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An Analysis of the Impact of Open Access Articles in Translational Medicine

Marcus Banks and Anneliese Taylor
Idea

- Adapt the techniques of article-level metrics
- Compare the impact of a subscription-based and OA translational medicine journal
- OA: *Journal of Translational Medicine* (JTM)
- Subscription: *Science Translational Medicine* (STM)
Article-Level Metrics (ALM)

- PLoS initiative to “place transparent and comprehensive information about the usage and reach of published articles onto the articles themselves.”
- Usage stats, citations, social bookmarks, comments, notes, blog posts, ratings
  - Many of these are “Web 2.0” tools
- Presentation by Peter Binfield of PLoS: [http://www.myplick.com/view/0Eq18v2-GWU](http://www.myplick.com/view/0Eq18v2-GWU)
Our Version of ALM

- Citations, news coverage, blog coverage, social bookmarks
- Side-by-side comparison of 10 articles in each journal on similar topics
- Sources: Google Scholar, Google News, FriendFeed, Twitter, delicious, CiteULike
- Rationale:
  - Journals of very different lifespans, so need to have a multifaceted analysis
Hypothesis and Findings

- **Hypothesis:**
  - Greater citations for *JTM*, due to its OA status and longer lifespan
  - Greater use of Web 2.0 tools for OA title

- **Findings:**
  - Greater citations for *JTM*
  - **Much greater news coverage for STM**
  - Little use of Web 2.0 tools for either title
Limitations

- Search challenging:
  - Google News: Exact journal or article title searches did not always work
  - Delicious: Required combination of URL and keyword searching
  - In general: Necessary to guess likely keywords based on article title
- More rigorous methodology possible
- Conclusions bear out regardless
Implications

- Sobering: Open access won’t summon attention
- Cautionary: Web 2.0 tools often not widely used by researchers
  - UC Berkeley Report about Schol Comm: [http://escholarship.org/uc/cshe_fsc](http://escholarship.org/uc/cshe_fsc)
- Exciting: Long-term case for OA could rest on transformative uses more than standard measures