



## Thoughts on Boosting the Impact of Publications

This guide to boosting the impact of publications has been written by Dr Sara Shinton. You are welcome to use it to develop a better approach to your dissemination strategy, but please respect my copyright and the effort taken to produce this material and do not reproduce any element of the guide without permission.

### About Sara:

I founded Shinton Consulting in 2000 to focus on my interest in researcher development, which came from my personal experience as a researcher (physical chemistry), careers adviser and working in academic development. I've worked with thousands of researchers to help them develop more effective approaches to their research careers, to consider alternative paths and in developing their leadership. You can find out more at [www.shintonconsulting.com](http://www.shintonconsulting.com)

## 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.

Many of these suggestions come from academics and researchers. They vary in the amount of effort required – some taking a few minutes, others hundreds of hours. I've worked with researchers in all disciplines, so it's unlikely that all will relate to your audiences or research model. 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 – obviously your judgment and understanding of your network should outweigh a generic set of suggestions like this. However, all the suggestions here have been used to positive effect by researchers and it may be useful to reflect on whether any squeamishness you feel about marketing your work is putting you at a disadvantage.

An article by [Dr Tristram Hooley](#) outlining ten ways in which to engage an audience using social media inspired the discussions which have produced this material. The original article appears to have been lost in the Vitae website re-launch so is reproduced here as an appendix.

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.

Thanks to all the researchers who have been involved in the workshops that I've run on academic careers, publications and leadership over the last few years that have helped me to develop this material.

Dr Sara Shinton, May 2014

## Short time commitment tasks:

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 this 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...)

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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## Medium time commitment tasks:

1. Write a mini-review of the area in which the paper appears, positioning it carefully
2. Meet with colleagues to discuss symposium 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 (suggestion from A&H)
5. Meet with any users who've expressed interest after 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 of expertise
17. Meet Knowledge Exchange staff to discuss how work might be related to impact activities
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

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.

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.

Your thoughts:

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

Which would make you feel uneasy? Can you discuss this with a mentor or colleague?

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

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## Longer time commitment tasks

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)

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.

Your thoughts:

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

Which would make you feel uneasy? Can you discuss this with a mentor or colleague?

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

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## Appendix 1

10 ways to promote an academic article that you've just published using social media and the web

By Tristram Hooley 08 February 2011

We all know that the world of research is a pure meritocracy in which cream inevitably floats to the top – don't we? However, even given this fact, and the equally likely fact that life is fair, there probably isn't any harm in doing a little bit of self-promotion for stuff that you have managed to publish.

So I thought I'd use this post to suggest 10 ways in which you can promote an article that you've just published using the internet and social media. These are just the first 10 that pop into my head. I'd really like it if people could add some additional ideas as comments.

Add the article to your university staff page and make sure that it links to the article. This is probably the first place that people go to check you out. It is a disaster if the page is out of date.

1. Make the paper available in the open if possible. Publish in an open access journal, use your institutional repository or ask if it is OK to publish a version on your blog or website (the answer may of course be no”).
2. Add the article to a social citation system like [CiteULike](#).
3. Send out a Tweet – I've just written an article on .....
4. Write a blog post about what you've just published. Try and summarise your article in terms that the general public might understand.
5. Add it to the Publications section on your [LinkedIn](#) profile.
6. Put the title of your article into Google. Choose “Blogs” from the “More” option at the top of the screen. See if anyone is writing a blog that is related to your area. Make a comment on their blog to let them know what you've written.
7. Ask anyone who is blogging in your area if they would review your article on the blog or let you make a guest post.
8. Post a presentation that you've done relating to the paper on [SlideShare](#) or some similar application.
9. Look to see if any of the people you have cited in your paper have a social media presence. If so, link up with them and let them know that you've cited them. Connecting up your social media and academic networks is likely to bring long term benefits.

These are just some ideas. The more places you mention it or get it mentioned the better it will score on Google.

Happy plugging!

Originally published on [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk) by Dr Tristram Hooley, Reader in Career Development and Head of iCeGS, University of Derby