Boosting the Impact of Publications

Online Resource
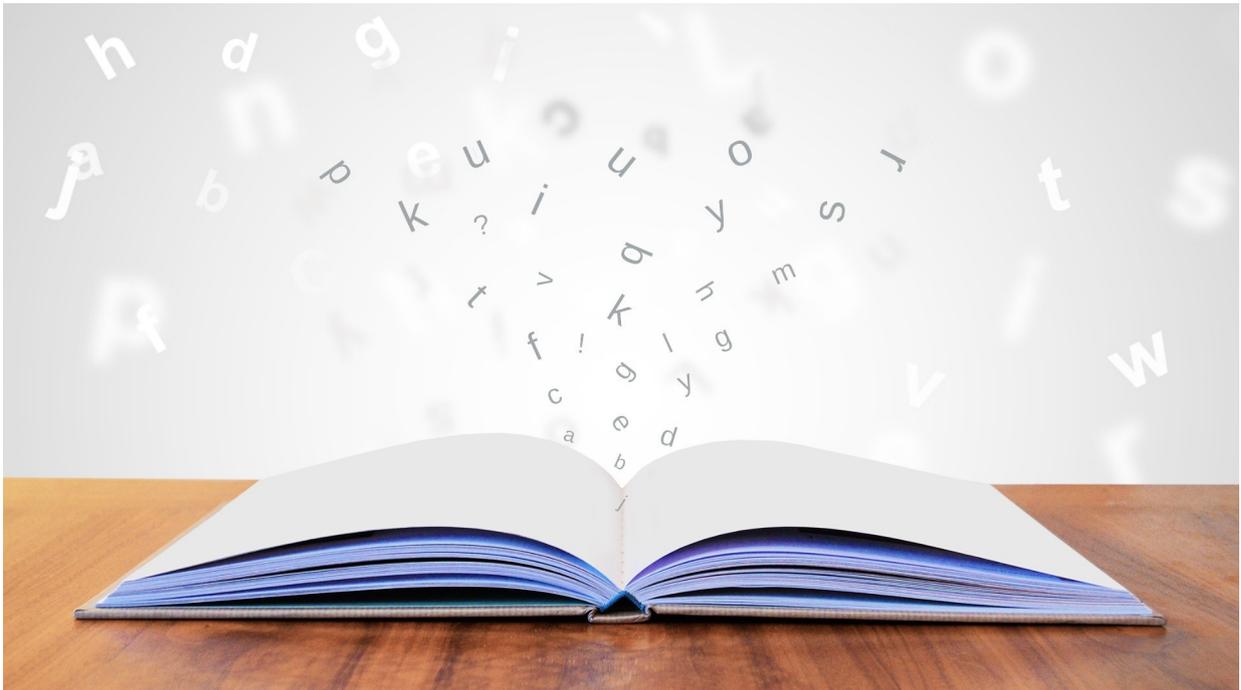
Boosting the Impact of Publications

Most academic publications represent thousands (if not tens of thousands) of hours of effort. Yet few researchers put even the tiniest fraction of this time into building an audience for their published work. This effort would increase engagement with the work and increase the chances of citation, invitations to speak and recognition as a key contributor to your field.

The suggestions in this guide vary in the amount of effort required – some taking a few minutes, others hundreds of hours. It's unlikely that all will relate to your audience or research mode, however it's hoped that you will find some ideas to boost the influence of your own work. You may feel that in your professional network that some of the suggestions would not be well received – your judgment and understanding of your own network should be applied.

Where suggestions are made to use social media or networks, the assumption is that you are already active on the right sites for them and have built an audience. If you don't use social media for work, then the audience won't be there. It might be more effective to find someone who has a strong social media profile in your area and to make them aware of your work in the hope they will disseminate it for you. If this goes well, it could provide you with a useful "jumping off" point for developing your own social media profile.

To illustrate how powerful social media can be for work, Cambridge University Press' Author Hub has a guide 'Top 10 Ways to Promote your Article' with 10 online suggestions: https://bit.ly/2zshrV4

Boosting the Impact of Publications
Short time commitment tasks

#	Task	Actioned
1	Make it easy for people to read the work – upload a copy to institutional repositories and link from other sites	
2	Upload or link to whichever sites are used by researchers in your field – Research Gate, Academia.edu, Mendeley, Cite U Like, etc.	
3	Update your own staff page, not just adding link to article, but editing biography and interests if it helps to reflect a stronger profile	
4	Add details to your group's website, institute, department etc., website as appropriate	
5	Disseminate through any relevant listserv services	
6	Add details of the publication to your email signature	
7	Use a tweet, Facebook post, LinkedIn profile update to point people to the paper online	
8	If an active blogger, write a short post positioning the paper. If not a blogger, find out who is and offer a guest post, or see if they are interested in writing about your work	
9	Take and hand out physical copies of the paper, or abstract with you when attending conferences or meetings	
10	Email thanks to anyone involved in the work	
11	Email relevant networks either collectively or individually. Include anyone you have cited, people who work in the area, user groups if relevant (patient groups, industrial networks, policy makers), people with whom you would like to connect	
12	Contact your institution's Press Office if the work needs to reach a wider audience	
13	Pin a copy to the "Recent Publications" board	
14	Approach seminar programme organizer and offer to speak (in home department and any relevant neighbouring departments)	
15	Identify people with common interests and approaches who might be willing to form a dissemination cartel (you do mine, I'll do yours…)	

Boosting the Impact of Publications
Short time commitment tasks

Some of these suggestions require existing knowledge or networks:

- Advice from library experts about which version of your paper can be made accessible without copyright issues

- Understanding of which social media your network uses

- Control of personal university staff page

- Relationship with Press Office and understanding of how to write a summary in a format ready for press publication

- Knowledge of who to approach about institutional publications and understanding of how to write a summary in a format ready to disseminate to a wider University audience

Your thoughts:

Which of these have you seen used to good effect in your field?

Which would make you feel uneasy? (Discuss this with a mentor or colleague, particularly one who has a strong profile.)

Which are you going to use to promote existing publications and future ones?

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Boosting the Impact of Publications
Medium time commitment tasks

#	Task	Actioned
1	Write a mini-review of the area in which the paper appears, positioning it carefully	
2	Meet with colleagues to discuss symposiums based on common interests, using publication as evidence of own standing in field	
3	Apply for follow-on funding	
4	Develop the paper into a proposal	
5	Meet with any users who've expressed interest after your reading work (choosing to engage with those whose interests are related to yours and who will be necessary partners in future funding applications)	
6	Release the Code or Data, if relevant	
7	Present work at an internal seminar, inviting people from around or near the institution that you would like to engage with your work	
8	If a book, have a book launch event	
9	If a book, identify reviewers and work with publisher to build profile	
10	Write a popular article based on paper for professional body magazine, etc.	
11	Add details of paper to upcoming presentations, future writing, proposals	
12	Approach key departments outside institution offering to contribute to their seminar programmes (building on experience and feedback from internal seminar)	
13	Use in teaching and add to reading lists	
14	Update existing public engagement material to reflect new publication	
15	Investigate funding for a workshop grant, thinking about who you want to collaborate with in future	
16	Volunteer as a reviewer with key journals, funding bodies citing paper as evidence	
17	Meet Knowledge Exchange staff to discuss how work might be related to impact	
18	Repackage work with institutional logo and an ISBN number, if relevant, to audience you want to engage	
19	Set up a Google group, forum or LinkedIn group if you've identified a network of people from these activities and want to keep discussions going	

Boosting the Impact of Publications
Medium time commitment tasks

Some of these suggestions require existing knowledge or networks:

- Good relationship with funding experts in your institution to help you investigate relevant funds for workshops, impact acceleration, network development. Understanding of which social media your network uses

- A medium-term view of how this work could be developed into a larger scale proposal and an understanding of who would need to be involved in this.

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Boosting the Impact of Publications
Longer time commitment tasks

#	Task	Actioned Y/N
1	Run the workshop – getting help from colleagues and administrators and thinking about what you want your role to be in this network in the future (i.e. being careful to be seen as a leader in the network, not the person doing all the dull jobs)	
2	Speak at the conference, ensuring that the paper is accessible to the audience, taking paper copies to hand out	
3	Ask good questions at conferences when you see opportunities to add to discussions on related topics (trying not to be one of those people who asks questions about their own work whatever the speaker's field is…)	
4	Develop strategy to develop relationship with any stakeholders outside academia who have engaged with work through non-academic dissemination routes, seeking support from Knowledge Exchange or Public Engagement teams in institution	
5	Follow up with related research publication (assuming you have this in the pipeline, ready to exploit the success of the first paper.)	
6	Incorporate dissemination strategy into next proposal and seek funding for more ambitious and impactful dissemination plans for next outputs (using existing successes and strengthened networks as basis)	
7	If non-academic version of research has been produced, plan a launch event to promote this, seeking support (possibly financial) from the University (Press Office, Knowledge Exchange etc.)	
8	Build on outcomes from workshops, networks and events to develop more ambitious research plans	
9	Develop more ambitious funding proposal with key partners from the network you've developed through your dissemination strategy (academic and non-academic)	
10	Relate outcomes from these activities to internal promotion criteria – make sure you are focused on your progression as well as building reputation (these should overlap, but be sure that your achievements are recognized by the University)	

Boosting the Impact of Publications
Longer time commitment tasks

These suggestions form part of a longer-term career plan – ensure you have people in your network you can discuss them with. This could be done through your annual performance and development review, with a mentor or discussions with senior staff.

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Links to sites

Cambridge University Press' Author Hub - https://www.cambridge.org/authorhub/

Research Gate - https://www.researchgate.net/

Academia.edu - https://www.academia.edu/

Mendeley - https://www.mendeley.com/

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This resource was created by Dr Sara Shinton

Sara is Head of Researcher Development at the Institute for Academic Development, University of Edinburgh, where her role is to provide strategic leadership for the IAD's Researcher Development provision, delivering excellence for all research staff and students in line with the University Strategic Plan and national policy and funding frameworks. This includes oversight of support and enhancement activities for doctoral students, early career research staff, doctoral supervisors and Principal Investigators. Prior to working at the IAD Sara ran Shinton Consulting.