Altmetrics: a Practical Guide for Librarians, Researchers, and Academics

Andy Tattersall
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For anyone who is involved in supporting, undertaking, disseminating, promoting, or measuring research your quest for the ultimate guide is over. *Altmetrics: a Practical Guide for Librarians, Researchers, and Academics*, edited by Andy Tattersall, is a fantastic resource. This publication is very comprehensive and will be of use from the novice to the Scholarly Communications librarian.

In scholarly and scientific publishing, altmetrics are non-traditional metrics proposed as an alternative to more traditional citation impact metrics, such as impact factor and the h-index. They are not intended to replace traditional bibliometrics but rather to complement them. Altmetrics measure attention on a range of alternative outlets and platforms, such as blogs, news articles and some grey literature. Used in conjunction with traditional bibliometrics they help to tell a more complete research impact story.

An aspect of this book that I really enjoyed was the demonstration of the trajectory of altmetrics. This is clearly illustrated by Euan Adie (Founder and CEO of Altmetric.com) in Chapter 5: The Rise of Altmetrics. This could have been a very techy chapter but instead it reads like an engaging history lesson. I have been an Altmetric Ambassador for Ireland (https://www.altmetric.com/blog/ambassador-spotlight-jane-burns/) for the past three years and I learned things that I did not know before.

The contributors to the book make the publication particularly interesting and useful. In addition to Euan Adie there is Claire Beecroft, an information specialist from the School of Health and Related Research at the University of Sheffield; Dr. Andrew Booth who is Reader in Evidence Based Information Practice, also at the School of Health and Related Research, University of Sheffield; Dr. William Gunn, who is the Head of Academic Outreach for Mendeley; Ben Showers who is a Digital Delivery Manager at the Cabinet Office (UK) and Andy Tattersall who is an Information Specialist at the School of Health and Related Research at the University of Sheffield. All of these contributors bring their own perspectives and practical applications to the book. It's also useful to see how different stakeholders in the areas of bibliometrics and altmetrics use and interpret the functions of these approaches to measure attention, impact and, most importantly, engagement.

Researchers publish for a range of reasons but one significant reason is to engage with others by sharing their ideas and outputs. The multiple perspectives from the

contributors really helps the reader to understand the levels of use and applications of altmetrics.

From the beginning, the editor sets out two goals for this book and these are: 1. To explain from a theoretical perspective why altmetrics has come about and how it fits into the bigger picture of research and academia; 2. To be a practical book by providing an understanding of how altmetrics can be applied to various scenarios and to a range of users. From a librarian's perspective this book should be on your desk as a "go to" manual for explaining research impacts and measurements (not limited to just altmetrics). This book achieves these goals and beyond. One of my favourite aspects of the book is the explanation of how different factors have contributed to the development of altmetrics. Robust attention is given to an understanding of bibliometrics, emphasising that altmetrics are not a replacement to bibliometrics, but rather a complementary resource to help tell the complete research story. Insight is provided into the value of using permanent identifiers such as DOI's that underpin the linking of articles to measurements of attention.

The structure of the book is fantastic. Each chapter deals with a specific topic and then highlights key points with detailed references. From a practical point of view, this allows a researcher to investigate further and for a librarian it provides content for information resources and presentations.

An additional audience that will find this book useful is Masters in Library and Information Studies students. I intend to add this book to the reading list for the Management for Information Professionals Course, that I lecture on in the School of Information and Communication Studies at University College Dublin. The reason for this is to ensure that my students will have a good understanding of this emerging and engaging area of research management for their own research outputs and in their future roles as Library and Information professionals.