



Speaking confidently about research impact

Using Altmetric to meet the expectations of leadership, funders, and accreditors

Universities are under growing pressure to explain the value of their research to audiences beyond the campus. Leaders want to understand where research is making a difference. Funders want evidence of relevance. Accreditors want clear, credible proof.

This short collection brings together two examples of how institutions are using Altmetric to meet those expectations, without reducing impact to a single score or story.

Who is this case study for?

This is for teams responsible for explaining research impact with confidence. Research intelligence and planning. Research development and impact. Business school accreditation teams. And senior leaders who need evidence they can rely on when research is reviewed, funded, or assessed.

A preview of what you will read

VU Amsterdam

Supporting leadership decision making

- * Reveals where research is influencing society, policy, and clinical practice
- * Uses dashboards and filters to uncover patterns across disciplines and geographies
- * Helps senior leaders steer investment, collaboration, and strategic focus

BI Norwegian Business School

Evidencing impact for accreditation

- * Identifies research with demonstrable societal and policy impact
- * Supports the discovery and validation of impact case material
- * Enables the creation of clear, evidence-backed impact narratives for review panels

Together, these case studies show how Altmetric helps universities speak with confidence about research impact, whether the goal is strategic direction or external assurance.





Strengthening strategic research intelligence with Altmetric at VU Amsterdam

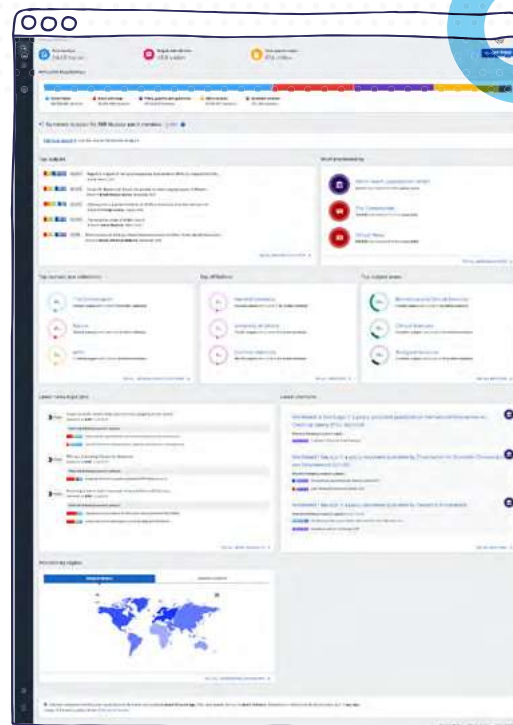
How VU uses Altmetric to uncover societal and clinical impact and support leadership decision-making

VU Amsterdam's Research Intelligence team helps researchers and university leaders understand where their work is influencing society, policy and clinical practice. To do that effectively, they need reliable evidence that goes far beyond citation counts. Altmetric gives the team a single source for policy mentions, news coverage, clinical guideline citations and global engagement data. It helps them reveal patterns in how VU's research is used around the world and support strategic decisions on investment, collaboration and direction. Matthijs de Zwaan, Co-ordinator of the Research Intelligence team, explains how Altmetric improves the visibility of VU's impact and makes complex analysis easier to deliver.

Matthijs describes how the team pulls publication data from various sources, enriches it with Altmetric metadata, then uploads DOIs to Altmetric Explorer to aggregate metrics as needed for each project.

Precise customization for specific insights

The system then produces an interactive dashboard that showcases the data in clear visualizations. Providing a wide range of metrics, it offers multiple filters so users can customize the results with great precision. To illustrate how it works, Matthijs offers the example of measures that are relevant for societal impact.



Example of Altmetric filters used by research teams

“Take our university medical centre’s Cancer Centre, which is a leading international centre for cancer research,” he says. “The dashboard has a filter for cancer types, so people working on those within specific sub-departments in the Centre can filter down to the research that’s relevant to them. If we want to look at the geographic distribution of mentions in policy documents, we can click on any of the countries to see the policy documents published there. And we can do the same with news stories, for example.”





Demographics Policy -Geographic distribution of mentions in policy documents and sources



Demographics News – Geographic distribution of mentions in news stories, documents, and outlets

Matthijs turns to the section on the clinical impact of research, which can feature anything from clinical guidelines through to academic work by any of the institutes he’s chosen to include in the analysis. “For all this you can also drill down to specific fields such as cancer types. But the main way this intelligence is used is in management-level decision-making.”

By identifying which research areas are receiving attention from society and clinical practice, the intelligence gives university leaders a steer on strategic focus.

Altmetric gives VU Amsterdam a clearer view of how its research is influencing policy, clinical practice, and society worldwide.

The next example, from **BI Norwegian Business School**, shows how one business school uses Altmetric to meet accreditation standards with confidence.

“The Altmetric team is quick to respond if we ask them to add any new sources to the database, which is very useful.”

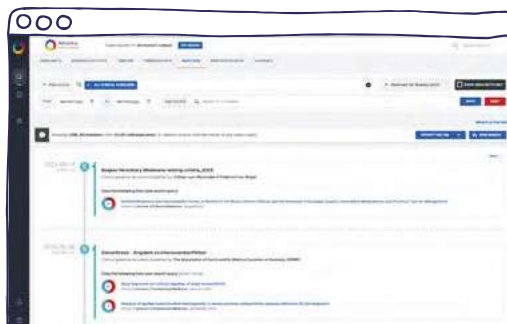
A major step forward in understanding impact

The clinical impact element is a recent addition to Altmetric – and it’s been getting a lot of attention from medical researchers because it’s something that is highly valued in the field.

For VU, as for other universities, it’s increasingly important to be able to show and quantify different kinds of non-academic impact.

“Altmetric is one of the few providers of this kind of data,” says Matthijs, “and the only one we know we can use as a single source for all these different measures – media, policy, clinical relevance and so on – to enable us to show the societal relevance of the researchers at our university.”

“Altmetric is the only source we trust to bring all our societal and clinical impact data together.”



Mentions by Clinical Guidelines

Find out what Altmetric can do for your institution

Request a demo.



Norwegian Business School

Tracking real world impact with Altmetric Explorer at BI Norwegian Business School

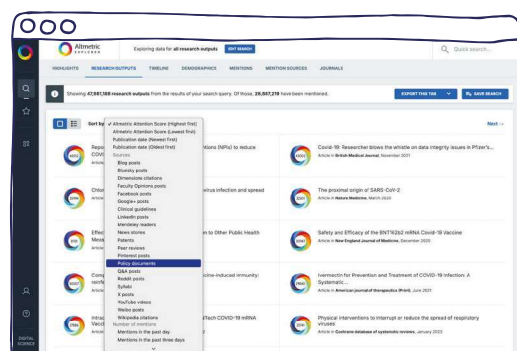
How BI uses Altmetric to evidence societal impact for accreditation and strengthen research narratives

Accreditation bodies want clear proof that research is reaching the world beyond the campus. That means business schools must show real influence on society and policy, not only traditional academic success.

BI Norwegian Business School turns to Altmetric Explorer to find that evidence quickly. The tool highlights policy mentions, news coverage and public engagement in one place, helping the team build stronger narratives for AACSB accreditation and internal reporting. Craig Aaen Stockdale, Senior Adviser for Research Administration, shares how Altmetric makes this work faster and easier to uncover.

The challenge of demonstrating societal impacts

In 2020 AACSB published a white paper setting out the inclusion of societal impact in their accreditation processes and requiring a business school to produce a narrative tracing a path from its strategic focus, activities and output to the eventual societal impact.



Research Outputs – Sort by Policy documents

“Altmetric helps us discover research outputs that look interesting and prioritize which ones to investigate for impact”

— CRAIG AAEN-STOCKDALE, SENIOR ADVISER, RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION, BI NORWEGIAN BUSINESS SCHOOL

“It’s quite a high bar,” Craig stresses, “because it includes a very specific requirement for examples of research that have already had a positive societal impact – not just something that could potentially have an impact in the future. That’s not always an easy thing to discover, let alone demonstrate.” Bibliometrics and citation data tells only part of the story. Altmetric combines policy mentions, news reporting and social attention in one place, giving a clearer picture of societal impact.

Investigating research impact with Altmetric Explorer

“It all starts with Altmetric Explorer,” confirms Craig. “We use it as a discovery tool to point us in the right direction. It helps us discover research outputs that look interesting and prioritize which ones to investigate for evidence of impact.”

Craig can search through all the research outputs and see how they rank on the Altmetric Attention Score. “For example, we can see where they’re mentioned in news articles, in policy documents and on social media,” he says. “Policy documents are usually a good place to start, because

most of our societal impact comes through influencing policy; for example, we have a lot of economists writing official reports for the Norwegian government, and our law department contributes to things like changes in legislation.”

Pinpointing research with provable impact

The Altmetric Attention Score helps Craig spot things that could potentially be interesting. A prime example that caught his eye was a recent publication where researchers were looking at foreign aid.

“If there’s an influx of foreign aid into a country that’s got weak democratic institutions, you see a corresponding increase in the money flowing out into offshore bank accounts in tax havens,” says Craig. “The researchers calculated that around 7% of foreign aid is siphoned off this way if there aren’t democratic institutions to prevent this happening.”



Using Altmetric to join the dots

Using Altmetric Explorer means Craig can quickly collect enough information to write a draft impact narrative, which he takes to the relevant researchers to validate and to fill in any blanks.

Crucially, the impact narrative helps BI show the peer-review panel the real-world impact of its research, so that the business school can maintain its prestigious accreditations.

“There’s an element of investigative journalism in this work,” says Craig. “You have to follow the trail of breadcrumbs and try to write an impact story that makes sense. And Altmetric Explorer really helps us do that.”

Find out what Altmetric can do for your institution

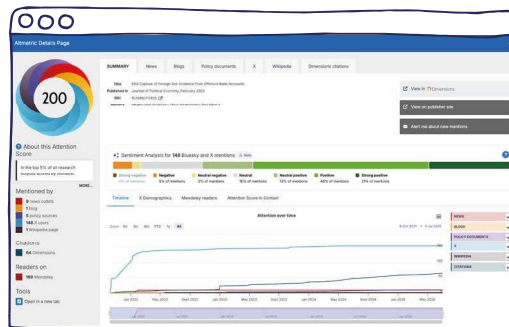
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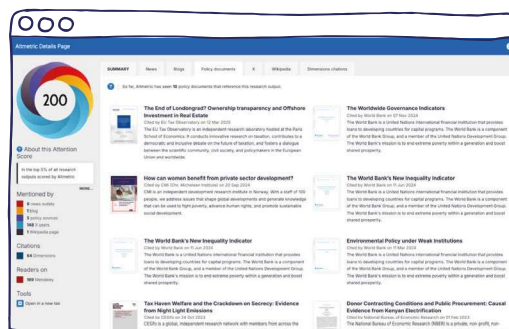
Reduce time spent searching

Increase confidence in audit trails

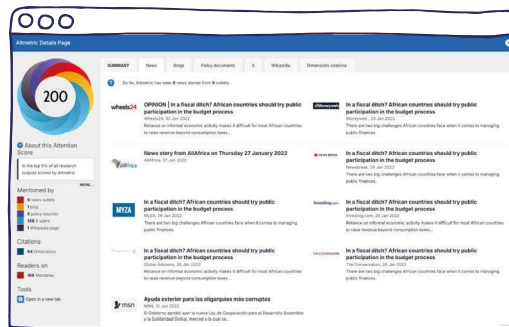
Support accreditation renewals



Altmetric Details Page – Elite Capture of Foreign Aid: Evidence from Offshore Bank Accounts



Altmetric Details Page – Policy documents



Altmetric Details Page – News