Finding Influential journals: Altmetric Explorer

Altmetrics are designed to help track online attention surrounding published research. Altmetric Explorer monitors a variety of online sources and tracks any instances where a research output is mentioned, shared or discussed. The sources tracked include:

- news outlets
- scholarly blogs
- policy documents
- patents
- social media
- post-publication peer review services
- Mendeley
- Citations from the Dimensions database

This data can be used to complement citation metrics and can help to give a richer picture of the impact, reach or influence of research, both within the academic community and beyond.

Altmetric Explorer can be used to identify journals which publish research receiving a high number of mentions.

Search for Altmetric Explorer on the University webpages or via StarPlus. Once on the Library's Altmetric Explorer page (www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/cdfiles/altmetex), click Connect to Altmetric Explorer

You may be asked to sign in or register – click Continue as a Guest for now (registering allows you to save reports but isn’t necessary to use Altmetric Explorer)
By default, Altmetric Explorer shows only mentions relating to University of Sheffield research outputs. However, if you want to explore research from across the world, click on 'Edit Search' and select 'Full Altmetric database'. You will then have access to altmetric data on millions of research papers, conference papers, books and more.

To search for research outputs relating to your subject area, you can either use the Keywords search to look for topics you’re interested in, or use the Subjects box to search using pre-defined subject categories. When you’re happy with your search, click 'Run Search'.

Once you’ve run a search Altmetric Explorer will give you an overview of the research articles that have generated the most mentions. Click on the journals tab at the top of the page to see these mentions aggregated by journal title. This will bring up a list of journals, ranked in order of the number of mentions they have received. You can re-sort this list according to the source of these mentions - for example if you wanted to see the journal which has published articles which receive a lot of mentions in policy documents, click 'Policy Mentions'.
A large amount of attention doesn’t necessarily tell us anything about the quality of research. For example, some research may receive lots of (negative) attention due to controversial claims, or because they have a ‘click-bait’ style headline. Fortunately, Altmetric Explorer allows you to explore mentions in context so you can check for yourself. Clicking on the title of a journal will bring up a list of papers published in that journal, sorted in order of the number of mentions. Clicking on any of these articles to explore the actual news stories, tweets and other online mentions received by a paper and read what people are saying about the research.

Remember it is important to recognise that no single metric can give the full picture when it comes to assessing research, so altmetrics should always be used in conjunction with other quantitative and qualitative measures.