



What's Impact? Whose Specialty?

J. Britt Holbrook
School of Public Policy

Britt.Holbrook@pubpolicy.gatech.edu

November 12, 2013



Open Access and Its Enemies

J. Britt Holbrook

Assistant Director
Center for the Study of Interdisciplinarity
Research Assistant Professor, Philosophy
University of North Texas

britt.holbrook@unt.edu

Futures of Academic Publishing: UNT's 4th Symposium on Open Access
May 30, 2013, Dallas, TX

csid Center for the Study of
Interdisciplinarity

UNT

A green light to greatness.

Sociotechnical Imaginaries

- Open Access is an attempt to enlist technology to co-produce a future for scholarly communication that we would like to see realized.
- Developing tools to assess the impact of scholarly communication is a key part of this process.
- ‘Impact’ itself is also a sociotechnical imaginary.
- Ivan Illich – *Tools for Conviviality*

Visions of Impact



Visions of Impact



Visions of Impact

ImpactStory.

What do these numbers actually mean?

Developing Standards

- There is a growing focus on developing *standards* for both bibliometrics and altmetrics.
- Our initial instinct is to appeal to *disciplinary* standards.
- Assumption: standards should be established by *bibliometricians & altmetricians* (drawn from the ranks of library and information sciences).

Developing Standards

“For altmetrics to move out of its current pilot and proof-of-concept phase, the community must begin coalescing around a suite of commonly understood definitions, calculations, and data sharing practices.”

- Todd Carpenter, NISO Executive Director

Developing Standards

“Organizations and researchers wanting to apply these metrics need to adequately understand them, ensure their consistent application and meaning across the community, and have methods for auditing their accuracy. We must agree on what gets measured, what the criteria are for assessing the quality of the measures, at what granularity these metrics are compiled and analyzed, how long a period the altmetrics should cover, the role of social media in altmetrics, the technical infrastructure necessary to exchange this data, and which new altmetrics will prove most valuable.”

Developing Standards

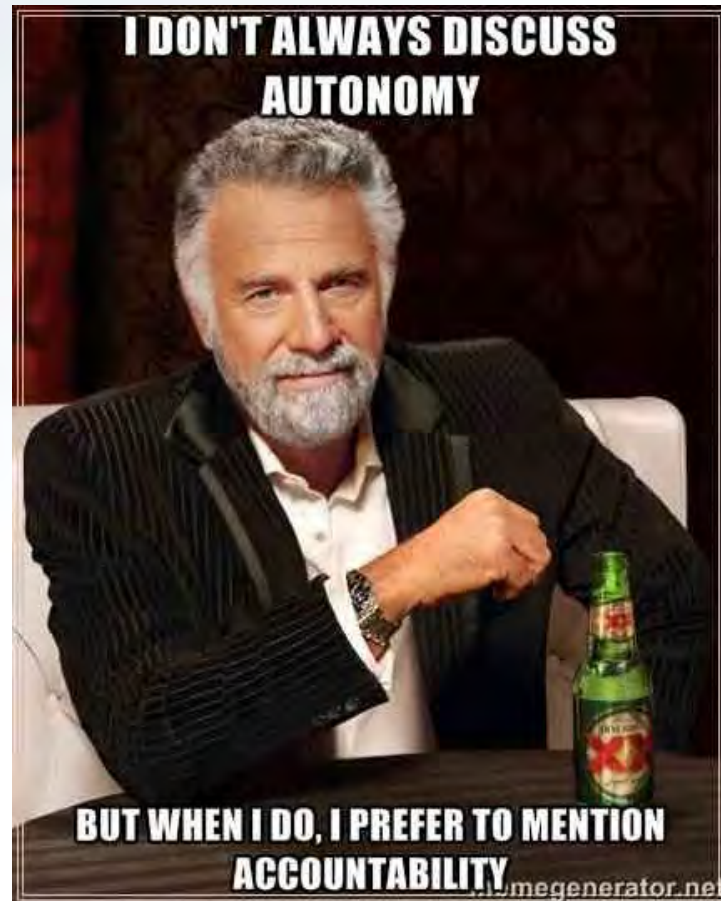
“If researchers are being evaluated, they should be aware of the criteria used and these criteria should be justified for the purpose at hand. This requires that users of performance indicators should have clear guidelines. It seems rather obvious that the bibliometric community has an important responsibility to inform and provide such guidelines.”

– Paul Wouters, Leiden University

Standards and Peers

- Academics implicitly *trust* the expertise of other academics – their academic *peers*.
- *Disciplines* define peers.
- This does not necessarily interfere with interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary peer review.
- Academics follow rules of ““deferring to expertise” and “respecting disciplinary sovereignty” (Lamont et al. 2012).

Autonomy and Accountability



Visions of Accountability

- Non-academics view accountability from *outside* disciplinary bounds.
- Non-academics *exploit* expertise, which entails making expertise *explicit* or *manageable*.

the
COMIC STRIP



of NEOLIBERALISM

Visions of Impact



Autonomy and Accountability

- Disciplinary autonomy is guaranteed by accountability to one's disciplinary peers (Holbrook 2013c).
 - Research evaluation dominated by peer review
- Societal accountability is guaranteed by *managing* disciplinary autonomy.
 - Research evaluation dominated by metrics

Illich – Tools for Conviviality

“Scientific discoveries can be useful in at least two opposite ways. The first leads to specialization of functions, institutionalization of values and centralization of power and turns people into the accessories of bureaucracies or machines. The second enlarges the range of each person’s competence, control, and initiative, limited only by other individuals’ claims to an equal range of power and freedom.”

“A society, in which modern technologies serve politically interrelated individuals rather than managers, I will call ‘convivial’.”

56 Indicators of Impact

- H-index
- G-index
- Universal H-index
- HM-index (standardizes co-authorship)
- Peer review
- Place of publication
- # of pubs
- # of citations
- Book sales
- Article Product downloads
- Website hits
- Media mentions
- Quotes in media
- Quotes in policy
- Developing a metric that people use
- Rabble rousing
- Muckraking
- Lawsuits
- Arrests
- Cited in testimonials
- Town hall meetings
- Social networking contacts
- Increased diversity
- Degree of ID/TD
- Degree of transformativity
- ID/TD rigor
- CSID advisors
- Special problem requests with CSID faculty
- Internationalization
- Grant ↓
- Audience size @ CSID events
- Success of faculty fellows
- Esteem of senior fellows
- Success of graduate / UG presentations & grants
- Posters?
- Impact factor of journals in which CSID publishes
- Angry letters from important people
- Mention by policy makers
- Meetings with important ppl
- Invitations to present
- Invitations to consult
- Invitations to evaluate
- Protests/demonstrations/sit-ins
- Coining/debunking phrase or buzzword
- Trending in social media
- Esteem surveys
- Trust/reputation
- Rankings
- Blog mentions
- Student surveys
- Student testimonials
- Faculty recommendations
- Faculty award/prize
- Textbooks
- Influencing curriculum creation
- Participating in public education programs

Libraries

Leverage your position as *boundary organizations*.

- What goal do you want to achieve?
- Why do you want to achieve it?
- How do you plan to do so?
- How will you know if you succeed?
- What benefits could accrue if you are successful?

Design tools for conviviality!

References

[The Comic Strip of Neoliberalism](#), last accessed September 12, 2013.

Holbrook, J Britt (2013a): Open Access and Its Enemies. [figshare](#).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.709019>, last accessed November 11, 2013.

Holbrook, J. Britt (2013b): “[Developing indicators of the impact of scholarly communication is a massive technical challenge – but it’s also much simpler than that.](#)” *LSE Impact of Social Sciences blog*, June 12, 2013, last accessed November 11, 2013.

Holbrook, J. Britt (2013c): “Peer Review of Team Science Research.” <http://hdl.handle.net/1853/49334>, last accessed November 12, 2013.

Holbrook, J. Britt, Kelli R. Barr, and Keith Wayne Brown. "Research impact: We need negative metrics too." *Nature* 497, no. 7450 (2013): 439-439. doi:[10.1038/497439a](https://doi.org/10.1038/497439a).

Illich, Ivan. *Tools for conviviality*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

Lamont, Michèle, Grégoire Mallard, and Joshua Guetzkow (2012). “Beyond Blind Faith: Overcoming Obstacles to Interdisciplinary Evaluation,” in *Peer Review, Research Integrity, and the Governance of Science – Practice, Theory, and Current Discussions*. Robert Frodeman, J. Britt Holbrook, Carl Mitcham, and Hong Xiaonan. Beijing: People’s Publishing House: 415-453.

[NISO to Develop Standards and Recommended Practices for Altmetrics](#), last accessed November 11, 2013.

[The Sociotechnical Imaginaries Project](#), Harvard University, last accessed November 11, 2013.

Wouters, Paul (2013): [Bibliometrics of Individual Researchers](#), *The Citation Culture*, last accessed November 11, 2013.