

**SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION
ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR OF EARLY
CAREER RESEARCHERS:
INTERNATIONAL SURVEY**

Dave Nicholas (CIBER and Tomsk State University) and
Tatiana Polezhajeva (Tomsk State University)

A COMMUNITY OF VITAL INTEREST

- Early career researchers (ECRs) **new wave** researchers: junior, untenured, postdocs
- ECRs (digital natives) possess **millennial beliefs** of openness, sharing and transparency and social media/smartphone practices challenging the orthodoxy
- Not just new wave, but also **big wave**. Largest body of researchers in HE
- In the **scholarly engine room**. Do *all* fundamental scholarly communication tasks
- Are in the **frontline**, so if want to know what is going on ask them, but because not 'senior' neglected.

BACKGROUND

- Past 3 years conducted **longitudinal study** of 100+ ECRs interviewed annually about scholarly attitudes/practices and whether changing?
- **Results:** big changes in some scholarly aspects (e.g. collaboration, research impact, social media/online communities, smartphones) and little change in others (e.g. **libraries**, altmetrics, citation-based metrics). ECRs practices constrained by reputational system. See more: <http://ciber-research.eu/harbingers.html>
- Ideal preparation for big international survey (incl. Russia). Knew questions to be asked and how to frame. Questionnaire Summer 2019 in 5 languages; received around 2000 responses and same number of textual comments.

MAIN INTERIM RESULTS

Looking for and finding information

- Confirms popularity of **Google Scholar & Google**: *2 out of 5* ECRs use GS extensively for scholarly purposes. Truly embedded in scholarly field, despite long and continuing criticisms. Lower use by arts and humanities ECRs, however.
- Banned by libraries, **phones** now taking over library functions; a *quarter* of ECRs use smartphones to a great extent or moderately for scholarly discovery purposes. Most likely to come from China and health sciences.
- Not unconnectedly: **social media** a popular place to find research content

MAIN INTERIM RESULTS

- **Reading behaviour**

In today's digital, fast expanding, diverse and crowded, scholarly environment how do ECRs determine what to read?

- Most important influencers the traditional ones: a) ease of access; b) journal prestige; c) rank and impact factor. It is telling that ECRs admit to using what is closest to hand.
- Despite publisher and reputation platforms heavily promoting altmetrics they are only minor influencers. Recommendations, for instance, obtain very little traction.

MAIN INTERIM RESULTS

Publishing (and OA)

- Many ways of publishing research and pressure is to publish openly. However, main result was to confirm the overwhelming desire to publish in highly ranked journals. But not so much A&H ECRs
- Of less traditional practices, embracing open science most popular. Reputational concerns mean social media & institutional repositories less popular.
- Quarter said published frequently in OA journals and about 45 percent occasionally. Chinese had the lowest percentage of those who did not.
- **Increased visibility** and **bigger audiences** main advantages. Compliance with funder mandates not thought to be an important advantage
- Association with **predatory journals** and the **cost** of publishing

MAIN INTERIM RESULTS

Peer review

- 75% of ECRs experienced review and half felt good experience and only 2% bad. It was **good** because it was a learning experience and helped their writing & presentational skills. Main criticisms: a) length of time it took; b) superficial comments received.
- Peer review preferred double blind. Clearly like anonymity as triple blind next most popular. Follows that open forms of review not popular.

MAIN INTERIM RESULTS

Social media

- Two-thirds ECRs used social media for scholarly communication. Come long way. Everything is thought to be *social* media
- Used for wide range of fundamental purposes, but most notably current awareness, collaboration and networking.
- Most popular: 67 mentioned altogether with ResearchGate and Twitter at the top

MAIN INTERIM RESULTS

Citation based indices

- Over three in five use them and employed for wide range of purposes, principally: a) monitoring scholarly impact; b) identifying must-read papers.
- Main reasons for not utilising: a) institutions not require it; b) peers did not employ them. Palpable disquiet about their (increasing) use. A&H ECRs not so keen.

Altmetrics

- Over two-fifths used and main reasons: a) discover whether their papers obtained traction; b) to monitor impact. Few thought would help career prospects.
- Main reasons for not using: a) not required by university; b) not widely employed by peers; b) lacked knowledge about them; c) didn't know what they are/ know how to use.

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS: VIEW FROM RUSSIA

- Over 200 respondents
- 21-35 years
- Natural Sciences, Social and Humanitarian, Life Sciences
- 61% women

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS: VIEW FROM RUSSIA

Looking for and finding information

active Google users (93%), Google Scholar (72%)

Reading

Easy access, social media recommendations, impact-factor are the main reasons for decision what to read

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS: VIEW FROM RUSSIA

Publishing and reviewing

Where to publish?

Open Access (70%)

High rank and Impact-factor

Social media for science news

Reviewing is a good way to better understanding publication process

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS: VIEW FROM RUSSIA

Evaluating

Citation indicators are very important for finance and help to monitor reputation and find experts and collaborators

57% respondents are not using altmetrics

THE HARBINGER TEAM

- David Nicholas (UK, Lead), Anthony Watkinson (UK/US), Abrizah Abdullah (Malaysia), Chérifa Boukacem – Zeghmouri (France), Blanca Rodríguez Bravo (Spain), Marzena Świgoń (Poland), Jie Xu (China); Eti Herman (Israel); Tatiana Polezhajeva (Russia); Hamid. R Jamali (Australia)
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