

Interview: Jason Priem – ImpactStory

1. Tell me about the product or service that you provide in the role that you play?

ImpactStory is an open-source, web-based tool that helps researchers explore and share the diverse impacts of all their research products--traditional ones like journal articles, but also alternative products like blog posts, datasets, and software. By helping researchers tell data-driven stories about their impacts, we aim to help build a reward system that values and encourages new forms of web-native scholarship. We're funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and we're in the process of incorporating as a nonprofit corporation.

ImpactStory aims to provide open metrics, with context, for diverse products:

- Open metrics: Our data (to the extent allowed by providers' terms of service), code, and governance are all open.
- With context: To help researcher move from raw altmetrics data to data-driven stories, we sort metrics by engagement type and audience. We also normalize based on comparison to a reference set. An evaluator may not know if 5 forks on GitHub is a lot of attention, but they can understand immediately if their project ranked in the 95th percentile of all GitHub repos created that year.
- Diverse products: Datasets, software, slides, and other research products are presented as an integrated section of a comprehensive impact report, alongside articles--each genre a first-class citizen, each making its own kind of impact.

(this section borrows from our FAQ)

2. How can librarians use this product or service?

ImpactStory is a great tool to use to get familiar with altmetrics, and with new ways of describing impact in an increasingly web-native scholarly communication world. It's free and only takes a minute to get started; just enter your ORCID or import products from Google Scholar, then add products from github or slideshare by entering your username. Finally, paste IDs (DOIs, PubMed IDs, URLs) for any other products you might be interested in. ImpactStory then makes you a custom profile describing your impact across all your products by going out and getting metadata and impact information from all over the web, including Twitter, CrossRef, PubMed, Mendeley, Wikipedia, F1000, and many more.

Ultimately, we hope it's a great platform to recommend to faculty who want to take advantage of [the power of altmetrics on their CVs](#), as well as in their grant, tenure, and promotion materials.

3. How has your organization reached out to the library community and how have you earned support for this particular service ?

We believe tools like ImpactStory have the potential to help establish the library as more than just a place for books and periodicals, but a forward-thinking, driving force behind scholarly communication on campus. We hear again and again how keen libraries are to make this transition, despite growing pressure on library budgets.. Indeed, budget pressure is often driving interest in

novel, forward-looking roles for libraries, as librarians seek to maintain and expand their institutions' roles in this time of change.

So we've worked hard to reach out to libraries, and are continuing to do so, having given well over a dozen talks and libraries and library conferences around the country this year. To do this we've been supported by early funding from the Open Society Foundations and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. More recently we've received an additional \$500,000 from the Sloan Foundation to continue a two-year plan toward sustainability for ImpactStory.

(this section borrows from our most recent Sloan grant application)

4. What skills or experience do you think librarians need to (or could) acquire to promote altmetrics within their institution and can you provide examples of the skills that you or your other collaborators have in this particular area that are beneficial during your interactions with the scientific research community?

As interest in altmetrics grows, libraries are in a unique position to help facilitate an informed dialogue with the various constituencies that will intersect with altmetrics on campus, including both researchers (students and faculty) and the academic administrative office (faculty affairs, research and grants, promotion and tenure committees, and so on).

First, librarians can provide this support in three main ways: **informing emerging conversations** with the latest research, **supporting experimentation** with emerging altmetrics tools, and **engaging in outreach and education around altmetrics**.

Second, the library community can begin familiarizing themselves with the current state of discussion around altmetrics. Good places to start include a [recent SPARC report](#), Galligan and Dyas-Correia's [excellent overview](#) [paywall], and the recent [ASIS&T Bulletin special issue on altmetrics](#).

Finally, librarians can play around with altmetrics tools to add them to their bibliographic instruction repertoire. Familiarity will enable a librarian to do easy demonstrations, discuss strengths and weaknesses, contribute to product development direction, and serve as a resource point for campus scholars and administration during the upcoming transition to web-native scholarship. ImpactStory is a great tool to start with, since it's free and open. Another tool to try out is PlumX; like ImpactStory, PlumX is a web application that displays altmetrics on a wide range of scholarly products. PlumX is available to scholars upon university-wide subscription; users can experiment with a free demo version (see <http://www.plumanalytics.com>).

Establishing a strong familiarity with the altmetrics tools will allow librarians to enhance standard bibliographic instruction with this added perspective. As these opportunities for outreach and engagement present themselves, librarians will find that even a brief demo of tools like ImpactStory and its ability to pull together usage data from a variety of resources hosting a scholar's work, will stimulate interest among content producers and users alike.

(this section largely paraphrases [Riding the crest of the altmetrics wave: How librarians can help prepare faculty for the next generation of research impact metrics](#))



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