

How social are ornithologists?



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The publication of science is surely meaningless if it isn't read. Gone are the days when researchers would publish and hope that someone finds, reads and cites their research. Scientists can now promote their own work and societies and journals can publicise their authors' papers and this is made all the easier with the advancement of online and mobile technologies and social tools for engagement.

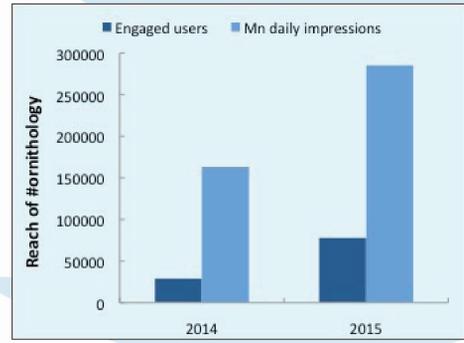
The BOU and social media

The British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) is an international society whose aim is to promote ornithology. We do this by publishing our international journal of avian science, IBIS, by hosting international conferences, and now via social media.

Social media use has grown exponentially in recent years and in ornithology, there is increasing awareness of the benefits of social media use for research from promoting published papers through to engaging amateur ornithologists in citizen science projects.

#ornithology on Twitter

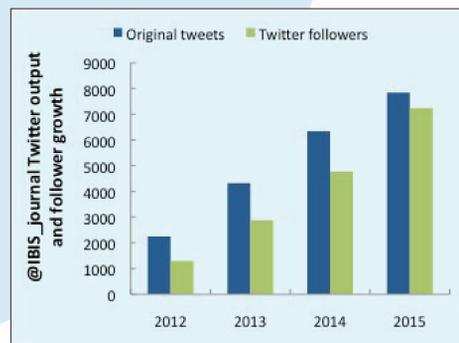
Twitter uses hashtags (#) to group related posts and #ornithology is growing rapidly.



@IBIS_journal on Twitter

The BOU has used social media, primarily Twitter, to build an online community promoting published articles/research, engaging ornithologists, driving news, information exchange, and collaboration.

- 94% of tweets link to online papers
- 6% of tweets link to popular content
- >300% increase in web traffic from social media output (2012 to 2015)

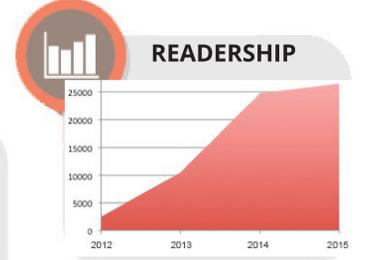


Blogging with the BOU

PROMOTE
Blogs provide accessible online content for you to promote on social media platforms to drive people to your paper and/or research

CONTENT
Lay summaries of science papers make your work more accessible both within and outside your own research community

ALTMETRICS
Of all the social media tools blogs contribute the most points to your published paper's Altmetric Attention score



Science blogging is booming and we have increased our blog output from just 6 posts in 2012 to 42 in 2015
#theBOUblog @ bou.org.uk/blog

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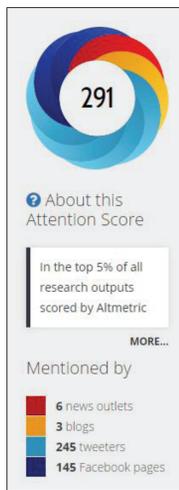


IBIS is partnered with Altmetric (@altmetric) and every paper receives an Altmetric Attention Score based on the online attention that paper has generated.

Individual authors, publishers and societies should promote their own work to increase the audience reached which will in turn drive online attention of their published papers.

A good example of this is Arjun Amar's (@arjundevamar) IBIS paper – see Altmetric summary panel right. By targeted tweeting by the author and the BOU, this paper was widely picked up and shared across social media platforms, blogs and news articles that resulted in this paper being the top Altmetric ranked paper in IBIS for both 2014 and 2015.

The BOU promotes online ornithology content from any journal, and in 2014, 96% of tweets and posts linked directly to online research papers and the BOU's social media activity contributed 75–95% and 55–85% of the Altmetric scores for ornithology journals with and without their own social media accounts respectively.



Research assessment

In the UK, the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) formally assessed the impact of academic research. The use of social media by universities was evident in the institutional statements and case studies submitted to this assessment and it is entirely likely that institutes will make widespread use of alternative metric scores in future REF assessments.

Citizen science and collaboration

Social media provides opportunities to engage with others in order to get them to contribute to your research directly by providing data or new collaborations. See our free-to-view paper to see more about these aspects of social media engagement.

Dudley, S.P. & Smart, J. 2016. How social are ornithologists?

IBIS. doi: 10.1111/ibi.12403



The RSPB Centre for Conservation Science's use of Altmetric data

REVIEW

An independent review rated our science as outstanding but said we needed to be better at telling the world about the science that we do

PROMOTION

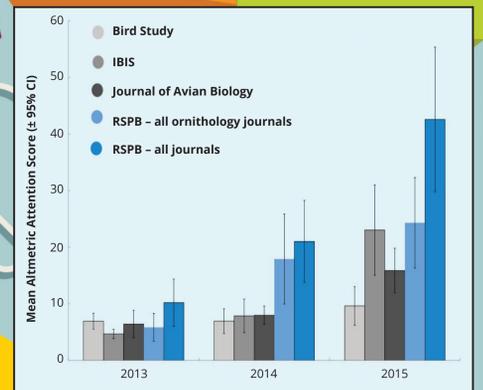
In 2014, we began improving our science communication, using twitter, blogs and our own website, assisted by a science communication expert

ANALYSIS

Altmetrics allow us to measure how effective our science communication has been in engaging audiences and informing people about RSPB science

RESULTS

The mean Altmetric Attention Score for RSPB papers is increasing more rapidly than those in ornithology journals



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