BUILDING ALTMETRICS SERVICES AT HULIB

Challenges and Opportunities
Metrics are already an established part of our work at HULib

Mostly done for natural and life sciences

→ Altmetrics?
Alternative scholarly impact metrics

As a starting point usually a publication - often an international scientific journal article

Most often are applied as article level metrics, and measure the impact of an article by how many mentions appear in social media (Twitter, blogs, etc.) or in the news media, how often the article is viewed or downloaded, or how many times it is saved (bookmarked or included in a site like Mendeley)
Today’s Presentation

• Covers our ongoing altmetrics pilot project
• Practical focus: what we done so far and how things are looking
• Based on early data (service not yet fully launched)

Paper (Target: September 2016)

• How this reflects on the current theoretical landscape
• Theoretical focus: what can we learn from this project?
• Based on more comprehensive data (service further along)
Starting point: recent changes in scholarly communication culture and new technological possibilities → a practical need to expand current services

Special interest: useful metrics for social sciences and humanities? (SSH)

So how did things work out?
INTRODUCTION

- Altmetrics are one way of measuring the immediate impact of a publication since the more traditional citations take some time to appear in the published literature
- Traditional bibliometrics measures only a small part of attention and impact
- Emphasis on societal impact
- Catches new forms and routes of scholarly communication
2015: Spring
- Benchmarking competing altmetrics platforms
- PlumX by EBSCO Information Services chosen
- Internal testing and planning

2015: Autumn
- Pilot phase: volunteer researchers from all four campuses
- Limited number of participants
- Focus on technical issues: ensuring compatibility with field specific databases

2015: Autumn+

2016: Autumn
- Current target for a wider launch
- More Helsinki University researchers are welcome to sign up
- Participation will remain voluntary
- Integration with other library services
OVERVIEW

- 156 participating researchers (6.6.2016)
- Currently tracking 18662 articles, 1020 reviews, 579 letters, 290 conference papers and 263 books
- All data is on the open web: https://plu.mx/helsinki
Take a look at social media vs. citations...
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Dogs evaluate threatening facial expressions by their biological validity - Evidence from gazing patterns

Citation data: PLoS ONE, ISSN: 1932-6203, Vol: 11, Issue: 1, Page: e0143047
Publication Year: 2016
Researchers: Laura Hänninen

Note: This article has received no citations yet!

This article has 181 twitter interactions across 2 URLs. It has received 44 tweets and 137 retweets.
And this has one citation!
BUT THAT WAS THE IDEAL SCENARIO…

• Previous articles were: (1) open access, (2) published in a major non-English language journal and (3) had topics that are “popular science friendly”

• Our experience: altmetrics seems to work best for fields that already benefit from bibliometrics, i.e. natural and life sciences

• In these cases it often generates valuable data: researchers can more or less in real time track where their publications are being discussed
WHAT ABOUT SSH?

• Our expectations were fairly high: would this finally provide useful metrics for humanities and social sciences?

• Reality check: these fields differ in publication culture, publication channels, research languages just to name a few

• In SSH getting useful data was more often an exception than the norm

• Feedback from researchers was also different: some were curious, some skeptical and some negative
'The best time is now!': The temporal and spatial dynamics of women opting into self-employment

Citation data: Gender, Work and Organization, ISSN: 0968-6673, Vol: 20, Issue: 2, Page: 184-196
Publication Year: 2013
Researchers: Marjut Jyrkinen

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ARTICLE SUMMARY

STABLE URL:
plu.mx/a/02FOKRf0kaqJd40dB9W2CxV-8-JTtPeHBAYD-DnmFQL

DOI:
10.1111/gwao.12019

AUTHOR(S):
McKie, Linda, Biese, Ingrid, Jyrkinen, Marjut

MOST RECENT TWEET
New publication by Prof Linda McKie et al is now available:
onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gwao.12019
2:03 PM - 25 Feb 2013
... BUT IT MAY LOOK LIKE THIS

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WHY SO?

• The system has difficulties with certain publications, that

(1) are published in non-English-languages → **Focused on Lingua franca**

(2) paradoxically, are published in non-traditional scientific venues → **Sources lists need to improve**

(3) are missing proper metadata → **May be due to publishers, not just a question of software**
THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF THINGS

• Tracking articles is reliant on identifiers such as DOI’s, ISSN numbers and ORCID profiles ➔ **Role of metadata**

• These identifiers need to be included in the tweets etc. in order for the system to pick them up ➔ **Dependent on scholarly and media communication culture**

• Most researcher profiles were set up manually using publication lists from PubMed, Scopus and our own research database Tuhat ➔ **Labor intensive!**

• Ideally publication lists would need to be updated as fast as possible ➔ **Currently ORCID seems to be the most convenient way for us to automate the process**
• Not as revolutionary as sometimes hyped? Perhaps a more grounded view is needed
• At its best a useful *supplement* to traditional (biblio)metrics
• Be careful when interpreting data: software is evolving at a fast pace → New source datasets, changes in existing ones and so forth
DISCUSSION

• Are differences caused by changes in impact or just new source datasets?

• PlumX cannot capture the context behind the discussions → For example the tweet that includes a DOI identifier is captured, but what about the full story?

• Last but not least, PlumX is of course a commercial product and thus exact technical details are trade secrets
CHALLENGES AND RISKS

• We’re planning to expand the service for more researchers next semester: what’s our service pledge/pitch going to be?

• Is one software platform/method good enough to serve all fields?

• Launching service is a large investment and may tie us to a single platform → what if PlumX is no longer competitive or is too expensive in a few years?
OPPORTUNITIES

• We are already maintaining and providing various databases and are experts on metadata: libraries are the organizations within universities that altmetrics falls upon the most

• Promoting Open Science

• Focus on your clients → Altmetrics isn’t for everyone and shouldn’t be advertised as such!
"Altmetrics is a young, but growing, field. For now, there is perhaps more promise than results, but the promise is sufficient to justify further research. - - - "

DON´T MISS THE BOAT!

There are real opportunities to influence development and university libraries should be involved.

Ivan Aivazovski [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AIvan_Aivazovsky_-_Ship_in_the_Stormy_Sea.jpg)
THANK YOU!

- We hope you have a fantastic stay here in Helsinki!
- Stay in touch: susanna.nykyri@helsinki.fi and valtteri.vainikka@helsinki.fi
- Metrics @ HULib: http://libraryguides.helsinki.fi/metrics

Photograph by Mika Huisman (2012)