

Author perspectives on research visibility and impact

Helena Francke¹, Camilla Lindelöw² & Lisa Olsson³

¹ University of Borås, Sweden, helena.francke@hb.se

² National Library of Sweden, Camilla.Lindelow@kb.se

³ Stockholm University, Sweden, lisa.olsson@su.se

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Focus

Background → Researchers in all disciplines share their work with others (Tenopir et al., 2016), both to further research and because publications build their reputation (Jamali et al., 2016). Sharing is also linked to new forms of metrics and rankings to indicate visibility and impact. However, there are still disciplinary and national differences (Hammarfelt & Haddow, 2018). A large proportion of authors in our study name open access as important because it increases a publication's visibility, potential to access it, downloads and/or social and scientific impact (Olsson et al., 2018).

Objective → This study investigates how authors publishing articles open access through an offset agreement reason about how they **make their articles visible**, **track the attention** their articles get, and how they view **impact measures**.

Visibility

Will you take any steps to ensure that more people find and read your article? If so, what?

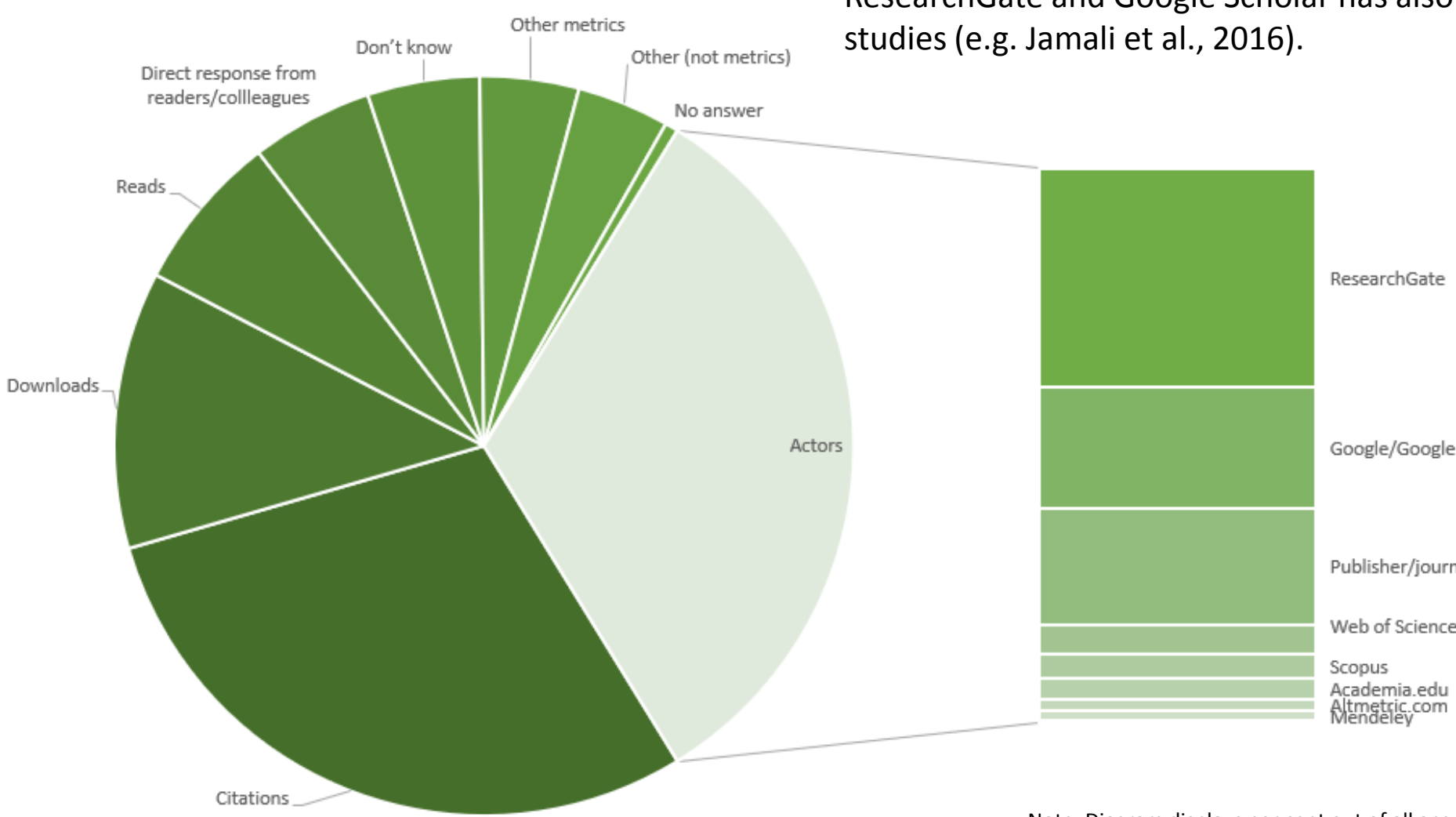
Articles are publicized or shared through **parallel publishing**, such as on the researcher's or group's web site, in a repository or through an SNS (e.g. ResearchGate or Academia.edu). Many distribute the work to their **colleagues** through e-mail, conferences, presentations, and general or academic social media. A fair share (20 %) state they **will not publicize** the article. These answers indicate a much stronger role for social media than in the study by Tenopir et al. (2016), which focused on sharing, although e-mail is a popular distribution channel in both studies.



Attention

How do you know what attention your article gets once it is published?

Citations is the most common answer by far (55 % of respondents), along with mentions of providers of citation metrics such as Google Scholar (12 %) and Web of Science (3 %). Many mention Research Gate (24 %), which may provide citation numbers but also altmetrics. **Altmetrics**, such as downloads (23 %) and reads (13 %), are highlighted. Publisher/journal statistics (13 %) are mentioned as important sources of both citations and altmetrics. **Direct response from colleagues** (10 %) is also a source for soliciting attention. The popularity of ResearchGate and Google Scholar has also been shown in other studies (e.g. Jamali et al., 2016).



Note: Diagram displays per cent out of all answers, not out of respondents. It is not possible to map one specific action to one actor.

Study

Results presented here are based on a survey of 375 corresponding authors whose publications have been published open access as part of the Springer Compact agreement between Bibsam and Springer Nature 2016-2018. A questionnaire (Francke, 2018), active between Feb. 20, 2017 and June 28, 2018, gathered author attitudes, experiences, awareness and suggestions in relation to the Springer Compact agreement. This work builds on three of the questions. Free-text answers have been coded and per cent are of number of respondents to the question. Respondents were fairly evenly distributed between health sciences, biosciences, natural sciences, engineering and social sciences & humanities.

Impact

What measures (existing or not yet existing) do you suggest is best for assessing the impact of your research?

Respondents were asked to indicate which suggested forms of impact they found best. Traditional forms of assessing impact, such as **citations and peer review**, are still highly valued. These are measures which indicate research being appraised or applied (Haustein et al., 2016), often through engaging with the research qualitatively. Some forms of **altmetrics** were also selected, exemplifying research being accessed or appraised (Haustein et al., 2016). These answers mirror those about attention. Finally, various measures indicating **societal impact** were selected, which also generally are based on applying the research. Free-text answers pointed to the **complexity** of the issue:

"There is no good way, all measurements are skewed and flawed in some way and the only way to get a somewhat accurate picture is to combine all ways of counting impact." (Engineer)

"In the case of extreme impact the article changes the field (which is not easily measured directly by any of the above examples)." (Humanist)

| | Impact measure | % |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|----|
| Traditional | Citations | 86 |
| | Downloads | 62 |
| | Impact on society | 38 |
| Altmetrics | JIF | 29 |
| | Peer review | 28 |
| Societal impact | Used in education | 26 |
| | Shares in social media | 21 |
| | Mentions in media | 21 |
| | According to plan/application | 9 |

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