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Altmetric for Books: Informing commissioning and data-driven decisions

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Altmetric for Books: Informing commissioning and data-driven decisions

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Michigan Publishing | University of Michigan Libraries
Who we are:

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University of Michigan Library

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University of Michigan Press
The prompt: Focus on how Altmetric data for books can be used by editorial teams to make data-driven decisions.
How editors track engagement with monographs:

- Sales
- Awards
- Reviews
- Course adoptions
- Usage data: Google Analytics, data from aggregator platforms such as Project Muse, JSTOR, EBSCO, etc.
- ....Altmetric data?
How editors track emerging topics & scholars

- CONFERENCES
- Keeping up with new literature in the field
- Meetings, conversations, word-of-mouth
- Workshops
- Series editors (or journal editors, if applicable)
- Establishing and building on reputation of press & list
What can Altmetric data contribute to acquisitions work?
Tracking Altmetric engagement data for any given recently published title and using that data to inform strategy about what to acquire in the future.

What's not really working (for us) (right now):
Why not?

TIME is the most meaningful factor in all of this:

- Meaningful attention takes a long time to communicate
- Books take a long time to acquire and publish
- Insufficient differentiation among books? The most salient variable in terms of how much engagement they have, and which other books have comparable, is when they were published.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOOCs</td>
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<td>December 2018</td>
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<td>Promissory Notes</td>
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<td>Women's Bookscapes in Early Modern Britain</td>
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<td>The Rise of the African Novel</td>
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<td>Autistic Disturbances</td>
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<td>The Politics of Millennials</td>
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<td>Victorian Bestseller</td>
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<td>Robert Hayden in Verse</td>
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<td>Sites of Translation</td>
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<td>A World of Fiction</td>
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<td>Anatomy of a Civil War</td>
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<td>Politics Over Process</td>
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<td>Gendered Vulnerability</td>
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<td>Stamping American Memory</td>
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<td>The Sound of Listening</td>
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<td>December 2017</td>
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<td>Textures of Mourning</td>
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<td>December 2017</td>
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What seems to be working:

Identifying timelessness. Altmetric data gives us valuable insights into how deep backlist titles continue to have an active, engaged life on the web. Especially interesting to our editors: representation on syllabi!
The Aeneid
Book, December 1994
1,327 syllabi mentions

Simulacra and Simulation
Book, December 1993
288 syllabi mentions

The life of Charlemagne
Book, December 1959
212 syllabi mentions

Secret history
Book, December 1960
178 syllabi mentions

The power of images in the Age of Augustus
Book, December 1987
153 syllabi mentions

Information and legislative organization
Book, December 1991
104 syllabi mentions

Bad Boys
Book, December 1999
67 syllabi mentions

Academic writing for graduate students: essential tasks and skills
Book, December 2003
55 syllabi mentions

Manifestoes of Surrealism
Book, December 1968
55 syllabi mentions

Paradigms and Sand Castles
Book, December 2002
52 syllabi mentions

Space in performance: making meaning in the theatre
Book, December 1998
51 syllabi mentions

The puzzle of judicial behavior
Book, December 1996
50 syllabi mentions

Of Two Minds
Book, December 1995
49 syllabi mentions

Galileo, science, and the church
Book, December 1970
48 syllabi mentions

Analyzing performance: theater, dance, and film
Book, December 2002
41 syllabi mentions

Increasing returns and path dependence in the economy
Book, December 1993
13 syllabi mentions

The feminist spectator as critic
Book, December 1990
11 syllabi mentions

Public opinion and American foreign policy
Book, December 2003
11 syllabi mentions
Looking beyond Altmetric data on our own books--making use of the Altmetric Explorer to, well, explore what is getting attention in our disciplinary areas of strength.

What we haven't tried -- yet!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Article in</th>
<th>Publication Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science Denial Across the Political Divide</td>
<td>Social Psychological and Personality Science</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
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<td>Exposure to opposing views on social media can increase political polarization</td>
<td>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
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<td>The Partisan Brain: An Identity-Based Model of Political Belief</td>
<td>Trends in Cognitive Sciences</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
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<td>The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform...</td>
<td>American Journal of Political Science</td>
<td>April 2011</td>
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<td>Gendered Citation Patterns across Political Science and Social Science...</td>
<td>Political Analysis</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
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<td>Gender Bias in Student Evaluations</td>
<td>PS, Political Science &amp; Politics</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
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<td>Explaining the Trump Vote: The Effect of Racist Resentment and Anti-Immigrant...</td>
<td>PS, Political Science &amp; Politics</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutralizing the Effect of Political Worldviews by Communicating Scientific...</td>
<td>Science Communication</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does Media Coverage Drive Public Does Public Support for...</td>
<td>British Journal of Political Science</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The effect of partisanship and policy close family ties</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>The science of being 'nice': how power from compassion</td>
<td>The Conversation</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion Elites</td>
<td>American Political Science Review</td>
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Altmetrics can help book publishers find interest in backlist titles, which can inform promotional strategies.

Not all altmetrics are equally valuable to university presses. The most valuable data are: monographs mentioned in syllabi, citations in public policy documents and social media discussions.

Journals are well-positioned to take advantage of altmetrics as journals have faster publication times, when compared to monographs, and journal platforms are designed in a way that makes it relatively easy to track altmetrics.

Last, but definitely not least: Good metadata is critical, and in the final section of the paper we are proposing some best practices for sharing metadata in a press website.

Learning from Altmetric for University Presses - results from a joint pilot
Conclusions

- **Monographs are still slow.** Even though Altmetric data can accumulate more quickly than citations, meaningful data accumulates too slowly, and books take too long to publish, for engagement with any given title to inform the next strategic acquisitions decision.

- **Altmetric data can signal timelessness/endurance.** Altmetric data, amazingly, tells us a lot about ongoing use of and engagement with deep backlist titles that perhaps we ought to pay some attention to!

- **There’s value to be mined well beyond data about the books you publish.** We could be doing more with Altmetric Explorer to supplement what acquisitions editors already do to track emerging trends and scholars. But we haven’t really tried this yet.