



# **Self-marketing and research communication**

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# Background: scope and focus

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- Largely talking about strategies/activities aimed at promoting one's career and specialism & building a **reputation** in today's 'fast-changing', increasingly competitive digital environment.
- Reputation is typically associated with **scholarly communications** talking about journals and (now) **social media** and because fixated about metrics (citations and, now, altmetrics).
- Elephant in the room not so much social media, but **trust/trustworthiness**, because that is supposedly what science and scholarship is all about.
- Fortunately know a lot about reputation, scholarly communications, social media and trust

*“Strong evidence that the scholarly world is being driven and governed by algorithms; a (high) metric-driven culture, which is standardising scholarly behaviour”*

# Take note: lots of background noise and change

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- Digital transition and disintermediation (DIY; we are all librarians now)
- Information explosion and overload: more sources, channels, platforms, players (coping mechanisms; don't even know whose information it is anymore)
- Dramatic changes in information behaviour (horizontal; fast information). Then there is the born digital (Google Generation)
- Open access (borderless)
- Mobile information (on the move, social)

*“What Marshall McLuhan called 'the Gutenberg galaxy' - that universe of linear exposition, quiet contemplation, disciplined reading and study - is imploding, and we don't know if what will replace it will be better or worse. But at least you can find the Wikipedia entry for 'Gutenberg galaxy' in 0.34 seconds”*

# The evidence base

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Three research projects (in reverse chronological order<sup>1</sup>) :

***1. Analysis of emerging reputation mechanisms for scholars*** (2014-2015). Funded by EC. Interviews, focus groups, questionnaire. 400+ EU academics. All disciplines.

***2. Trust and authority in scholarly communications in the light of the digital transition.*** (2012-2013). Funded by Alfred P Sloan Foundation. Interviews, focus groups, questionnaire and log analysis. 4000+ international researchers, science and social sciences.

***3. Social media use in the research workflow.*** (2010-2011). Funded by Charleston Observatory. Questionnaire survey. 2500 international researchers. All disciplines.

*“Researchers moved inexorably from a print-based system to digital system, but not significantly changed way decide what to trust or how to build reputation”*



**Reputation and scholarly activities**

# Could not be a more important scholarly topic to deal with

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*The main currency for the scholar is not power, as it is for the politician, or wealth, as it is for the businessman, but reputation (Becher, 1989).*

It is therefore not a topic to be dealt with superficially so you will see we looked under the bonnet\*

The EC would like to change the paradigm

Going to start with this project because of its currency and because it provides the necessary framework

# Background

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- Scholarly reputational system in EC not fit for purpose given digital transition (nor is its universities)
- Conventional indicators fall short in reflecting scholar's reputation & impact. Spotlight rests on one activity, one particular manifestation of that activity and one group (academic researchers).
- Digital and Web 2.0 should change all that:
  - a) given rise to new formats for conducting, publishing and disseminating science and research (and teaching);
  - b) ushered in increasing numbers of 'actors' and new types of actors (free-lance scientists, innovators, citizen researchers);
  - c) introduces new ways of measuring and reputational platforms;
  - d) impact more easily measured?
  - e) and reputation is now more public, global and open.
- With new forms of working & new actors measuring scientific reputation becomes a new challenge and there is a need to see what is going on.

## EC take

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- *The investigation of emerging reputation mechanisms for scholars can be seen as part and parcel of the powerful, Europe-wide initiatives for reforms in the Higher Education system, as reflected, most recently, in the European Commission's modernisation agenda. Proceeding from the notion that in the globalised, competitive, Science 2.0 driven, knowledge-based society of today the future hinges on research, innovation and education for all, these initiatives call for a redefinition and reconstruction of the academic enterprise and the roles of its principal stakeholders, the Higher Education institutions and the scholars they employ. In this context, focussing on the quest for reputation, indubitably a central pursuit of the scientific endeavour on both the individual and the institutional level.*

# Structure and scope of project

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Three stages, each feeding next:

1. Literature review which helped defined range of scholarly activities to provide project's conceptual framework; various tasks that scholars/researchers undertake, both online and offline, that do/might contribute towards building reputation\*
2. State of the art mapping of online platforms, such as ResearchGate, that offer 'reputational mechanisms' for scholars – map against the model of scholarly activities to see what is and what is not offered and look for novel, successful approaches
3. Case studies. Demonstrate how do emerging reputation mechanisms work from the scholars', institutions' and platform's point of view

We really need to discuss reputation in the broad and possibly redefine it

# Audit and categorisation of scholarly activities

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- **The scholarship of research** (discovery): Individually or collaboratively conducting, disseminating and evaluating research
- **The scholarship of integration**, the arraying of extant knowledge, often within a wider, cross-disciplinary context (i.e. literature reviews, textbooks, inter- or multi-disciplinary projects)
- **The scholarship of application**, the application of disciplinary knowledge and skill to societal/practical problems (i.e. consultancy for industry or government)
- **The scholarship of teaching**, the conveying of the human store of knowledge to new generations
- **The scholarship of co-creation**, participating in scholarly research with the public (Citizen Science projects, for example)

[not a lot of support for management as a scholarly activity in the literature]

# The scholarship of research: 24 discrete activities identified

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- Identifying a researchable topic
- Obtaining funding (blue-chip; alternative mechanisms for – crowdfunding)
- Planning a research project
- Building upon previous knowledge
- Releasing data to the scholarly community
- Releasing methodologies, research tools and protocols to the scholarly community
- Disseminating research results formally via traditional scholarly channels
- Disseminating research results informally via active participation in conferences
- Disseminating research results informally via social media
- Peer reviewing
- Monitoring one's impact

# The reputational rewards and costs of the scholarship of research

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- Research and publications based reputation is the yardstick by which scholarly success is measured
- Reputation is not merely a by-product of the research process, but one of its three main outcomes along with publications and impact
- Achieving a good reputation leads to career related rewards, funding, and further research and collaboration opportunities (and jobs)

However:

- Reputation-wise too, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer (the Matthew effect). And this is where the early career researcher feels it – locked out from the members club

## **And in the age of Science 2.0\*?**

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- In today's more open and democratised scholarly environment the Matthew effect dictated vicious circle is more easily broken. More open and more ways in. Can fast track development
- The social media afford possibilities for congregating in a common virtual area in order to share work, ideas and experiences and can bring about greater scholarly visibility
- Novel platforms, techniques and metrics can compliment more traditional ways of reputation building for a synergetic effect. Promotional values of social media impact on conventional metrics

# The scholarship of integration: 10 discrete activities defined

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- Producing a literature review/textbook via traditional strategies
- Producing an integrative research output
- Producing an integrative, often multi- or inter-disciplinary research output collaboratively
- Producing Open Education Resources (OER)

The integrative mode of scholarship combines perspectives, information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories, more often than not from two or more disciplines, so as to achieve a wide-ranging exploration of problems from novel perspectives

# The reputational rewards and costs of the scholarship of integration

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- Often necessitates cross-disciplinary collaboration, which improves visibility\* in wider scientific community, but:
  - As criteria of scholarly excellence essentially based on disciplinary standards, the traditional academic career incentives do not stimulate integrative research
  - Engaging in more time-consuming mode of integrative research may bring on a reputation hindering ‘production penalty’\*\*

With academic values and practices tending to be very much discipline-specific, it takes more time and effort for scientists trained in disparate disciplines to work together.

## **And in the age of Science 2.0?**

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- Harnessing today's social-media afforded more 'lightweight', but popular forms of communication may help overcome disciplinary boundaries. Good cross disciplinary vehicles and web (and online communities) is blowing up disciplinary boundaries.
- Information sharing networks may often yield 'harder to count', but equally important – albeit different – outputs, such as public policy initiatives or popular media placements. However, from a reputation building angle these are under-appreciated and unrewarded within today's academy.

# The scholarship of application: 10 discrete activities identified

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- Identifying a researchable topic focussing on practical problems experienced by public/practitioner audiences or in organisational/industrial settings
- Planning a research project focussing on practical problems experienced by public or practitioner audiences
- Producing an application oriented research output
- Producing an application oriented research output through a PPSR (public participation in scientific research) project
- Participating in the commercialisation of one's inventions/discoveries (for example, by filing patents)
- Serving industry or government as an external consultant
- Popularising scientific knowledge

# The reputational rewards and costs of the scholarship of application

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- Brings about both scholarly and public visibility and impacts on both the progress of knowledge and the progress of society.
- Fulfilling leadership roles in one's professional/ disciplinary community contributes to networking, scholarly visibility and the achieving of peer esteem
- Linking theory to practice, the scholarship of application sees scholars partnering with various stakeholders (e.g. practitioners, policymakers, community leaders) to apply theory and research-based insights to designing practical solutions to intractable social problems. Seen to be a very good thing.
- Loosely related with 'impact' (UK REF)

However:

- Where the application-oriented activity cannot be readily translated into conventional research outputs (i.e. journal articles), the reputational price to be paid may arguably be seen as too high

## **And in the age of Science 2.0?**

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- With social media rendering the boundaries of the scientific community more porous, lay experts are increasingly drawn into the scholarly net; so greater opportunities.
- From a reputational point of view, this serves to open the entire process of research to the scrutiny of public collaborators and audiences, which contributes significantly to the achieving of public visibility and societal impact, and hence - scholarly prestige

# **The scholarship of teaching: 9 discrete activities identified**

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- Designing a course/learning programme
- Producing and delivering a teacher focussed, online, institution-based, either access controlled or freely accessible course/ learning programme
- Conducting a social networks based, participatory MOOC (massive open online course)
- Pursuing the Open-Notebook Science model in the classroom
- Tutoring/mentoring students on an individual basis
- Advancing learning theory through classroom research
- PhD supervision

# The reputational rewards and costs of the scholarship of teaching

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- With scholarship(s) of research steadfastly held to be most legitimate and rewarding form of the scientific pursuit, the reputational focus is inevitably away from teaching
- Still, teaching can bring about expert achievements-based eligibility for peer and student recognition and esteem, and for the potentially ensuing career-related rewards/ opportunities
- Also, when teaching is approached as a disciplinary- and pedagogical-knowledge based and peer-authorised undertaking, it can be just as conducive to reputational achievements as research
- Becoming less hidden as academe becomes more customer facing

# And in the age of Science 2.0?

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- If and when the actual teaching done is not confined to the four walls of the classroom, it can lead to enhanced scholarly and public visibility
- The prime example: social networks based, crowd-sourcing technologies enabled participatory MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), which afford vast and unlimited, globe-spanning visibility
- Rating systems possibly a revolutionary force

# The scholarship of co-creation: Activities

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- Participating as a consultant in a PPSR (public participation in scientific research) project
- Leading a Contributory/Collaborative PPSR (public participation in scientific research) project
- Collaborating in a Co-Created PPSR (public participation in scientific research) project
- Conducting a PPSR (public participation in scientific research) project in the classroom or in a web based course/learning programme

Defined as intentional collaborative endeavors between science researchers and public participants – including amateur experts, community members, scientists trained in other fields, and/or school students – aiming to generate new, science-based knowledge to address real-world problems. PPSR projects follow three models, according to the varying degrees of public participation in the scientific research process: contributory, collaborative and co-created PPSR projects.

# The reputational rewards and costs of the scholarship of co-creation

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- Science 2.0 affords possibilities for knowledge discovery and knowledge transmission to converge, have reputational potentials
- Arguably the most obvious instances of co-creation can be seen in the instances of public participation in scientific research (PPSR)
- PPSR projects, inviting as they do amateur experts and informed citizens to join the scholarly net, can bring about increased visibility for the scholar
- No less importantly, the scientific papers and societal publications such projects yield can serve to accrue for the scholar both scientific-achievements based eligibility for peer recognition and societal impact

# Scholarly reputation building - conclusions

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- Traditional research related activities - conducting research, collaborating in research, taking part in multidisciplinary project and especially publishing good articles in good journals, are seen to contribute most to reputation.
- A narrow/limited view of scholarly reputation building activities, but a pragmatic one: as long as criteria used to judge a successful scholar across the institutional, national and international levels centre upon research, excellence in other areas of scholarly work contributes little to a scholar's standing.
- Management/admin activities may represent an important part of a scholar's daily activities, but held to be least important for reputation building purposes at least on international level, less so on local level.
- Today's scholars construct, sustain and enhance their reputation against the backdrop of a shifting scholarly landscape, where the pursuit of science can become a more dynamic, open and participatory, but, at the same time, also a more tentative and uncertain activity
- Greater visibility afforded by transparent/open practices has advantages for reputation building, but it may prove to be a two-edged sword. E.G. a) The negative exposure which is often believed to result from making mistakes online (when you were younger and less wise); b) the sharing of in-progress work, which goes against the grain of established practices



Online platforms that offer 'reputational mechanisms' for scholars

# Aims

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- Scope on-line platforms which accommodate 'new' types of reputational mechanisms for scholars to:
  1. Understand what type of scholarly activities these platforms support (map against conceptual frame)
  2. Understand how the reputation is constructed within these platforms
- Identification of innovative approaches and opportunities (good practice)
- Reveal potential gaps and biases, e.g. are all scholarly activities measurable online; how reliable are scores?

## 23 emerging reputational platforms identified

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- Academia.edu
- Academici
- Bibsonomy
- Biomedexperts
- CourseTalk
- Dryad
- Edmodo
- Epernicus
- GitHub
- Kudos
- Impactstory
- LabFolder
- LabRoots
- LinkedIn
- Mendeley
- myExperiment
- MyNetResearch
- MyScienceWork
- PeerEvaluation
- Profology
- ResearchGate
- Scitable
- StackOverflow

# Scholarly activities supported

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- From **58** activities: **22** are **supported (but heavily skewed)**  
**36** are **not supported**
- Activities supported include
  - **16** research (activities related to releasing and disseminating research outputs especially well-supported)
  - **3** teaching
  - **2** application
  - **1** integration
  - **0** co-creation

# Conclusions

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- Wide range of platforms support scholarly activities although not many have features that can help build and assess reputation.
- The 'market' is in its infancy and fragmented. To determine scholarly reputation holistically have to examine around a dozen platforms and still not obtain a comprehensive picture. ResearchGate and ImpactStory are probably the most impressive. Kudos the most interesting.
- Clearly a bias toward research and within on showcasing and dissemination. Because it is where most scholars obtain their kudos. This market is quite mature with plenty of competition driving innovation.
- Teaching neglected. Many more services, such as CourseTalk, needed to review/rate courses and lecturers. Another idea is to provide academic 'genealogy' to see who has been who's student and develop scores based on this, for instance, by quantifying and measuring how influential an academic is by the number of students supervised and by how important/influential those students are now.
- Few platforms offer anything to the new actors; most are aimed at professional researchers and academics except citizen science platforms, such as Socientize, which does allow participation by the general public.
- Nevertheless, only about 5 years down the road and they are regarded as the future as we shall see, the seed corn, and already making waves



**User studies**

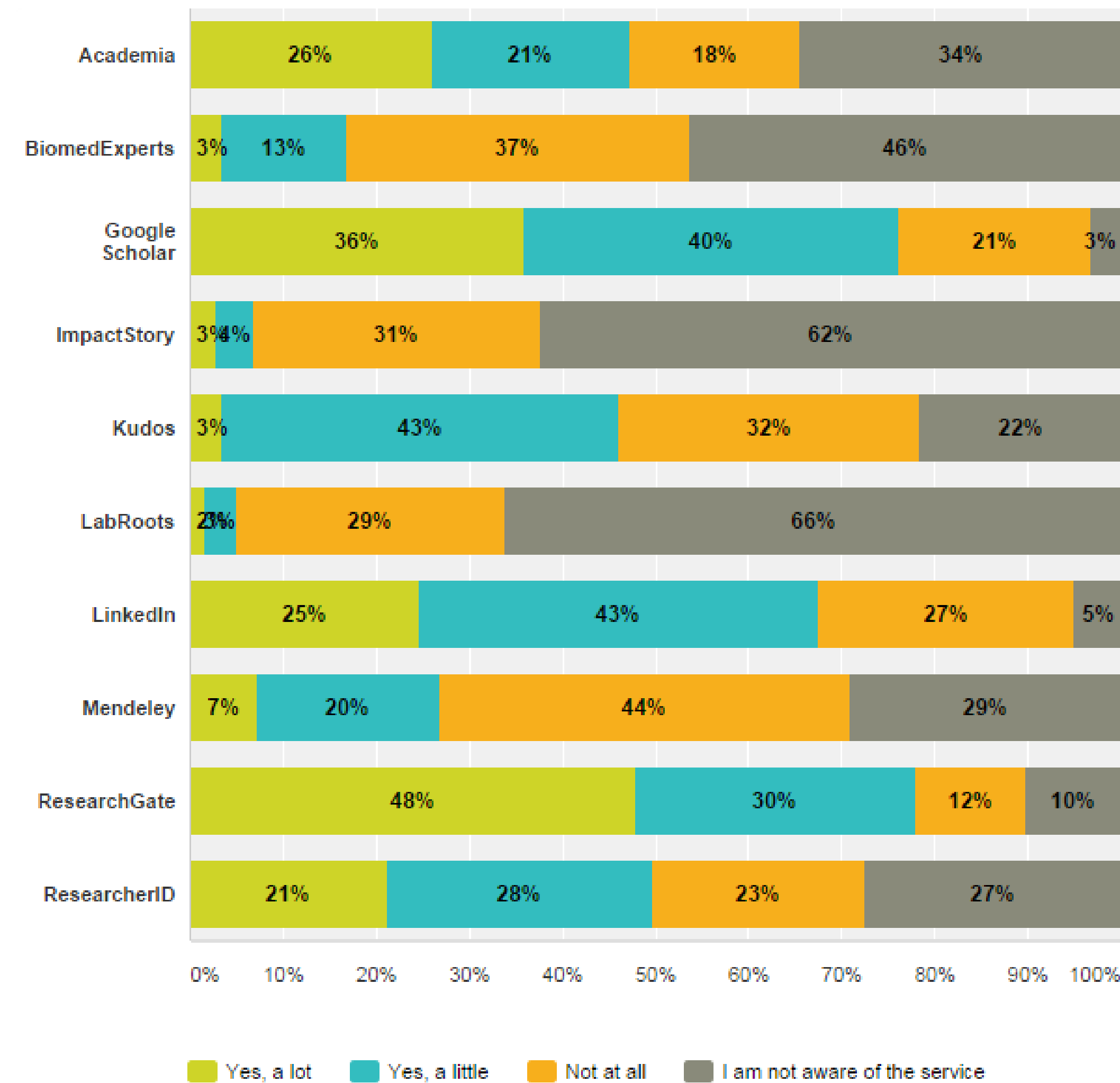
# Questionnaire survey of EC users

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**Q 1- Which activities contribute to your scholarly reputation?**  
**Q2- How important does your employer/institution regard each of these activities when assessing your performance?**

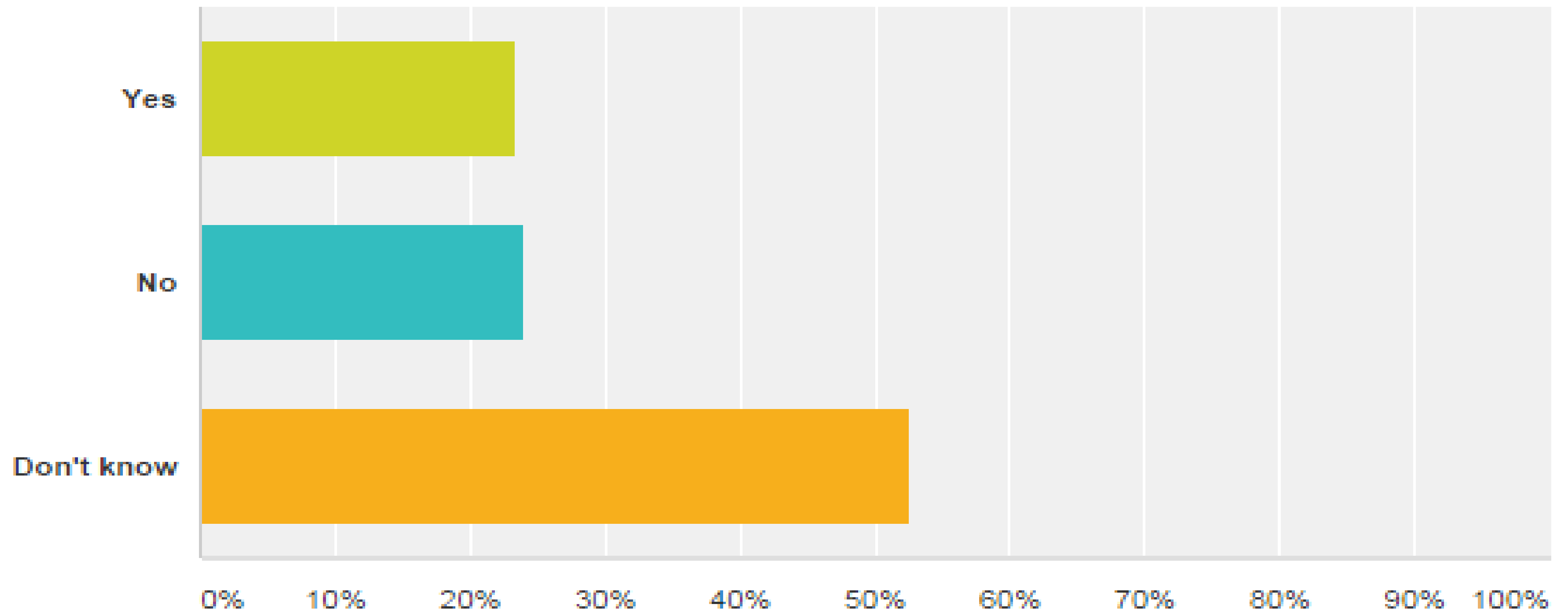


# Which web-services do you use to build and maintain a reputation and showcase your scholarly activities?



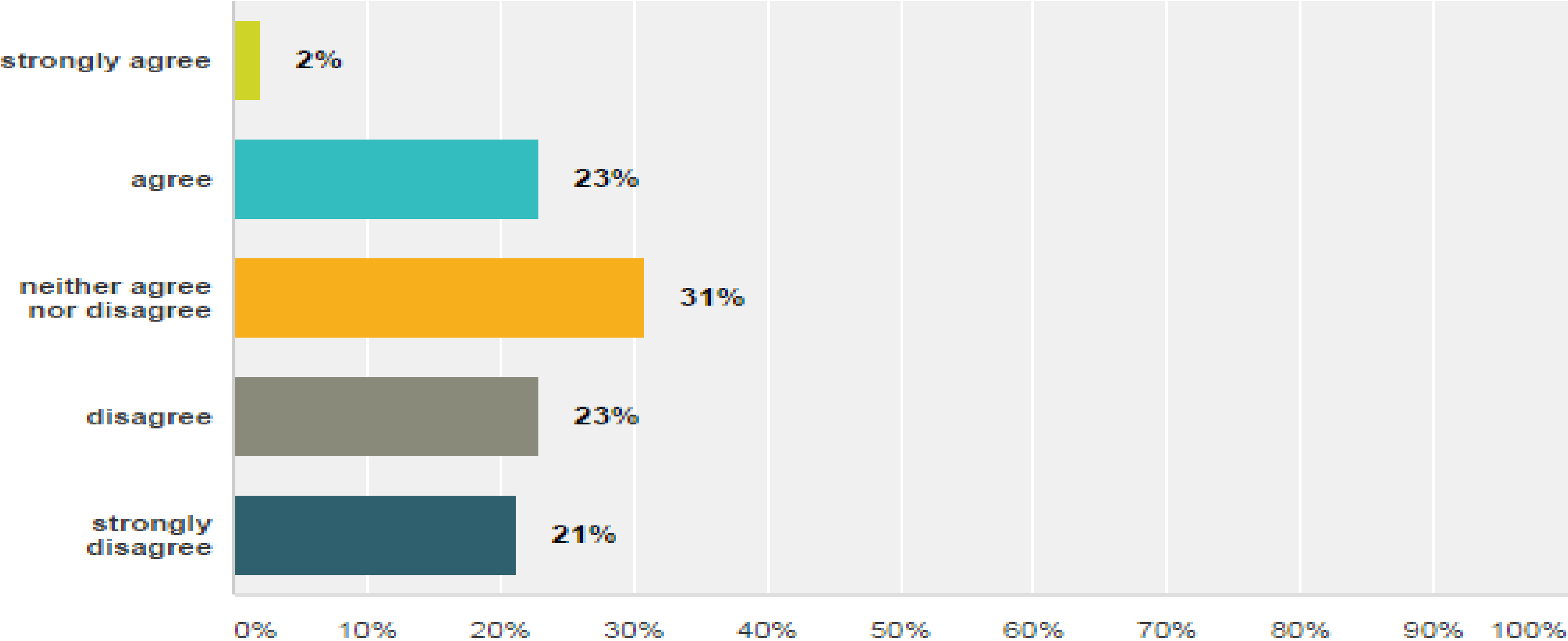
# Taken together are there any gaps or weaknesses in the web services that you use for scholarly reputation purposes?

Answered: 188 Skipped: 0



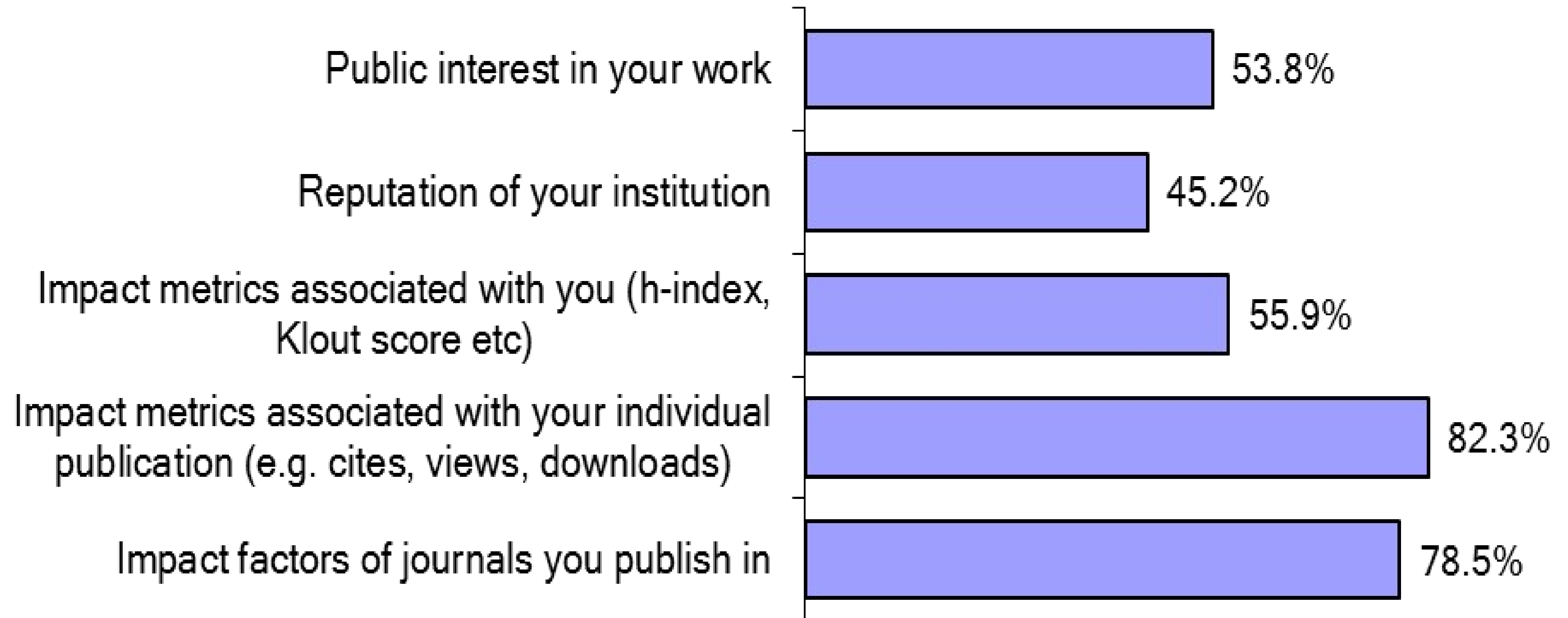
Should social media metrics (likes, tweets and data from Mendeley, Slideshare etc.) be counted towards your scholarly reputation?

Answered: 188 Skipped: 0



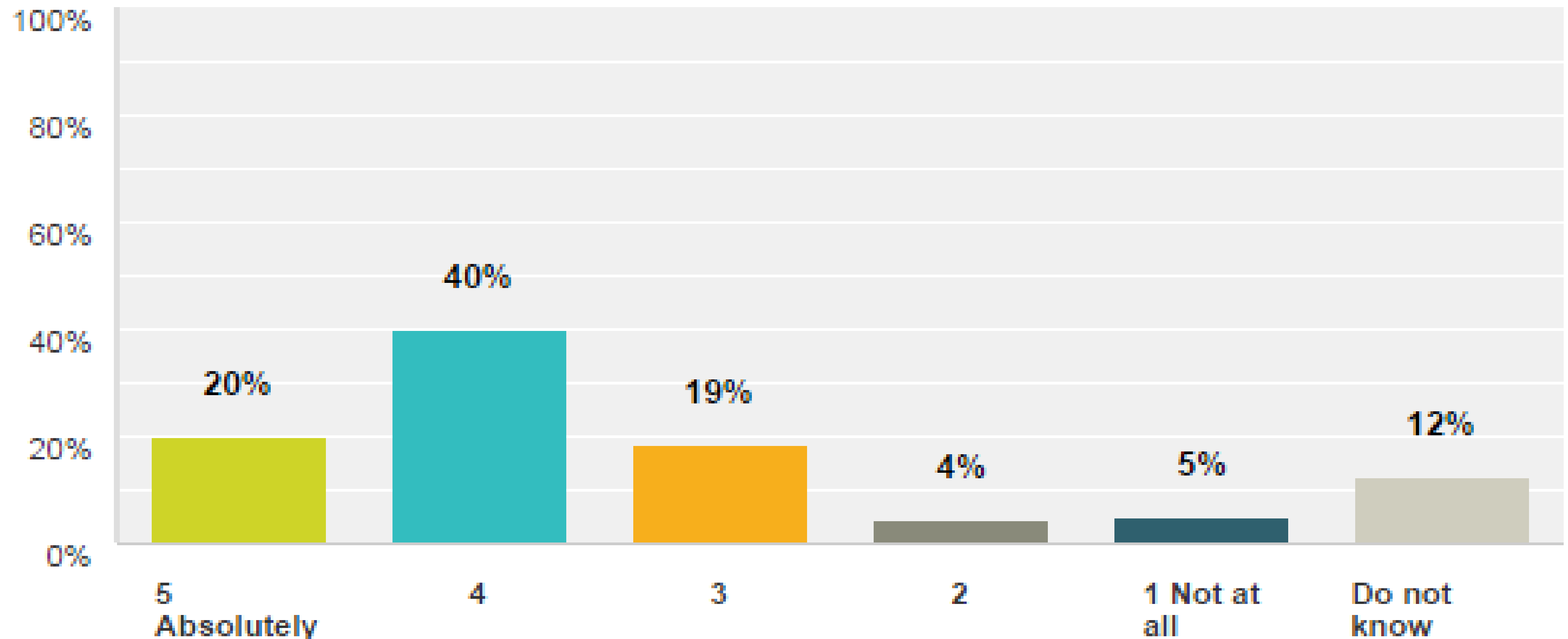
Which of the following do you consider more important than 'social metrics' for your reputation? Check as many as you want

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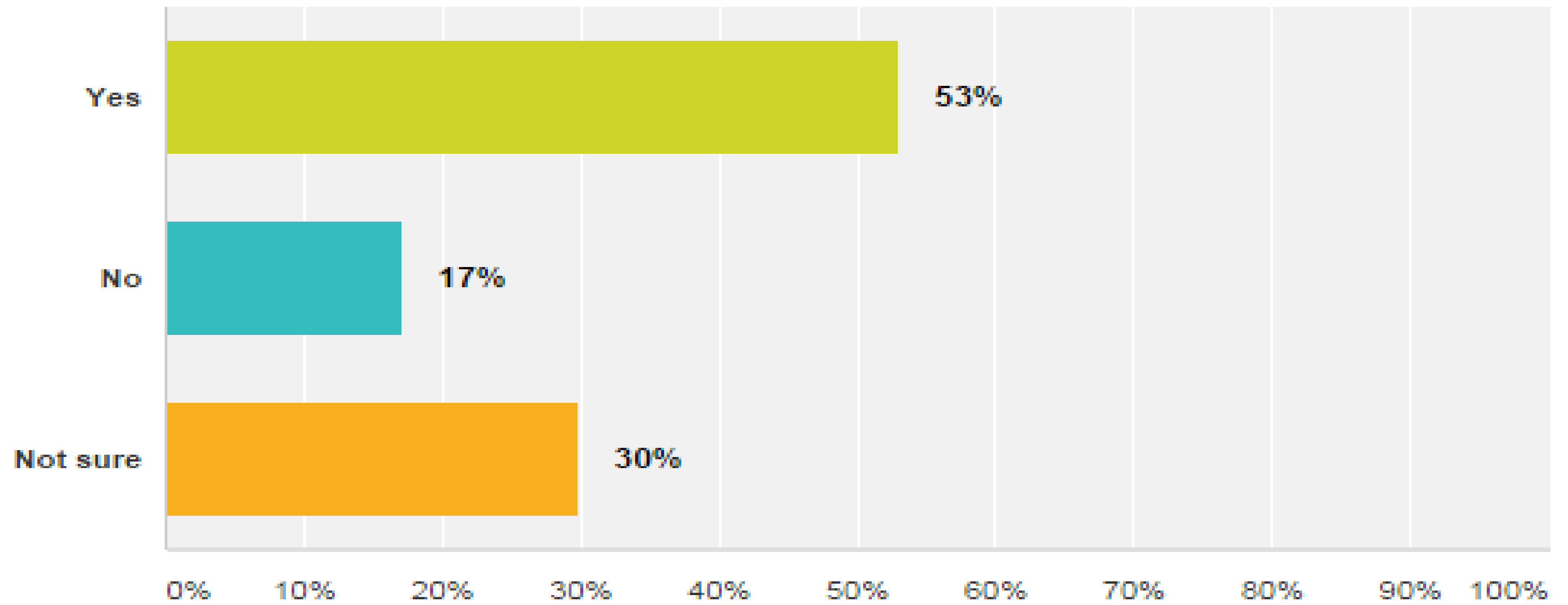
# Do you think 'reputational platforms' will become a more important force in the future concerning career development/progression?

Answered: 187 Skipped: 1



# Do you think that online services that help build, maintain and showcase scholarly reputation benefit young scholars more than established scholars?

Answered: 187 Skipped: 1



# Case studies conducted in Poland, Spain, France and Switzerland

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- Early days for EU academics as reputational platforms not making big waves. Do not see academic social networks as being important tools for the management of their academic reputation. Best known system is LinkedIn, followed by ResearchGate and Academia.edu.
- Appear staid in their behaviour and suspicious. Partly because see it as a commercialisation of science, partly because do not like the metrics (any metrics for that matter) and partly because see them upsetting the applecart (giving rise to 'multiplicity of voices').
- Knowledge about services low; even when used, services used lightly and passively and for reasons other than to reputation (more as a resource).
- Researchers really only 'actors' with management and support services, such as libraries, innocent bystanders. Leadership and guidance not forthcoming. And data from them not taken into account in assessment. Very odd because all universities pre-occupied with their image and national/global rank, but somehow senior management do not seem to link this to the reputation of individuals.
- Only lukewarm support for teaching and managerial work to be counted as reputational activities.
- Older professors do not see (often do not know) social networks as tools that can help build academic reputations. Younger ones know some networks and use them occasionally, but do not really engage with all their functions.

# Voices 1

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- *In theory, the university and the state, the benefactors of grants, should be the key reputational stakeholders, but in practice they do not seem to be involved at all. Polish universities, especially state-owned ones, are quite conservative when it comes to the implementation of information systems for evaluating academics.*
- *Old professors don't use social networks at all. They have a reputation as a result of becoming a professor; they therefore do not care about their reputation in the social networks. They have enough university power in their hands and they do not need to look 'cool'. They are also professors for life.*
- *Logic might suggest that the key actors are the young generation, but not necessarily so, because they are conformist. They apply all the rules forced on them by university authorities, who have no interest in reputational systems work of their academics.*

## Voices 2

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- *Big users mainly use platforms as a 'collective game' where they can play with members of their community (professional and academic) to gain visibility, esteem, recognition and reputation. Researchers are convinced that what is happening on these platforms contributes to a widening of their notoriety and reputation. These researchers are connected regularly and spend time posting content, downloading publications, updating their accounts, exchanging messages; in a word, interacting.*
- *The main reason preventing researchers from using reputational platforms are a lack of time. Researchers have very tight working schedules and find it difficult to find time to use these platforms "enough" or "fully". This situation holds true, even for researchers who are convinced of the usefulness and impact of these platforms. Another drawback to using reputational platforms lies in that they do not carry the weight and authority of 'official' places where reputation and recognition can be gained.*

# Conclusions

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- **Drag anchor.** Scholars only waking up to H-indexes and Impact Factors so might not want to change tack and Google Scholar, purveyor of H-indexes and citation counts, a popular reputational platform.
- Palpable sense of mistrust of the **social media** and what it might deliver in the way of metrics and that will stop a lot of scholars using reputational platforms, although the Kudos model of hitching them to conventional indicators might overcome some of the criticism.
- **Fears** in respect to main directions of travel for the reputational market. One school of thought believes that too much power should not be invested in one platform because of the sheer importance of reputation. Other school believes that having just a couple is the only way to: a) get widespread adoption; b) avoid the 'Balkanisation' of reputation, whereby scholars would pick the reputational system which shows them up best.
- Reputation is **international**, EU don't want to look like hippies
- The **best way forward** for EC would be via small scale 'seeding' experiments and evaluations. Main reason for believing this is because field young and emerging and should have freedom to develop before any interventions. However, it was also impressible and malleable and therefore there are nudging opportunities. So stakeholders should be moving into a laboratory stage of research lasting several years. Also any programme of research needs to take account of national diversity.

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# Interlude



**Trustworthiness and role of social media in scholarly communications**

# Sources of data

**Funding:** Alfred P Sloan Foundation (2013). Research questions:

1. How researchers assign and calibrate authority and trustworthiness to scholarly sources and channels used, cited and to disseminate their research; **scholars as consumers and producers**
2. Whether Google, **social media** and open access are having an impact on conventional practices of establishing authority and trustworthiness
3. Differences by age, nationality, type of institution, gender, subject

**Methods:** threw the lot at the topic – computer logs, focus groups, critical incident interviews and questionnaire. Big and robust evidence base on behaviour of thousands of researchers.

**Scope:** focus on US and UK, but international questionnaire.



# Personas

Researchers function as authors, editors, reviewers, citers and users of the literature. **Different trust judgments employed for each function.**

**Editors** thinking dominated by picture of themselves as information providers, people offering trustworthy content for others to trust. Police the system and largely like the way it works.

**Citation behaviour** much stricter, more focussed and more 'political' than user behaviour.

Researchers have **more freedom as to what they use** - can use blogs, OA etc. to their heart's content, but not cite them (thus place to look for chinks in the armour of established system).

**Publishing** is where the traditional system is whipping researcher into order – ranked peer reviewed journals for career progression



# Metrics and trust proxies (Impact Factors etc.) – a major force

- In a competitive academic world, where scholars are increasingly subjected to performance metrics (**algorithms**), consequence creativity and new ideas driven out by metric-driven culture.
- **Scientists unquestioning about merits** of metrics; social scientists **uneasy** but felt had no choice; humanities scholars felt **culturally uncomfortable** and alienated, but were part of it.
- However, early career researchers in social sciences/humanities thought themselves '**slaves**' to a **metric-based/journal focussed system**; adhere to rules to climb academic ladder but thought ladder broken. In marked contrast journals a manifestation of all that was wrong with scholarly communications (**a chink?**).
- **Altmetrics.** Making little headway with researchers. Most ignorant; those knowledgeable view them as dubious popularity indices that have little bearing on research. Social media mentions less an indicator of quality/credibility than usage.



# Impact and role of social media: the generalities

- Many researchers are engaged at least occasionally, and occasionally very much the keyword.
- Role mostly in usage, rarely in citing and publishing.
- Most critical and hesitant about trusting social media.
- Use the same standards to judge quality of social media as used for traditional sources (peer review/name of individual).
- Benefited most informal ('grey') scholarly communication and treated as such.
- However, personal networks and circles of trust are central to formal scholarly communication and made much easier to maintain by social media.



# Social media – the negatives

Only a minority – early career mainly, thought social media was more than **a side-show**

Lack of interest explained by **validity problems** but also other reasons:

1. Many researchers novices and antagonistic as a result;
2. No time to try out;
3. Put off by current HE climate, which favours peer review, journals and citation indices;
4. Informal language of social media unsuitable for scholarly discourse;
5. No measures by which content could be evaluated; altmetrics unfamiliar and seen as popularity, not quality, indices;
6. No benefits to it– it didn't help their career;
7. Intrinsic openness of social media carried with it the possibility that non-experts would be involved: this represented “noise”.



## Social media - the positives

Some researchers, mainly young and in social sciences, more positive and saw social media **valuable for**:

- a) Obtaining new ideas, stimulation and starting new 'conversations';
- b) Self-promotion of research and articles, books and conferences, which presented that research; especially in regard to public engagement;
- c) Passing around references (Twitter good at this);
- d) Increases citation (and usage) counts (even the negatives were interested in this!). Does this by giving increased digital visibility. But so few publications subject of social media.



# Citing social media

Pressure from supervisors to cite peer-reviewed articles. *You see interesting things elsewhere (i.e. social media) but you cannot use/cited them.*

*twitter not used as an information source: it would be like citing a conversation in the bar.*

Cited social media sources as ‘personal communications’

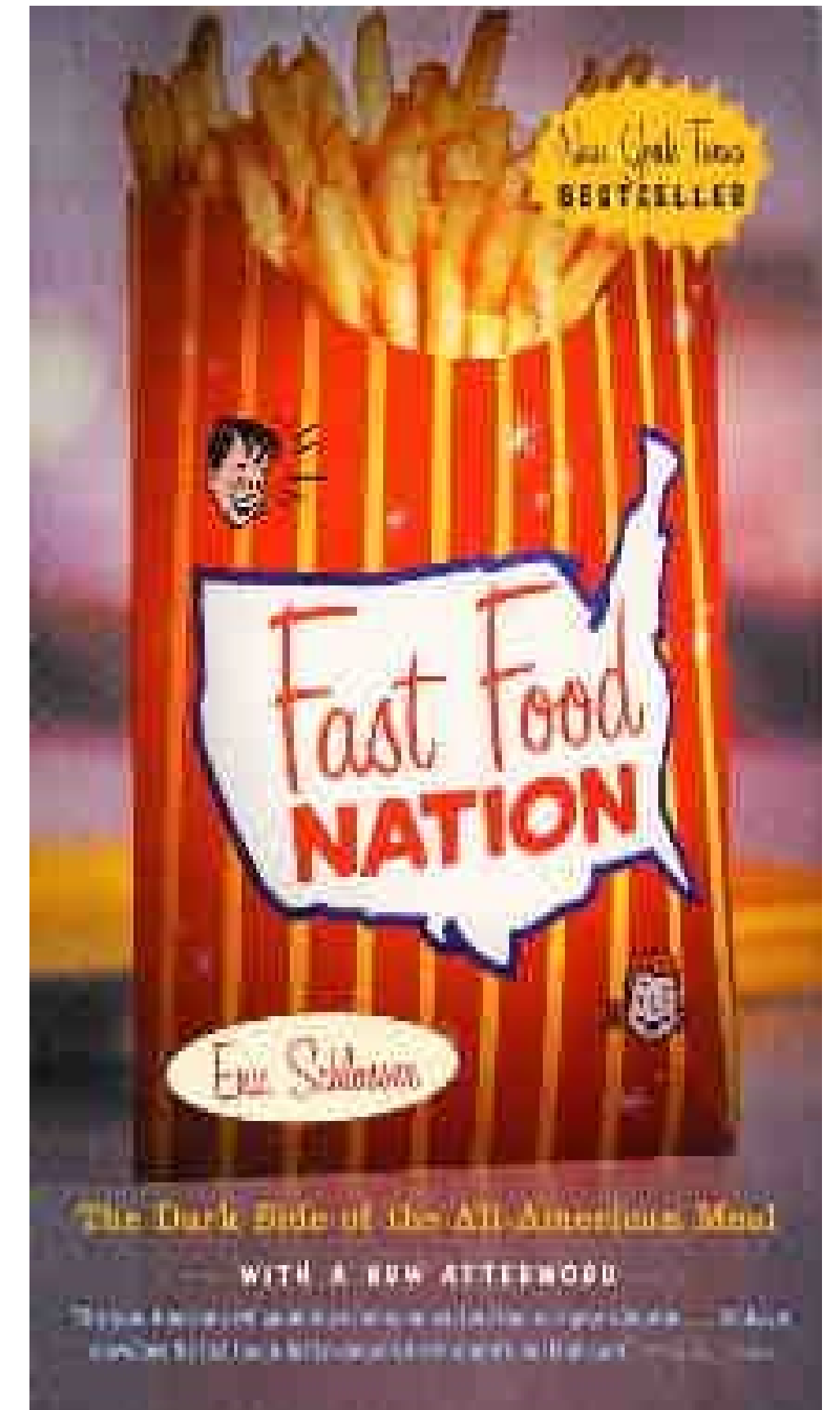
Blogs not to be sourced: many blogs ‘*were just streams of consciousness stuff*’.



# Publishing/Dissemination in the social media

Researchers under 30 much more likely to agree with these statements:

1. Mandates should encourage people to write a blog and/or tweet about your research
2. I use social media (e.g. Twitter, blogs, social networks) to get out information about my research because it is a reliable way to reach my target audiences..
3. I tend to blog about the findings of my research, which is a good way to test the veracity of my ideas.



## More diversity (age/seniority)

Early career researchers made more use of social media but scared to embrace it fully and camouflaged use. For them the benefits were:

- a) Fast track the development of a personal network;
- b) Facilitates collaboration among researchers;
- c) Finding researchers to work with (in real-time);
- d) Staying in touch with events;
- e) Stalking authors
- f) Taking full advantage of 'dissemination plus world' they were part of.

Relates closely to the need for researchers to build up their own circle of trust, relationships with people they confidently share their findings with, and keep up to date with changes in specialism



## Diversity (age/seniority) cont.

Despite aforementioned advantages young were reticent to contribute too much to the social media, largely because they did not want to let themselves down/show immaturity.

Worried use of social media could have a negative impact on career development. *It is so easy to comment today and in the digital world the record it always there. So, say you said something premature or immature twenty years ago, it could come back and bite you at a crucial time in your career development.*

Acknowledged social media was open to 'grandstanding', self-publishing and promotion, but, is this not all part of climbing the academic ladder.

Older social science researchers used social media to derive new/fresh ideas and for outreach – to connect to the public and practitioners.



## Diversity (country, subject)

- Researchers from less developed countries were more positive in their opinions towards altmetrics and social media, perhaps because more difficult for them to excel in traditional world of scholarly communications
- Surprisingly few differences by subject, but social scientists and humanities researchers slightly more likely to use social media and talk of it positively
- Humanities scholars were more likely to use social media to disseminate research.



# Change: trust/quality better/worse than a decade ago?

More bad/mediocre stuff around because;

a) more accessible; b) more opportunities to publish

But quality risen over the years. Rise in quality meant could live with bad/boring stuff and overload

*‘There is a massive sea of mediocrity now because it is just easier to publish, but at the higher end the quality is better because of better training, greater competition and rewards for publishing’*

But didn't want any changes, they liked disintermediation (DIY) and didn't really blame social media



# Conclusions

*What, then, was revealed about the much hyped agents of change: social media? Well, almost all the researchers interviewed made a clear distinction between formal and informal methods of communication, with social media very much in the latter grouping and peer-reviewed journals very much in the former. Often the only way researchers will trust social media material is if it is linked to a traditional source (e.g. a tweet about a peer-reviewed journal article – quite a common practice). Only a few – although significantly mostly young and early career researchers – thought that social media were anything other than more appropriate to personal interactions and peripheral to their professional/academic lives.*

## Conclusions (cont.)

### **Parallel universes or clash of the Titans?**

- Traditional scholarly system being enforced and reinforced by increased competition, career considerations, established metrics and institutional policies. Peer reviewed journal more dominant and spreading its influence.
- Yet social media has established a (growing) foothold. Increasingly useful for new ideas, references, publicity and outreach (communicating with practitioners), which made the whole process easier and faster. Even those who didn't use it – the majority, thought it was the future.

Back to the question posted at the beginning:

*Will social media change research and publication processes?*

The answer has to be:

*slowly, selectively, patchily but surely as the young and early career researchers move up the academic ladder. The big question is whether the EC will fast-forward the process*

# Reflect on main research questions

- Are social media scholarly; can they be trusted?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using social media for scholarly communication and "self-marketing"?
- What are the do's and don'ts of using social media in academia?
- What are the reputational benefits and risks?
- What of the increasing pressure to use for research communication and promotion?
- Younger v older researchers practices and perceptions? .



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# Interlude

# **Social media in the research workflow**

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- 2010 Early days. Before reputational systems really got going; even Google Scholar did get its individual page and H-Index going until 2012
- Over 2000 researchers
- One of first to look at where it fitted in the workflow

# Main findings

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- **Tools.** The three most popular social media tools in a research setting are those for collaborative authoring, conferencing, and scheduling meetings. [Social networking 4th]
- **Awareness** of social media among members of the research community is high, but there is a large gap between awareness and actual use for the majority of tools.
- **Subject differences.** Researchers in business, health, the biosciences, and the arts and humanities are less likely to use social media professionally than their peers in other parts of the academy.
- **Age.** Researchers under 35 are generally more likely to use at least one social media application than the over 35s. This finding is a broad generalization when we look at specific tools, which show strikingly different patterns of take up by age. Should be very careful of applying 'digital native' narratives to social media. Age is in fact a rather poor predictor of social media use in a research context.
- **Technology adoption model.** Rogers' model of technology adoption offers a far better explanation for take up: innovators and early adopters are 1.26 times more likely to use social media professionally. Professional users of social media are 1.68 times more likely to use a smartphone or other mobile device than non-users; and 2.11 times more likely to use an iPad.

# Main findings

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- **Impact.** Researchers are using social media tools to support every phase of the research lifecycle: from identifying research opportunities to disseminating findings at the end. They may not be the same tools, and they are certainly not the same researchers, but social media are most definitely making an impact on scholarly workflow.
- **Popular brands.** Most popular tools used in a professional research context tend to be mainstream anchor technologies or ‘household brands’, like Skype, Google Docs, Twitter and YouTube. Largely appropriating generic tools rather than using specialist or custom-built solutions and both publishers and librarians need to adapt to this reality.
- **The key driver** for the take up of social media is pressure exerted by peers outside of the researcher’s own institution. Social media are helping to fulfil the demand for cheap, instant communication between researchers fuelled by the growth of collaborative and interdisciplinary research. Use of social media is usually down to personal initiative
- **Dissemination.** Journals, conference proceedings and edited books remain the core traditional means of disseminating research, with institutional repositories highly valued as well, but social media has become an important complementary channel for disseminating and discovering research.

## Barriers to use of social media in research

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