Academics' online presence

A four-step guide to taking control of your visibility

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Academics' online presence: A four-step guide to taking control of your visibility

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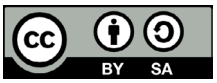

Disclaimer:
All suggestions given in this guide are to make you aware of the possibilities and are not necessarily endorsed by OpenUCT. You should always read the terms and conditions and privacy information associated with any service before signing up.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital world, if you use the web, you have an online presence. Online content is exploding; there were 1.8 trillion gigabytes of online information in 2011[1] and academics are part of that content.

Universities have web pages profiling their staff. Academic networks such as LinkedIn and Academia.edu are used by researchers around the globe to keep in contact with colleagues and collaborators. In addition, social media are increasingly being used for purposes in addition to 'social'. It is fair to say that academics want to make a difference; having an influence is almost a job requirement.

Research and other outputs need to be found and read, and nowadays that means online. A searcher browsing a topic is likely to use what they find online rather than forage for more in the analogue world. Moreover someone looking for you personally is likely to accept what they find as the full story. This means that academics need to know what is already out there about them, whether they like what they see, and whether their work is actually 'findable' at all.

Figure 1: Footprints and shadows [1]

There are two broad categories of online content to consider in an assessment of your online presence: your digital footprint and your digital shadow. While these two terms are used in many different ways, for our purposes your digital footprint is your active contribution to and interaction with the online world, that is, content that you add to the web, profiles that you set up, and comments you make on blogs and news articles, and so on.

Your digital shadow, on the other hand, is content about you posted and uploaded by others as well as automatically generated and collated content. You should try and maximise the former and watch the latter, especially as it is difficult to control. The best way to drown out content about yourself that you may not like is to upload content of your choice.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is a starting point for improving your online presence. It suggests a range of tools for expanding and shaping your online presence, and outlines a number of strategies for taking your online visibility to the next level - your Online Presence 2.0. These suggestions are just a slice of what is currently available – there are many alternative platforms, and new ones are being created all the time while older ones fall away. To choose which tools and platforms to use, think about what you want to achieve. At the same time try experimenting with new platforms and find what works the best for you.

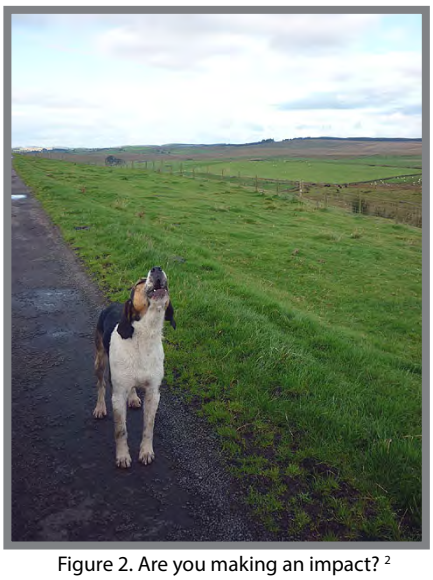


Figure 2. Are you making an impact? [2]

[1] DC Report: The 2011 Digital Universe Study: Extracting Value from Chaos, June 2011 (http://www.emc.com/collateral/demos/microsites/emc-digital-universe-2011/index.htm)

[2] Footprints and shadows photo: Sarah Goodier

[3] A hound howling in the wilderness (NY6767) by Karl and Ali is licensed under a CC-BY-SA license, available at http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2594257

The benefits

Assessing and improving your online presence will result in several benefits.

- Being aware of your current online visibility gives you some control.
  - You will gain a sense of what your digital shadow looks like, that is, content about you posted and uploaded by others, or even created by you inadvertently.
  - You will make informed decisions about your digital footprint, what you want your active contribution to and interaction with the online world to look like.

- Increasing your own visibility enables you to:
  - Gain recognition in your field and beyond
  - Communicate your research to a wider audience
  - Grow your networks

- Increasing the visibility of your scholarly outputs will:
  - Increase the impact of your work and potentially increase citations
  - Make your work available to the widest audience

This is beneficial not only for you but also for your unit, department, faculty and university as well as your research field as a whole.

A 2011 Pew study revealed that seven out of ten people who use the internet have searched for information about other people[4]. Being aware of what is out there about you lets you know what they might find. The functional building blocks of a networked scholar are shown here to the right.

Your digital identity online, defined as 'the extent to which others can identify you online as a scholar', is central. This is why it is critical to become aware of your online presence and to shape and maintain this presence.

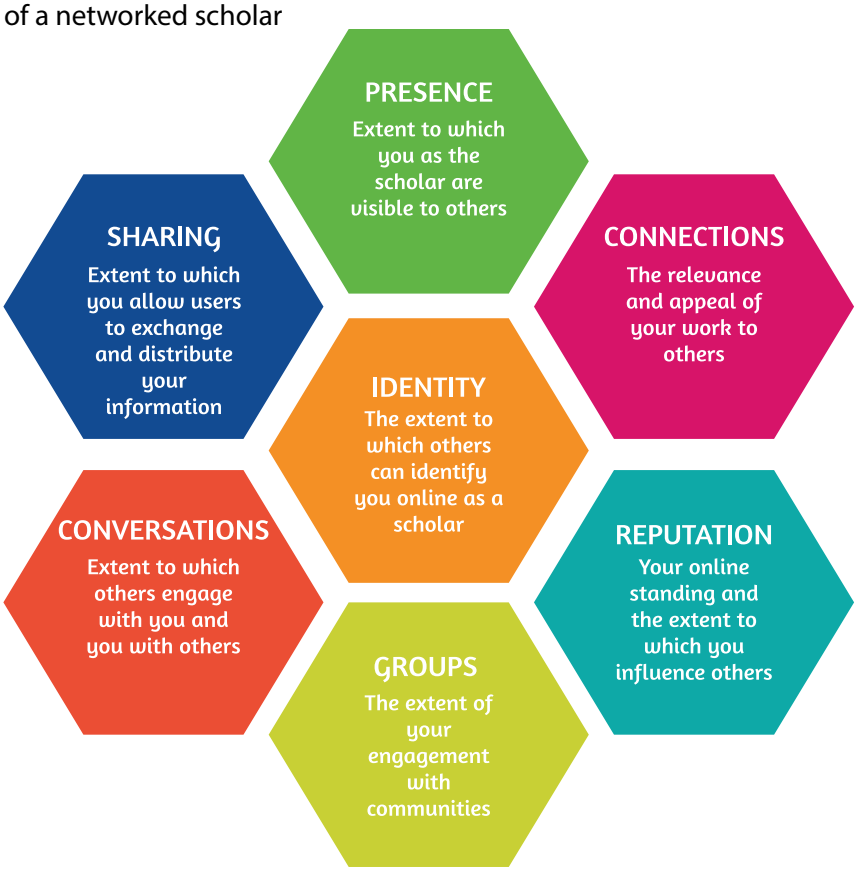


Figure 3. Building blocks of the networked scholar[5]

[4] Pew study results available at: http://pewinternet.org/

[5] Figure adapted from: 'Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media', Jan H. Kietzmann, Kristopher Hermkens, Ian P. McCarthy, Bruno S. Silvestre. Business Horizons (2011) 54, 241—251

The four-step process

This guide is divided into four sections or steps.

Step 1

'Assess yourself' – this section looks at ways to assess your general online presence as it stands today. Regular assessment will allow you to keep track of your progress.

Step 2

'Your profile as an individual' starts with deciding where you want to take your online presence. Once you've decided on a strategy, it's time to consider your active online presence, the specifics of your digital footprint. This section focuses on online profiles that you might have already or that you might want to set up.

Note: You can download and explore the whole guide or focus on what you are most interested in – each section is available for download separately (so there may be a few repetitions within the guide). The figure on the back cover of the guide also provides an overview which may help you decide where you might get the best value from the guide.

Step 3

'Improving the availability of your output' is about making your scholarly outputs reach as many people as possible. While you may publish prolifically, if people can't discover your papers online, they are much less likely to read them. Some say that if it's not online it does not exist; we think if it's not findable online it might not exist. This step involves assessing what publications and other outputs of yours are already online and then sharing everything else you are able to. You are also encouraged to share all your scholarly outputs, including teaching resources and 'popular or informal' resources in a variety of formats.

Step 4

'Communicating and interacting' reviews some other strategies and tools through which you can communicate with colleagues and interact with people who share your interests.

Points to ponder

- Record the links and observations you make – it will be easier to assess how you appear on line overall if you track what you are finding. Taking screenshots of the pages (using 'Print Screen'/'Prt Scr' button on Windows machines or the Grab tool for Macs and pasting the resulting image into a document) can help with this.

- Having an online presence is a time commitment. Online profiles that are not maintained or updated do not create a good impression. Think about how much time you can commit to keeping your profile(s) current and then decide if you should have just one profile with links from other services, or whether you should replicate your profile on a number of services.

- Perhaps do a 'Before and After' of your online presence. Keep a record. Once you have decided on your objectives, assess what changes you can see over time.

Search for yourself

Do a general search in Google (www.google.com), Bing (www.bing.com) or Yahoo (www.yahoo.com), or a combination of them, using your name as the search term. These are the top three search engines, in terms of market share. As of August 2012 the percentage market share of each was: Google 81.58%, Bing 8.47% and Yahoo 7.04% (see http://www.statowl.com/search_engine_market_share.php for the current market share).

To narrow down the search, try your name and your institution. You can also try searching by your subject area. As most people don't look beyond the first page or screen of their search results[6], you may want to stop looking there, or you could get a more detailed view by looking further.

It is also useful to also do specific Google searches. You could start with Google Images, Google Videos, Google Books and Google Discussions. You can also do some of these more focussed searches in Bing and Yahoo.

Points to ponder

- What results come up about you? How distinctive are they? Do you share a name with some one in a different field?
- Are all the results from your institutions? Publications? Other resources? Online profiles? Are none of the results relevant to you?
- If the results are nothing to do with you and your research output or institution, would that be obvious to someone else looking for you?
- Consider where you would like to appear – in other words, what is your niche? If someone searched for a topic, where would you like to appear?
- If you already do regular searches for your own name, your results in Google will be influenced by your previous searches and those of other people, so also do searches for your name in search engines which don't have this personalisation feature, such as Duck duckgo (http://duckduckgo.com/) and Ixquick (https://www.ixquick.com/).
- It is not vanity but a necessity to set up Google alerts (http://www.google.com/alerts) so you can automatically keep an eye on your developing presence and follow your online footprint and shadow. It's a very simple process – follow the link above for a 'how to' explanation.
- If you don't appear at all in the general search results, don't panic. There are many factors that affect what results appear on the search results page (see 'How search works' http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNHR6IQJGZs&feature=plcp for a brief overview). Searching by name alone has drawbacks.

[6] See Beitzel, S.M., Jensen, E.C., Chowdhury, A., Frieder, O. & Grossman, D. 2007, 'Temporal analysis of a very large topically categorized Web query log', Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 58(2): 166-178. Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/asi.20464/full

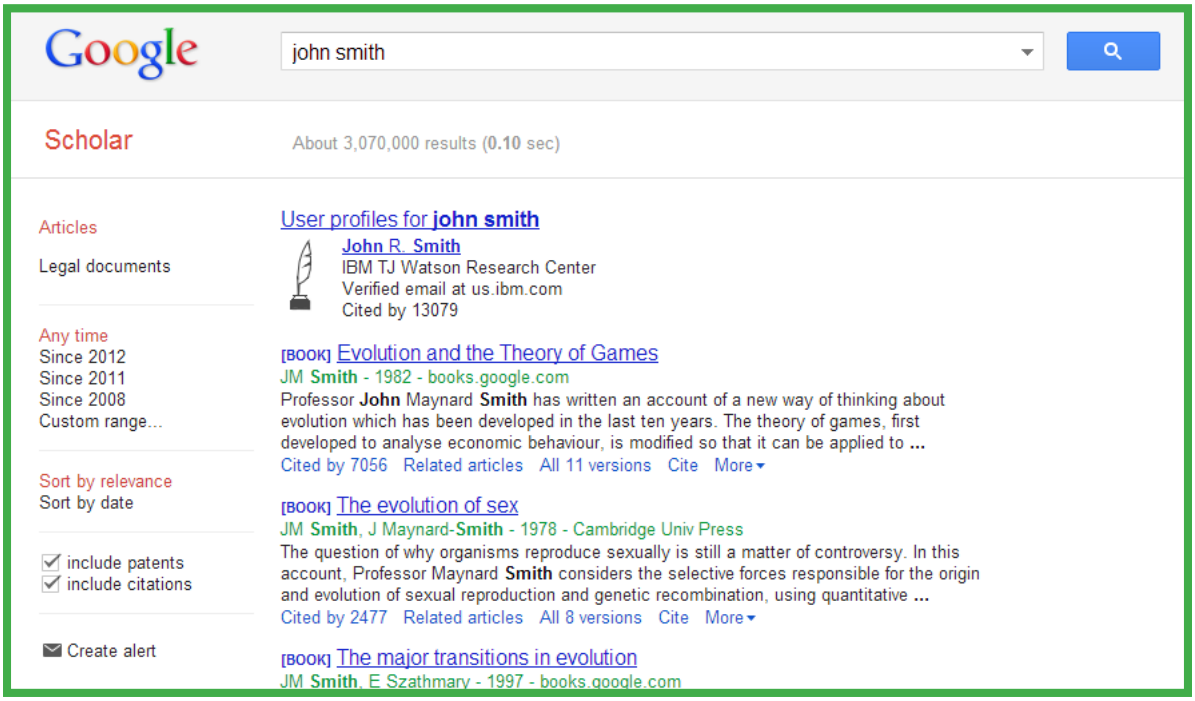
Assess your articles online

How easily can your traditional scholarly outputs (journal articles, book chapters, etc.) be found online? Find out using Google Scholar, Web of Science and Scopus. There will be overlapping and unique results from each of your searches. This also offers you a way of doing what is often called citation tracking – seeing who has been citing your articles and using this as a measure of impact.

More details about this are available in the UCT Guide "Tracking Your Academic Footprint: A guide to tools to tracking your citations"[7]

Figure 4: "Citation needed" by futureatlas.com[8]

Google Scholar



Google Scholar is a search engine for scholarly literature covering just about any field and discipline you can think of (http://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/about.html). It differs from Google in that as well as indexing scholarly-looking web documents that are freely available, it also has documents supplied by agencies that have partnered with Google Scholar (e.g. journal publishers and academic institutions) and citations extracted from indexed documents' reference lists. Google, on the other hand, indexes only freely available web pages[9].

Assessment services

Your institution may also offer services which enable you to search for your scholarly publications - such as Web of Knowledge or Scopus.

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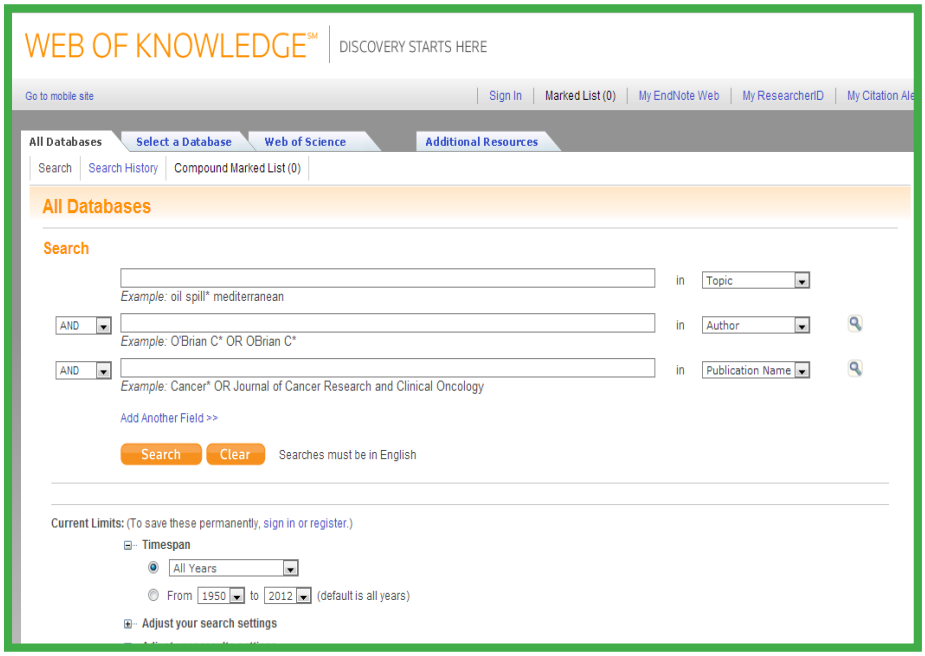
[7] The Guide Tracking Your Academic Footprint: A guide to tools to tracking your citations" is available (http://libguides.lib.uct.ac.za/tracking_your_academic_footprint)

[8] "Citation needed" by futureatlas.com and is licensed under a CC-BY license, available at http://www.flickr.com/photos/87913776@N00/5129607997

[9] Walters, W. (2011). 'Comparative recall and precision of simple and expert searches in Google Scholar and eight other databases', Libraries and the Academy, 11(4): 971–1006. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/portal_libraries_and_the_academy/v011/11.4.walters.html

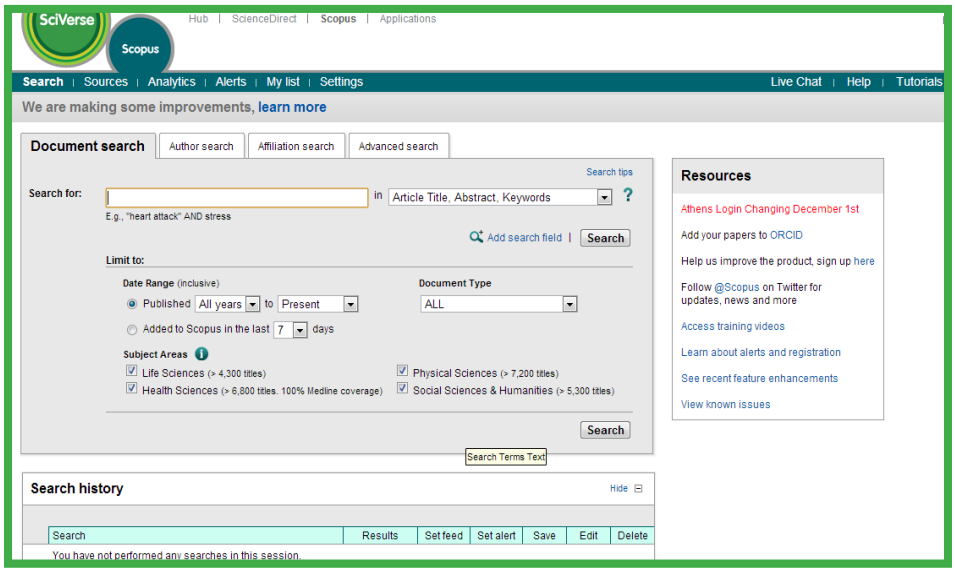
Web of Knowledge (http://apps.webofknowledge.com/)

Web of Knowledge is a search and citation indexing platform, provided by Thomson Reuters, for scholarly articles in the sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities.
Again see 'Tracking your academic footprint'.



Scopus (http://www.scopus.com/search/form.url)

SciVerse Scopus, as it is known in full, is an Elsevier-owned database of scholarly article abstracts and citations (http://www.info.sciverse.com/scopus). The UCT libraries guide also has a section on using Scopus.



Web of Knowledge and Scopus are both subscription services, but you may have access through your institution. You can also search other databases and indexes of scholarly articles. Some of these are discipline specific, so search those that apply to your discipline and research area(s) (see Step 3).

Points to ponder

- Which of your articles came up in the search? Were they the articles you thought or hoped would appear? Did some of your articles not appear anywhere?
- Set up a Google Scholar alert as well as a Google alert - http://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/help.html#alerts - so you can automatically keep an eye on your developing presence and follow your online footprint and shadow.
- If the results are obviously nothing to do with you, your research output or institution, consider if you have a very common name. A name shared by several people with an online presence can make finding the 'right person' difficult. Consider how you can make your name more distinctive. For example, if you publish papers using a middle initial, you should include that initial in your online profiles.

Ascertain your broader impact

Beyond looking at how many citations your papers have, how do you measure the impact and reach of your scholarly work? Altmetrics, short for alternative metrics, are ways of tracking your content's impact online and seeing the variety of ways your papers and other outputs are being used. These metrics stretch beyond traditional citations. They measure your online output in alternative ways, such as bookmarks of your articles in Mendeley (http://www.mendeley.com; see Step 4), mentions in blogs, tweets containing links to your publications and much, much more.

You could keep a record of the Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) of your papers or the Uniform Resource Locators (URLs –the link that appears in the web browser address bar).

Both the DOI and the URL are unique to the content they are associated with. The DOI is like an identity number for your paper in the digital world. The URL is an identifier that specifies its location. You can use one or both of these to see the altmetrics of specific output. There are several services you can use to obtain altmetrics. However, be aware they are limited in their ability to track your article by the identifier provided – they won't be able to pick up instances where they can't match the identifier you've provided with the mention or bookmark.

New hope for Africa? Copyright and access to knowledge in the digital age

Document Information:

Title:	New hope for Africa? Copyright and access to knowledge in the digital age
Author(s):	Tobias Schonwetter, (IP Law and Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa), Caroline Ncube, (Department of Commercial Law and Affiliate IP Law and Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa)
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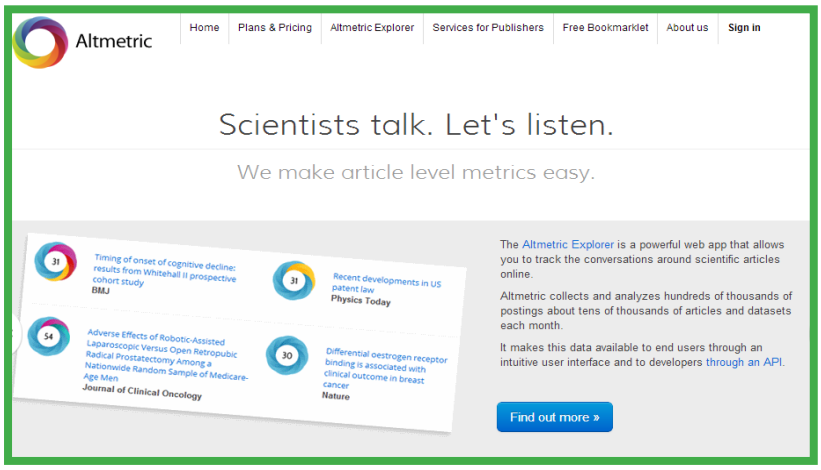
Keywords:	Africa, Copyright law, Digital storage, Knowledge management
Article type:	Research paper
DOI:	10.1108/14636691111131457 (Permanent URL)
Publisher:	Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract:

Purpose – This paper's main purpose is to deepen the general understanding regarding copyright exceptions and limitations as an important balancing tool of copyright law, particularly for developing countries in Africa. It seeks to address the problematic interplay between copyright exceptions and limitations on the one hand and technological protection measures (TPMs) on the other. It then aims to offer a solution for mitigating the potentially detrimental impact of TPMs on otherwise-permitted uses of copyright-protected knowledge materials.

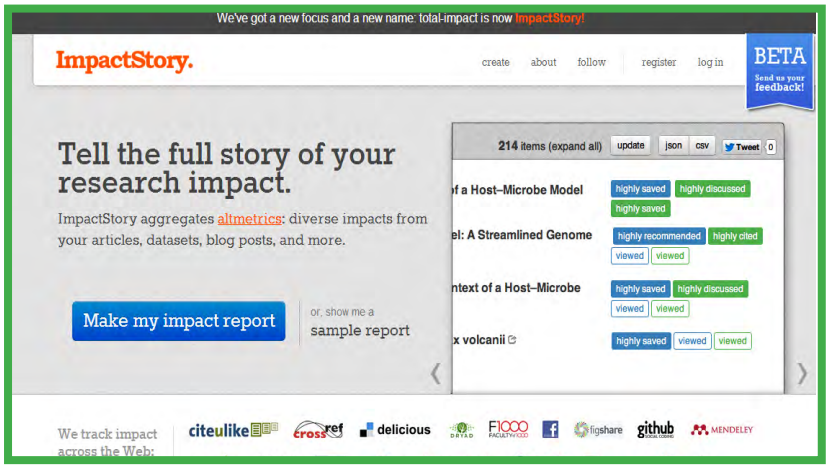
Altmetric (http://www.altmetric.com/)

Altmetric, a subscription service, gives you an idea of the broader impact of your research (and that of others). Once you've selected an article or papers for which you want to see the Altmetric data, you can view many alternative metrics through the article's DOI or other supported identifier. These include: how many times it's been tweeted, if it's been the subject of a blog, how many Mendeley bookmarks it's received, where the people who are interacting with your research are from. It's quite a comprehensive service.



ImpactStory (http://impactstory.it/)

ImpactStory (until recently known as Total-impact) is a free altmetrics aggregating service. It takes the identifier(s) you give it (a DOI or URL – up to 500 characters); your Google Scholar profile publications; a Slideshare, Github and/or Dryad username; and/or a BibTeX citation file[10], and gives you the diverse impacts from these works, datasets, etc. Its quick, easy to use and free.



Readermeter (http://readermeter.org/)

Readermeter can be used to view the impact of your output on Mendeley using your name, any relevant initials and surname. It is quite possible that you have a presence on Mendeley without having set one up yourself, as other people may be bookmarking your work. The readership metrics can give you an idea how many people are bookmarking (and potentially reading or wanting to read) your work. It is very useful if your name is unique but if you have a common name, the results may include outputs by other researchers, so be aware of this.

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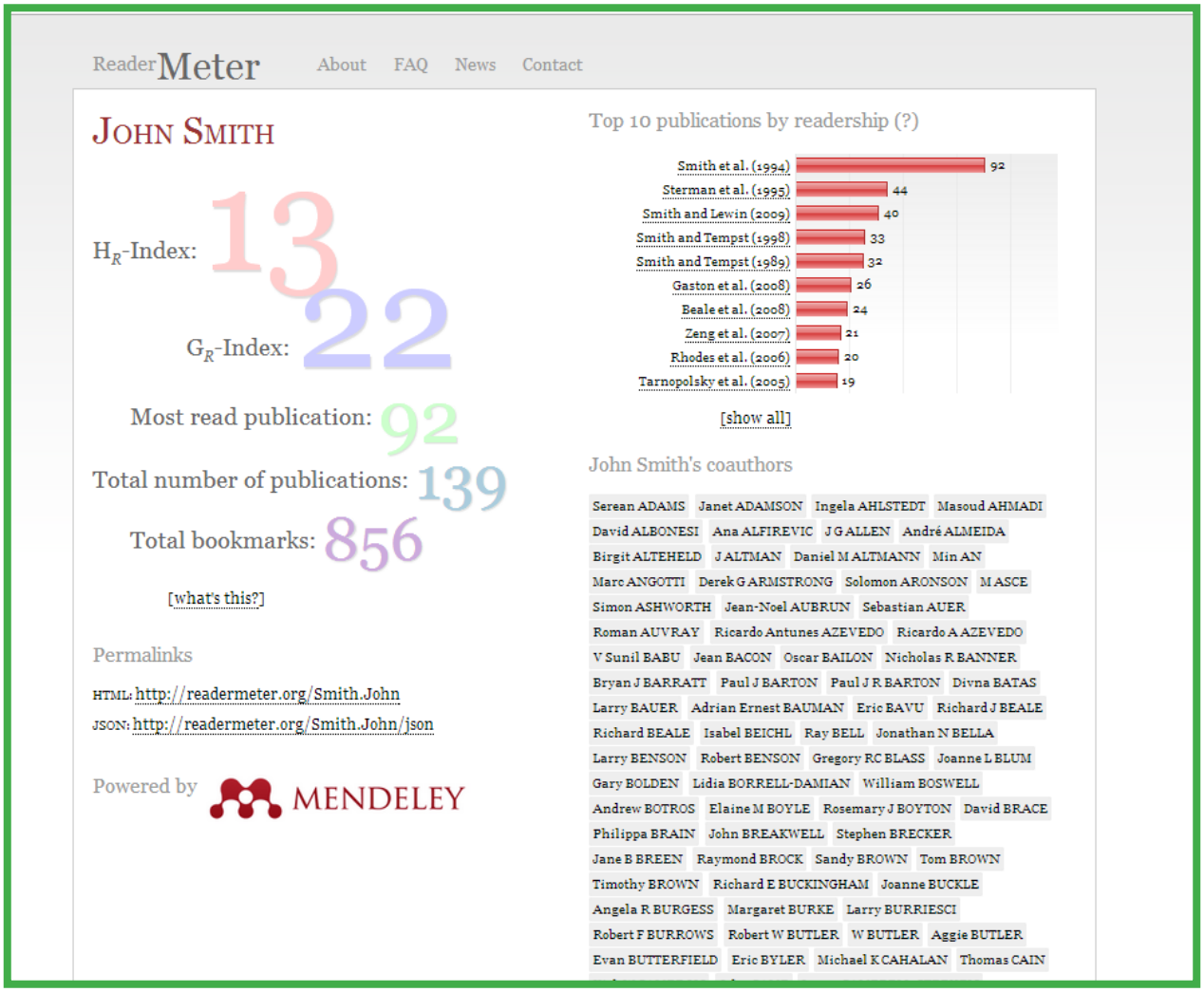
[10] For more on these services, see http://www.slideshare.net/ (Slideshare), https://github.com/ (Github) and http://datadryad.org/ (Dryad)

The metrics include an HR-index, GR-index[11], your most 'read' publication, total number of publications and total bookmarks (see below for a screenshot of the results with a brief explanation).



For more on altmetrics, see 'Altmetrics: a manifesto' (http://altmetrics.org/manifesto/) and 'Altmetrics – trying to fill the gap' (http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2012/07/25/altmetrics-trying-to-fill-the-gap/)

Points to ponder

- Did you find any altmetric results for your outputs?
- Did the results surprise you?
- What strategies might you decide on to change the results you found?

[11] Readermeter adapts the H-index and the G-index by redefining them using bookmarks instead of citations (see "About": http://readermeter.org/).

Decide on your priorities

There are many ways to increase your visibility online. However, they all take time and effort so decide on your priorities, taking into account your technical ability and how much time you can invest. You want to avoid 'multiple profile disorder' so decide which of your profiles are important to you, and consider linking them to whichever one you update regularly. Having a few well-maintained and updated profiles is better than a broad but neglected online presence. After all, the purpose is to be found, not to be found wanting.

Your personal or institutional profile

Universities with websites often have academic staff profiles. This institutional profile is a good opportunity to present your scholarship, research interests, publications, teaching resources and achievements to the world. Make sure that this page contains up to date and relevant information, pictures relating to your activities and accurate contact details.

Having a personal website can also be beneficial in raising your online profile and establishing and maintaining your personal brand. You can use this space to cover more ground about your scholarship and interests than a standard university profile might allow. Your personal webpage could also be a platform from which you post and discuss interesting topics related to your work. You might also use this as a space from which to blog.

Professional and academic networking site profiles

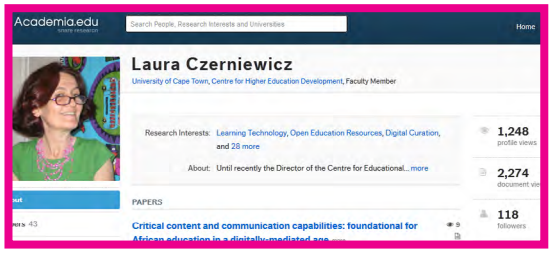
Think back to the online profile services you have signed up for over the years, most likely after an email invitation from a colleague. Assess which of the following you use and for what purpose. The ones we mention here are the most common at present - be mindful that these can change over time.

LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com/)

LinkedIn is a network for all professionals (not just academics). You can post and hunt for jobs, form groups around an organisation or particular topic, and start and participate in a discussion with people from all around the world.

At the end of 2012, LinkedIn had 175m+ professionals from around the world, 44m+ of these members from Europe, Middle East and Africa http://press.linkedin.com/about).

Academia.edu (http://www.academia.edu/)



Academia.edu is specifically aimed at academics, as the name implies. An interesting aspect to Academia.edu is that it automatically trawls the web for papers associated with your name, which is great, but it is a good idea to check them. You can add your CV, papers, books, presentations, teaching resources as well as blog posts and websites, which makes it good site for non-traditional scholarly outputs. As of August 2012, Academia.edu had 1,794,003 academics signed up to their service worldwide (http://www.academia.edu/about).

ResearchGate (http://www.researchgate.net/)

Also aimed at academics and researchers, ResearchGate has a niche in the sciences. Over 1.9 million people were signed up to ResearchGate in August 2012, the largest discipline being medicine with ~427 000 people specifying it as their research area.

You can view topics under discussion relevant to your specified research interests in your 'Live feed'; start your own topic, add to the discussion around someone else's topic or ask a question in 'Topics'; view 'Publications' for articles that relate share files and get comments from other project members on collaborative research.

Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com)

While Google Scholar is where most academics go to search for scholarly articles, many don't have a Google Scholar profile. If you have yet to compile a comprehensive list of publications (with links to the articles, where available) or want people to find all the citations of your articles one place, along with your H-index, a public Google Scholar profile is a good way to create this record and keep it up to date (almost) automatically.

You need to have a Google account to create a Google Scholar profile. Then, at the top right of the Google Scholar home page, you will see a list of options starting with 'My Citations'. If you click on any of these buttons, you'll be redirected to a sign-in page, from which you can sign up for a Google Scholar profile in three easy steps.

While you can choose to make your Google Scholar profile public or private, having a public profile will mean that anyone interested in your publications will be able to access your profile with just one click - at the top of a Google Scholar query for your name.

Note: the 'Cited by' number refers to the total number of citations of your work included in your Google Scholar profile.

Points to ponder

- Do you use any services not listed above? Add these to your list.
- Do you need all the profiles you have? Which do you actually use?
- If you have profiles on several services, perhaps keep one main profile and link all the others to it.
- This will mean only maintaining one profile for the majority of the time.
- Do you have more than one profile with the same service? Consolidate your multiple profiles with the same service. Having two or more profiles is not better than having one comprehensive one and can be confusing to those looking for information.
- Do your online profiles give a brief but comprehensive view of you as an academic?
- Do you want to use different profiles for different purposes?
- Do you have an easily accessible, comprehensive list of your publications online?
- Are some services more suitable for your discipline than others? Are more of your colleagues using a certain service?

Social networking

There are many social networking tools online; you can find a list on Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites. Facebook and Twitter, both of which are used for personal and professional purposes, currently have the largest numbers of registered users.

Twitter (http://twitter.com/)

Twitter, contrary to what the name might imply, is not necessarily silly or foolish. This 140-character micro-blogging site is a 'real-time information network' which can connect you to just about anything that sparks your interest. Many academics may find it valuable as a social networking tool. You can also use it to broadcast your own views and interests, provide links to your research articles, send out information about conferences you are organising and circulate interesting reference material you happen to come across. The possibilities are endless, as long as you can fit your point (and link) into 140 characters.

Lists of academic tweeters are a good place to start if you sign up for Twitter and are looking for people to follow: see 'Your favourite academic tweeters: lists available to browse by subject area' http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/09/02/academic-tweeters-your-suggestions-in-full/. The LSE has also published a guide on Twitter for academics which continues to be useful – see http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/files/2011/11/Published-Twitter_Guide_Sept_2011.pdf. (You will find more about this guide in Step 4.)

Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/)

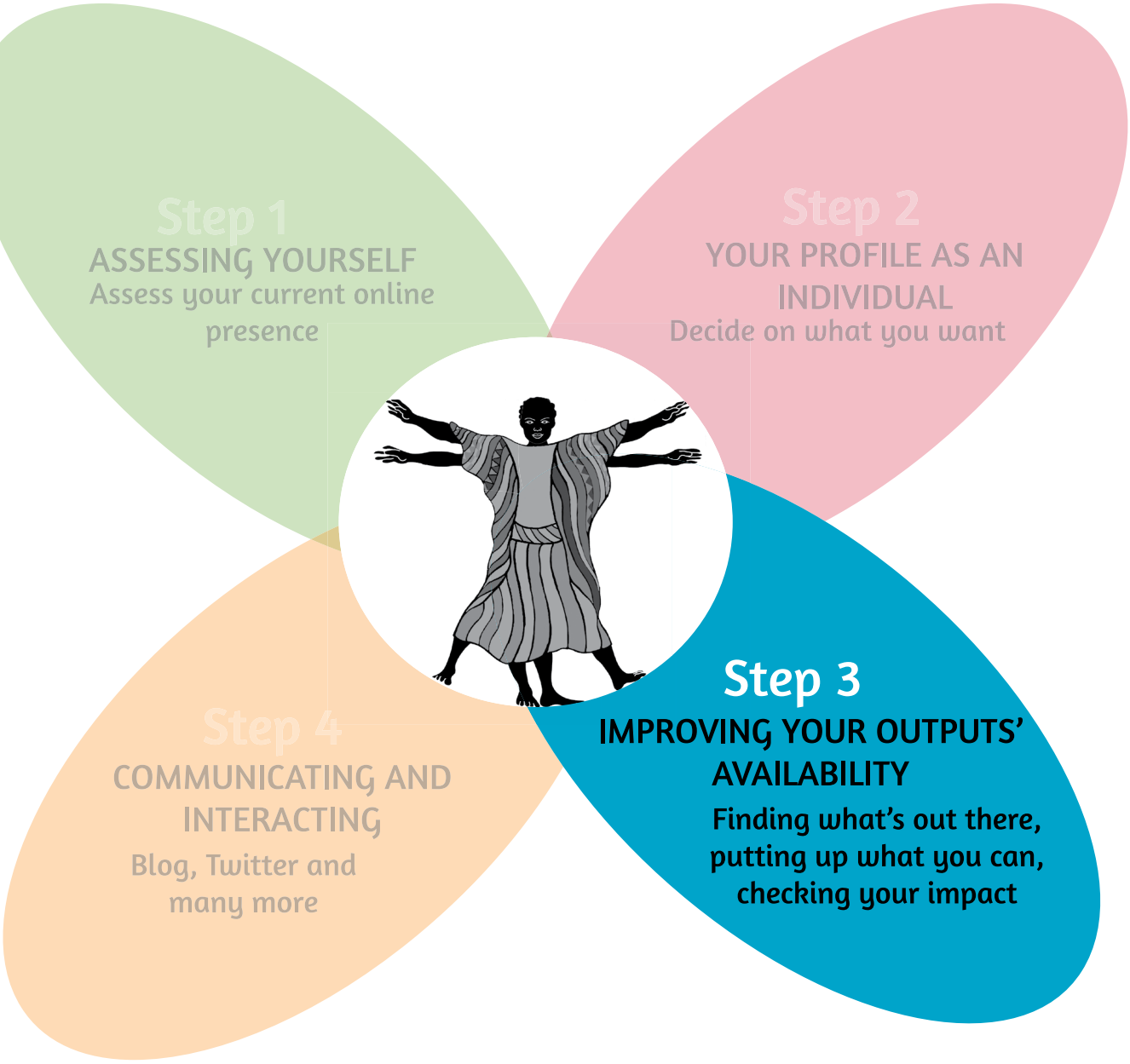
This social network is primarily a platform for friends to connect and exchange information, and share photos, links and videos. Pages and groups also allow people to connect and interact with causes, businesses and other topics they. However, just because Facebook is primarily a social network, this doesn't mean you can't use it to interact with colleagues if you and they have the same idea about the service and its uses. You could also have a hybrid personal and professional account, but decide on your purpose upfront and adjust your privacy settings accordingly. Consider whether you might prefer separate personal and professional profiles, and which you would be comfortable making openly available to anyone, including your students.

As of the end of June 2012, Facebook had 955 million monthly active users, of which about 81% are from outside the USA and Canada (http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx? NewsAreaId=22).

Be aware of your Facebook (and other) privacy settings. If you are using Facebook in a purely personal capacity, it might be wise to keep your profile (most information, photos, etc) private. Facebook seems to move the goal posts all the time, so it is worth being mindful. For more on communicating and interacting using this type of network, see Step 4.

Points to ponder

- Do you communicate and interact frequently? How important are professional communication networks for you and your work?
- To grow an audience, you need to share and engage with your readers regularly. The ideal is to blog once a week. Tweet on and off throughout the day about what you are reading, etc. Many people 'live-tweet' conferences, sending quotes from the current speakers and up-to-the-minute action, using the conference 'hashtag'.

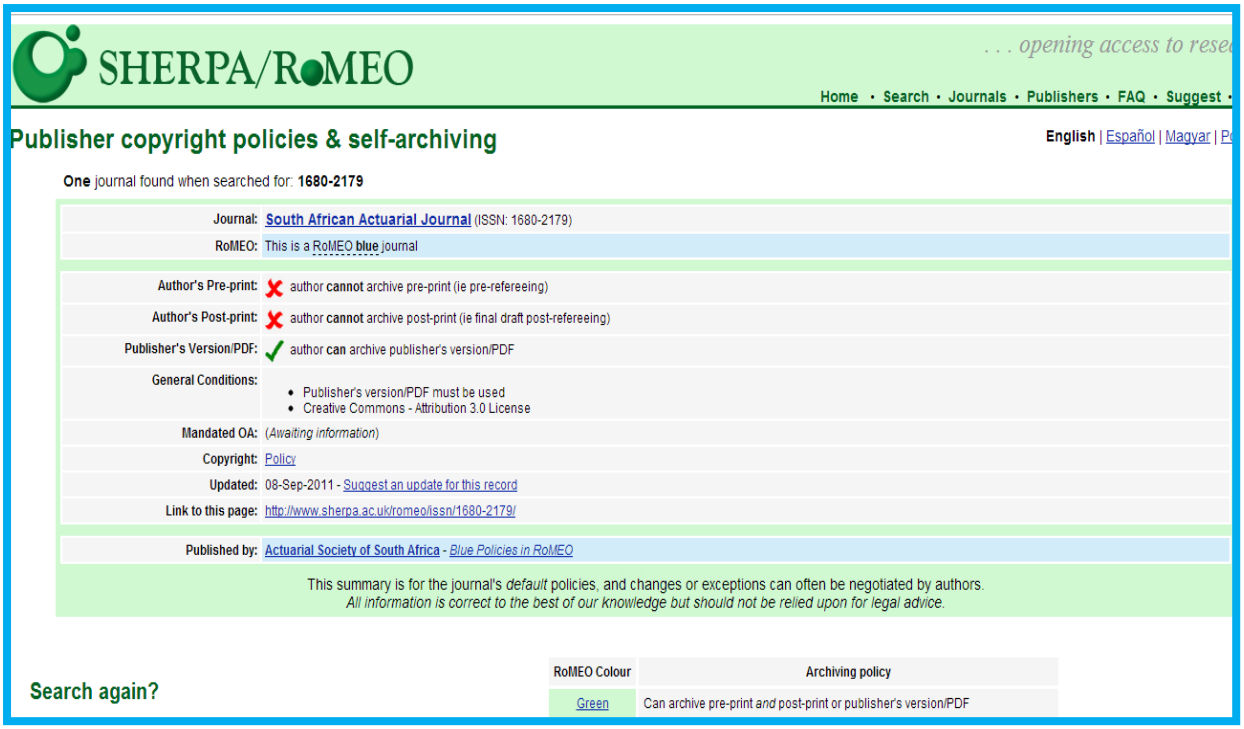


After checking the current availability of your research outputs and viewing their altmetrics (see Step 1), you may want to put more of your outputs online, increase the visibility of those already online and increase their chances of being found, read and cited. You could start with the most recent publication and work back as far as possible, according to the time you have available. If you don't have time to do anything about your past outputs, focus on what you publish or produce from now on. However, be aware that not all your outputs can be shared – more on this below.

Here are a few steps you can take towards increased availability of your publications.

Archive, archive, archive!

Put online all the journal articles that you can. The copyright agreement with your publisher will determine what version of your article you can share and when. To check publisher archiving policies quickly and easily, you can go to Sherpa Romeo (http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/).



With this service, you can search by journal title, publisher or the journal's ISSN (International Standard Serial Number – a unique code that allows the identification of any serial publication, such as a journal) for information on publishers' copyright policies. If you can't share the final published version, you can usually share the preprint or the postprint. These terms are defined in different ways by different publishers so be sure to check. Sherpa Romeo has clarified their definitions of these terms here: http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeoinfo.html.

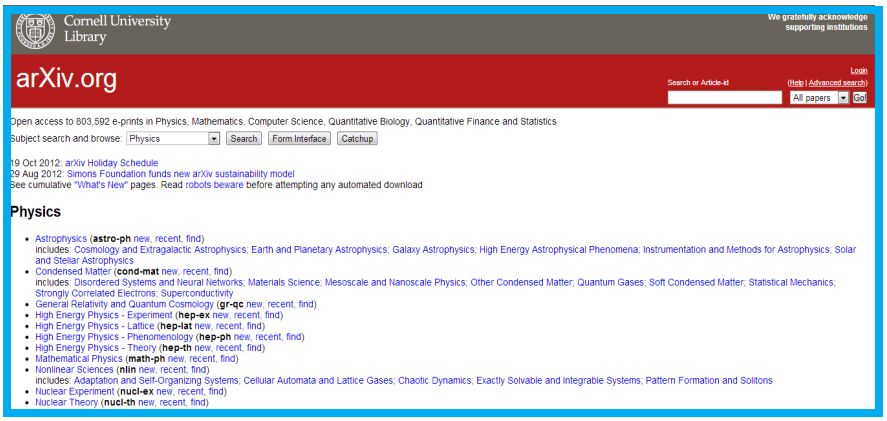
Publishers' agreements generally refer to self-archiving, which is placing your article or a version of it on your own website or in your institutional repository. Check the details. Find out about other digital repositories at OpenDOAR, an online directory of open-access repositories from around the globe (http://www.opendoar.org/find.php). You can also search by country. Most of these are currently institutional repositories – your institution may be among them

Use discipline-specific repositories

There are other scholarly paper search services and repositories that you can make use of, many of which are free to archive work on and free to use. These curate scholarly outputs in order to maximise discoverability. They tend to be discipline or theme specific.

arXiv

arXiv (http://arXiv.org) is a science-orientated online archive for preprints of papers, run by Cornell University Library. One of the most well known repositories, it had almost 900 000 e-prints in Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science, Quantitative Biology, Quantitative Finance and Statistics at the time of writing.



Social Science Research Resources Network (SSRN)

For Social Science researchers, the SSRN (http://www.ssrn.com/) contains bibliographic information and abstracts as well as full text papers. SSRN supports the Open Access movement and content submitted by authors is free to download.

African Higher Education Research Online (AHERO)

Hosted at the University of the Western Cape, AHERO (http://ahero.uwc.ac.za/) curates shareable scholarly outputs about higher education in Africa.

Wikipedia has a list of academic databases and search engines (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_databases_and_search_engines) – have a look at this for services that include your research area and interests.

Points to ponder

- Which of your articles came up in the searches? Why?
- Were they the articles you thought/hoped would appear?
- Did some of your articles not appear anywhere?
- Do you use any services not listed above? Add these to your list.
- Are some services better for your field than others? Are more of your colleagues using a certain service?
- Are you able to share your outputs on your website, in your institutional repository, on your departmental staff page and in repositories and databases that serve your discipline?

Change the way you publish

Archiving almost always has a time delay but publishing in open access journals means immediate availability to all with internet access. Open access publishing increases visibility, opportunity for use and potential impact; in fact the majority of studies have shown an increase in citations arising from open access. In a summary of studies reporting on the citation advantage of open access, 27 out of 35 showed a citations advantage (with the percentage increase ranging from 45% to as high as 600%)[12]. All of this with no compromise on quality – peer-reviewed open access journals go through the same editorial process and the same quality control checks as their non-open access counterparts[13].

You can find a list of these journals in The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ - http://www.doaj.org/). On this site, which includes articles from many disciplines, you can search for specific journals and papers. If your work is supported by research funders such as the European Commission, the US National Institute of Health or one of the UK's Research Councils you will soon be faced with a requirement to make your research output available open access. This is a complex matter, which might include the need to find funds for Article Processing Charges. If you are in this situation chat to your Research Office or to your Library.

Open everything

It's not only journal articles you can share. Consider making all your scholarly outputs available online. Academia.edu has sections for outputs such as blog posts and teaching resources. You can upload your conference presentations, PDFs, videos and webinars on to a service like Slideshare (http://www.slideshare.net/), which enables you share your presentations with the world, and which provides some data on your views and downloads. Consider sharing your teaching resources. Your course outlines and lecture notes could be useful to students and lecturers around the world. There are many sites to which you can upload open educational resources (OERs) – see http://creativecommons.org/education for some suggestions. Your institution may have such a platform, so look out for that too.

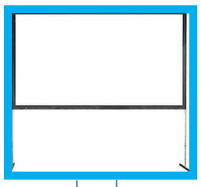
OpenUCT Initiative aims to make freely available to anyone with internet access as many of UCT's research, teaching and community-focused scholarly resources as possible. This OpenContent online directory can be found at http://opencontent.uct.ac.za/.

Be sure to check the terms and conditions of any site and the privacy policy. Think about how you want to handle your copyright. You can license your outputs using a Creative Commons licence to make it clear how people may use your resource. See http://creativecommons.org/ for more details; also read this useful 'Before Licensing' article before you decide: http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Before_Licensing.

There are many ways to share visual outputs. Below are a few options, grouped by medium.

Vimeo http://vimeo.com/ Youtube http://www.youtube.com/

Picasa Web Album http://picasaweb.google.com/ Flickr http://www.flickr.com/



Prezi http://prezi.com/ Slideshare http://www.slideshare.net/

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[12] Swan, A. (2010) The open access citation advantage: studies and results to date. Available at: http://eprints.ecs.soton.ac.uk/18516/

[13] Several studies have shown a citation advantage to publishing in Open Access journals. The following links are for an article, slideshow and blog post respectively:
http://eprints.ecs.soton.ac.uk/18516
http://www.slideshare.net/oaod2010/alma-swan-the-open-access-advantage
http://www.openoasis.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=560&Itemid=391

Maximise discoverability by careful curation

Take metadata seriously. Metadata refers to information that describes, explains, locates and otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use or manage digital information . Keywords or a description of an image are examples of metadata. When you search for an image, for example in Google Images, it's the metadata that helps Google suggest relevant images in your search results.

If you add tags, keywords or descriptions to a file you are uploading, these form part of that file's metadata and make it much easier to find. For non-text files, such as images or videos, leaving out these descriptive metadata can result in no one finding your uploads at all. It may seem like an optional extra to tag a file or paper, but in the long run, if you want it to be found, investing five minutes or less in tagging is well worth it in the long term.

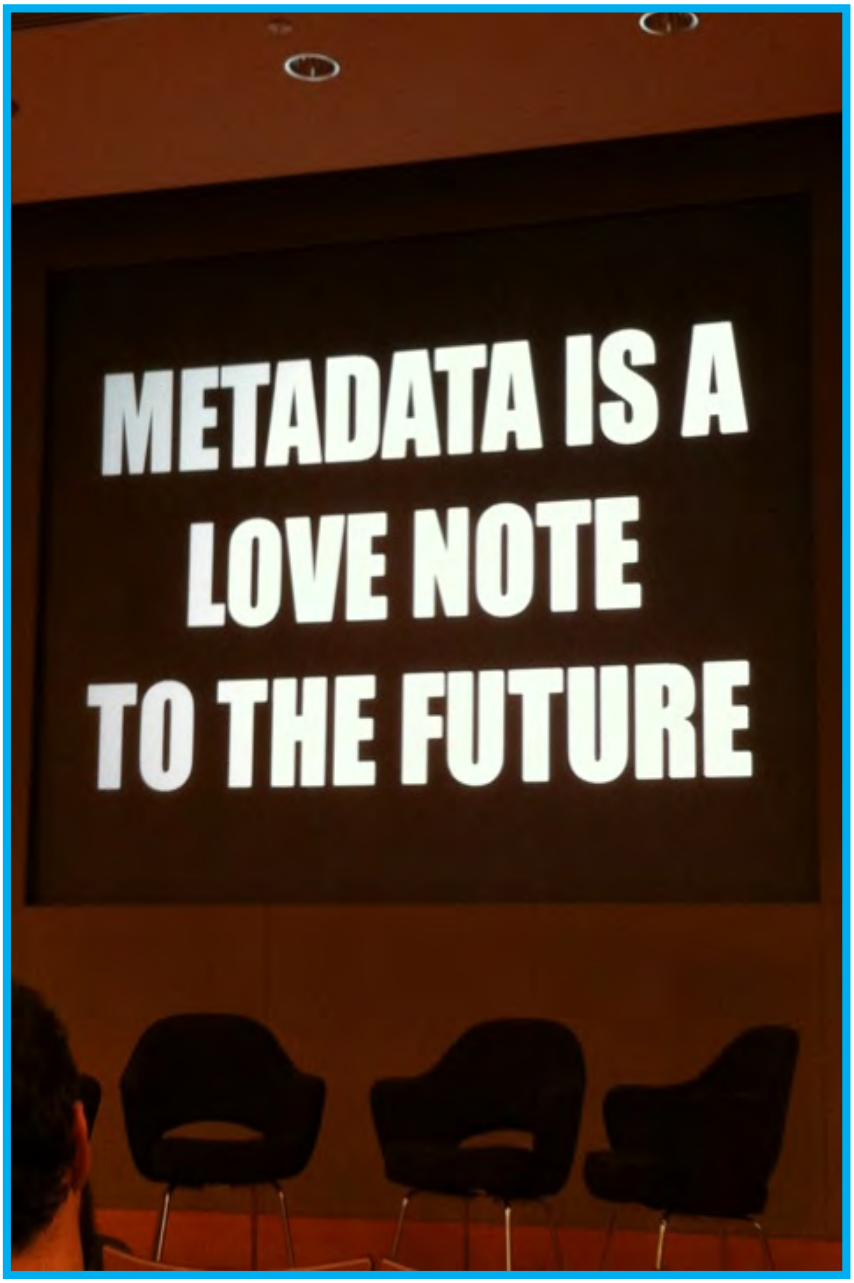
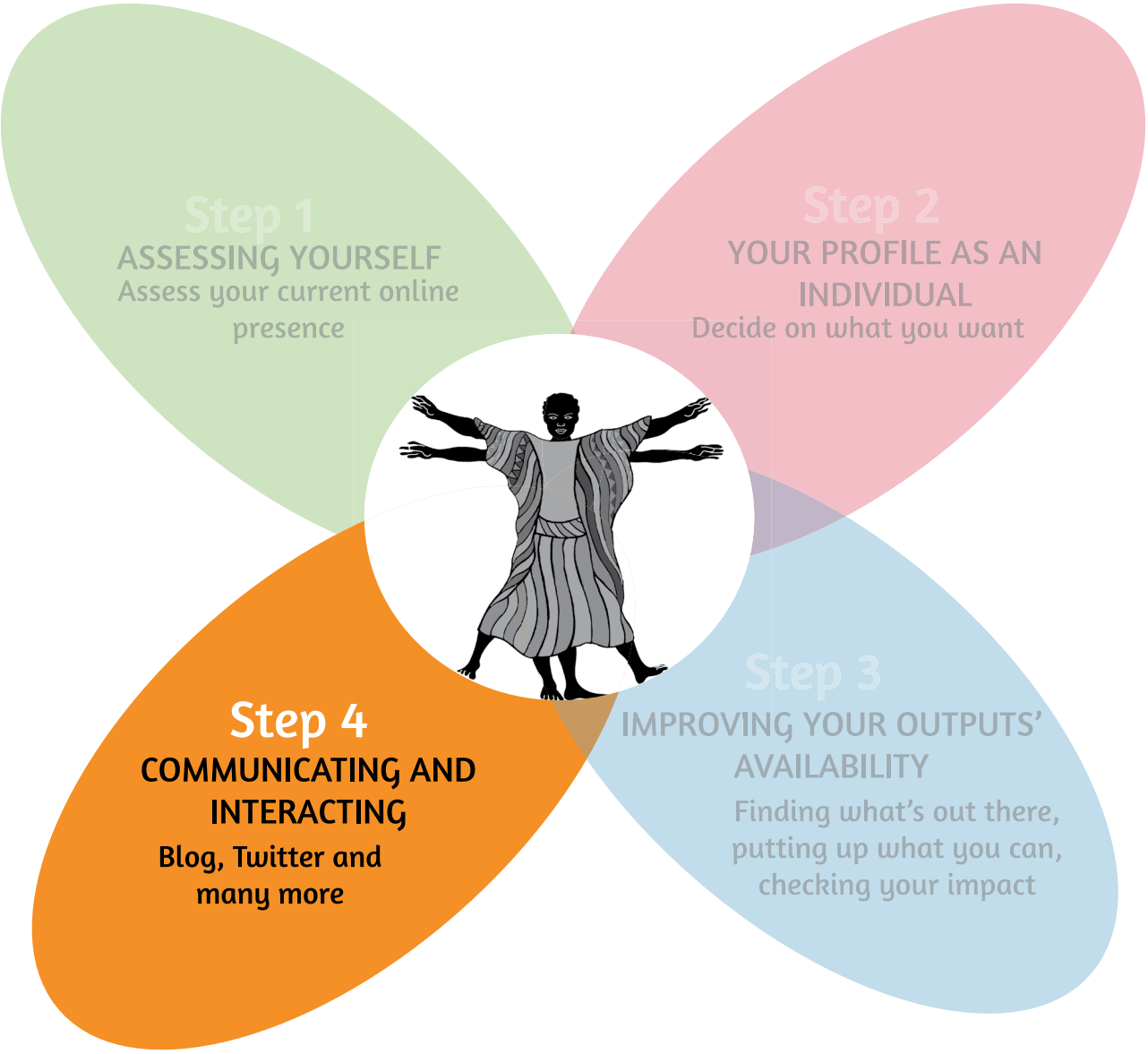


Figure 5: Metadata is important[15]

[14] Definition modified from DCC: Digital Curation Manual – instalment on Metadata; available for download at: http://www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/resource/curation-manual/chapters/metadata/metadata.pdf

[15] 'Well said! 'metadata is a love note to the future' from @textfiles talk via @nypl_labs & @kissane http://t.co/FjvCL-VUZ



While having an online profile on a platform such as ResearchGate or LinkedIn is a first step, in order to interact with others online, you need to engage with them. Several of the services mentioned above (see Step 2) have areas for discussion and interaction – investigate and start using them if you don't already.

Did you ever have a blog or website? Does it still show up in a search, and is out of date?

If you are looking for new ways to communicate and share, consider some of the following options.

Become a curator

There are a several ways of sharing pages and bookmarks. Some examples are given here.

Diigo.com (http://www.diigo.com)

Diigo.com enables research, sharing and collaboration. You can use Diigo to highlight parts of an article or add notes. These annotations will remain on the page when you return. You can bookmark the pages you are interested in and archive a snapshot. Adding tags helps you find the pages easily later on. Full text search of the pages is also available. You can share your library or keep it private.

Delicious (http://delicious.com/)

'Discover yourself', Delicious's tagline, is quite appropriate. This online service lets you save all those links you might want to go back to later, and allows you to access them from any device. No need to save endless numbers of webpages to your computer, scroll through hundreds of bookmarks or struggle to remember where you came across a vital link that you didn't save. Adding the 'Save on Delicious' button to your browser toolbar lets you save links quickly and easily.

Delicious lets you sort your saved links using tags to help you find them again easily. You can add notes or images and highlight text on the page. You can also make your profile and links public so others can benefit from the useful links you find (http://delicious.com/about). In this way you can become known as a curator of interesting content in particular areas.

BitLy (https://bitly.com)

Bitly is another online bookmarking service. You can save any links (webpages, videos, music, etc.) as 'bitmarks', bundle these into related collections and search your bitmarks and collections. You can also share interesting items on the web via social media, with different privacy settings for individual bundles so you can control who sees what.

Scoopit (http://www.scoop.it/)

If you what to go beyond sharing links and your bookmarks, you can curate content and publish it online in the form of a magazine. Scoopit provides a platform from which you can share content from the web around a specific topic in a visually pleasing format.

These are just a few examples of some common services. Find out what your colleagues and other academics in your discipline are using to maximise the community benefits.

The power of loose ties

You are already aware of what those in your closest circles are doing, but it is more difficult to keep up with your broader community in a general way. Services such as Twitter and Google+ provide ways of keeping up with the "disciplinary zeitgeist" through conference updates in real time, announcements of new events and publications, and even debates and discussions.

Twitter (http://twitter.com/)

Although it is true that Twitter can be used in silly or foolish ways, this 140-character micro-blogging site can be invaluable professionally. As a 'real-time information network' it can connect you to just about anything that sparks your interest and give you up to date access to what is happening in your field. So, you can see why academics may find it valuable.

If you sign up for Twitter and are looking for people to follow, have a look at this post: 'Your favourite academic tweeters: lists available to browse by subject area' http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/09/02/academic-tweeters-your-suggestions-in-full/

Also, see the LSE guide to Twitter for academics and researchers for a comprehensive view of the what, where and how: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/09/29/twitter-guide/

Here are some key points from the LSE guide.

- Sign up for your free account at www.twitter.com/signup.
  - Go for a short username – if people want to mention you in their tweets, they don't want your 20 character username taking up ~15% of the available characters.
- Start following others!
  - To populate your Twitter feed with interesting information and relevant links, you have to follow those people whose tweets you are interested in seeing. Twitter suggests followers for you in a 'Who to follow' section. It only takes one click to follow or 'unfollow' people, so don't be afraid of following a variety of tweeters to start with – you can always change your mind.
  - And, who knows, they might just follow you back.
- Search for people and interesting topics.
  - You can use the search in Twitter to find people (but be aware they may not be tweeting under their full name) as well as interesting topics and keywords (the latter preceded by a hashtag. e.g. #tweeting)
- Build your followers.
  - Followers find you over time. To ensure people start to follow you, tweet regularly, engage others on topics you are both interested in, and tweet with a purpose - not what you had for breakfast.
- Yes, you can use Twitter for research and teaching.
  - Tweet about your research, live-tweet conferences you attend and engage with the public and other academics about research in your field. Potentially, you can use Twitter as a research tool and in the classroom.

Explore and find what works for you

You can have a public Twitter account or alternatively protect your tweets, which means that people have to request permission to follow you and view your tweet stream. If the purpose of having the account is to publicise your research and papers, protecting your tweets will severely limit the number of people who will be able to view what you are trying to put out there.

However, using your Twitter account just to follow others (and not engage) can be a good source of information as well as a good place to start building up your knowledge of how Twitter works. You don't need to tweet from the first day you sign up – take some time to become more familiar with how microblogging works and tweet when you are ready.

Google+ (http://google.com/+googleplus)

Google+ (Google Plus) is a social network from Google similar to Facebook. You can connect and share with friends, family and beyond. It's a collection of several services, some of which Google offered prior to the launch of Google+ in June 2011. Services include Circles (similar to groups), Hangouts, Pages and the +1 button. As of June 2012, only a year from its launch, Google+ had 250 million registered users, of whom 150 million were active (http://www.engadget.com/2012/06/27/google-has-250-million-users-more-mobile-than-desktop/)

If you already have any Google account (e.g. Gmail, Google Analytics, etc), it's quite easy to start using Google+. You can find the '+You' button at the top of the Google homepage.

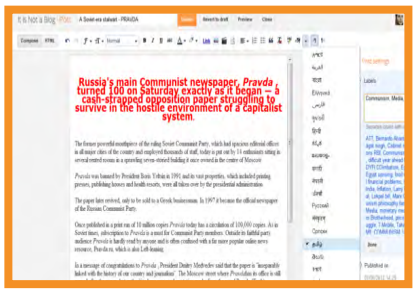
- Clicking on '+You' will take you to the Google+ login page where you can sign in using your account and set up your homepage from there.
- Google has a brief, handy guide for faculty and staff interested in using Google+ : https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B5Y-fwYJF2hLZTEzZDcwYjgtZjE4NC00OGIwLTk3MTItN2I2MmQ5MzUzMmZk/edit?hl=en_US
- You can share posts and content publicly or even with selected groups of people, which is a really useful feature. Just be aware of who you are sharing what with!

Become a blogger

Blogging about your research and what your research group is up to is an increasingly important way of engaging with different audiences - colleagues, students or your community. Blogging is both simple and complicated, and can be handled in many different ways. You might blog as an individual or you could get your whole research group involved, with a different person blogging each week about an aspect of their work or interesting related topics.

There are many blogging platforms available and you will need to consider which will work best for you. Here are two example blogs:

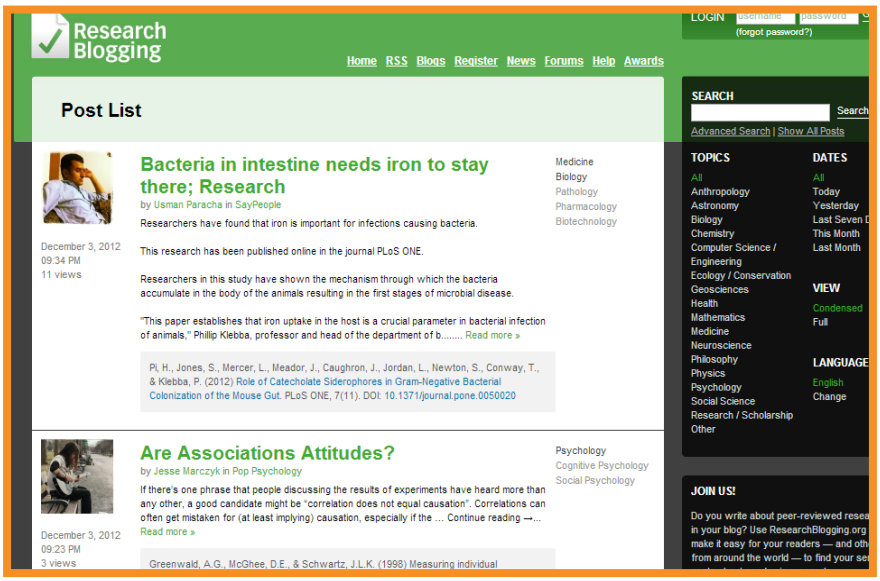
Wordpress site (http://wordpress.org/)



Blogger (http://www.blogger.com)

A blog is also a good platform for research-related photographs or a link to your research group's Flickr account (http://www.flickr.com/).

When you have your blog up and running, you can submit your blog to blog aggregators. Aggregators group many blogs on a variety of topics or those that share the same topic theme. Users visiting these aggregator sites in search of posts on the topic you are blogging on will be lead to your blog. Researchblogging.com is one such aggregator.



Manage and share your papers

Following on from Step 2 and 3, there are many platforms you can use to share your research papers, including your professional networking profiles. There are also online services that can help you organise and manage them more effectively.

CiteULike (http://www.citeulike.org/)

CiteULike is like an academic Delicious except that it stores papers and citation details instead of links. No additional software is required – CiteULike works straight from your web browser. And because everything is stored online, this means that you can access your papers from anywhere that you can access the internet. You can share the papers you've uploaded as well as make and join groups for topics that interest you, adding a social component to this service.

Mendeley (http://www.mendeley.com/)

Mendeley is not just a reference management tool, it's also an academic social network. Similar to CiteUlike, in that you can manage your papers and citations online, Mendeley goes a step further with its desktop software. You can organise your research papers on your computer by dragging and dropping them into Mendeley Desktop, which will extract all the relevant citation information automatically, and you can sync this library with Mendeley online so you can access it anywhere. In Mendeley you can annotate and highlight points of interest in your PDFs. You can also collaborate with others online, through groups (public or private), and discover new research. Mendeley even has an iPhone app, so you can access and read your papers anywhere. And the Microsoft Word plug-in lets you reference from your PDF collection in Your Documents as you write.

With over 1,900,000 members (as of 20 September, numbers available at http://www.mendeley.com/) this service is making significant inroads into the academic community. Interestingly, you may have a presence on Mendeley without having set one up yourself, as other people may be bookmarking your work. You can review your presence on Mendeley by using ReaderMeter and/or Impact Story (see Step 1).

Maximise discoverability by using social media

If you're sceptical about the value of publicising your research through social media, consider that by putting it out there and talking about it, you are bringing it to the attention of someone who may find it and find it useful, or who will pass it along to others who will. One researcher experimented with her own outputs to see what would happen when she blogged and tweeted about them[16]. In her case, publicising the research made a big impact on how much it was accessed and downloaded. To quote from the post: 'The papers that were tweeted and blogged had at least more than 11 times the number of downloads than their sibling paper which was left to its own devices in the institutional repository.'

Makes one think hard about the power of social media, even in academic circles.

[16] Terras, M (2012) 'The verdict: is blogging or tweeting about research papers worth it?' http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/04/19/blog-tweeting-papers-worth-it/

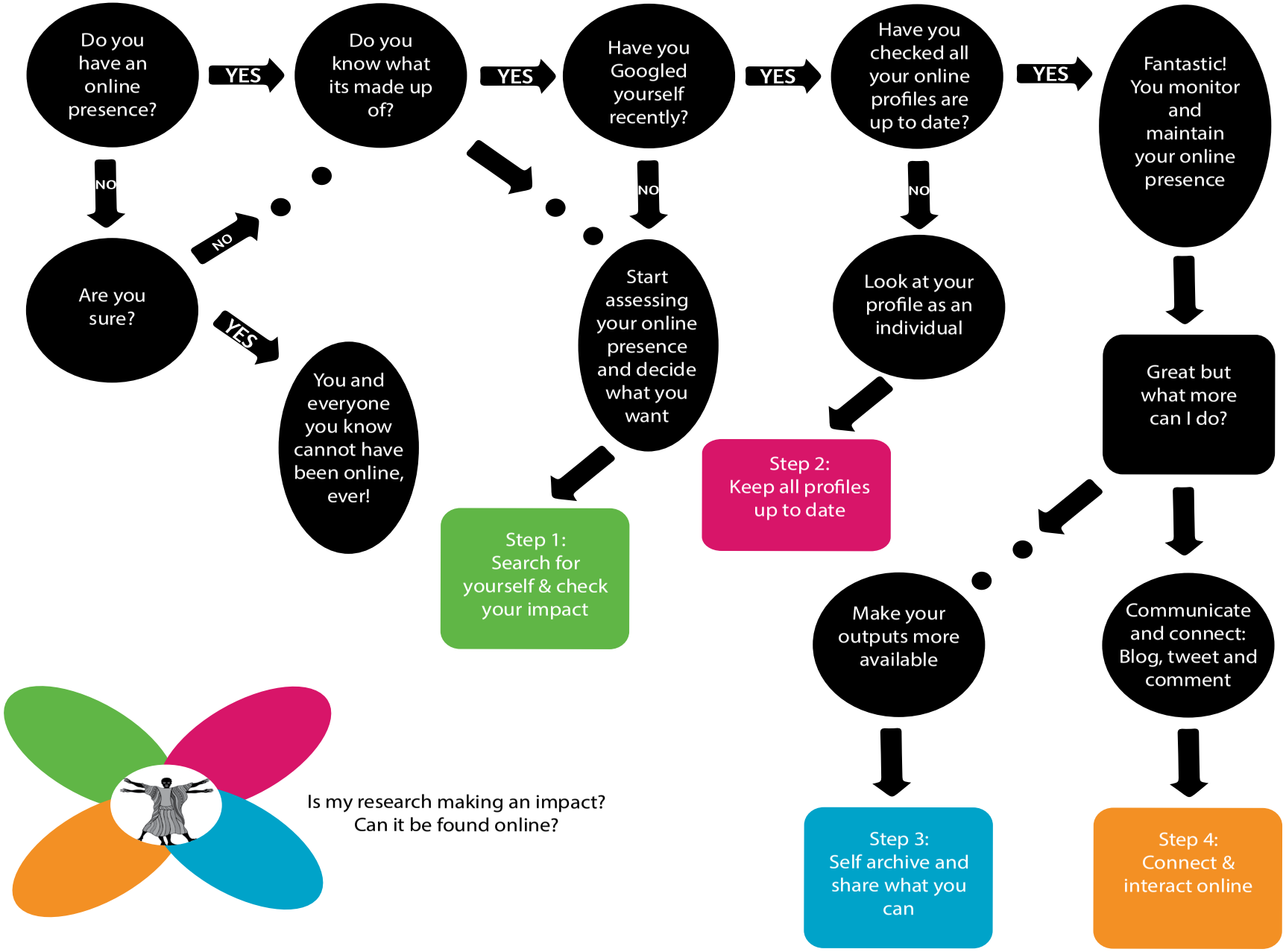
CONCLUSION

If you've made it this far, congratulations and thanks for persevering. Hopefully this online presence guide has at the very least given you a better idea how to assess and potentially improve your online presence as well as introduced you to a few tools that can help you along the way to your Online Presence 2.0.

This is a growing area of activity, so we are keeping a list of resources on the OpenUCT Delicious account: http://www.delicious.com/openuct/onlinepresence. All relevant links are tagged 'Online Presence'. We will continue to add to this list as we come across interesting resources. If you know of a resource that would be beneficial to others, please let us know so we can include it. Or better still, start your own list on Delicious or elsewhere.

To end at the beginning: there is no single solution, so find an approach to your online presence that works best for you. After all, it is your presence and representation out there.

A guide for academics: Four steps to improving your online presence



Is my research making an impact?
Can it be found online?