper is a version of the one on the BrightPlanet site. Although it is designed as a m... program "for existing Web portals that need to provide targeted, comprehensive information to their site visitors," its insight into the structure of the Web makes it worthwhile reading for all those involved in e-publishing. —J.A.T."

Searching on the Internet today can be compared to dragging a net across the surface of the ocean. While a great deal may be caught in the net, there is still a wealth of information that is deep, and therefore, missed. The reason is simple: Most of the Web's information is buried far down on dynamically generated sites, and standard search engines never find it.

Feedback so far

Particularly internally, Michigan Press have seen a really positive response to the inclusion of Altmetric data. The management committee value being able to have a wider view on the impact of their publishing program, and the staff within the press are using the data to identify success stories and to help build future outreach strategy. Feedback from authors is also proving positive - with many reporting that they regularly check in on the altmetrics for their own work and that of their peers.