

Using Content Discovery as the Starting Point for your Publishing Strategy

A new study on how readers discover scholarly publications was recently [published](#). More than 40,000 researchers were surveyed to study their behavior when it comes to finding scholarly papers and books online.

The study provides a few interesting insights into the distribution of content and how readers source content relevant to their research. At Ediqo, we have taken these insights as the starting point to building effective publishing and distribution strategies: understanding how researchers access scholarly content will help you determine the most effective ways to publish your own papers and, thus, maximize the impact of your research.

Here are five strategies to help you effectively publish and distribute your research, which can all be applied in parallel.

Strategy 1) Choose the right place for publication (and make sure you are indexed)

Web search engines (Google and the like), academic search engines (Google Scholar, etc.) and indexing & abstracting (A&I) databases (Web of Science, etc.) are the predominant places scholars begin their search for content. Ensuring good coverage in these search engines and databases is essential to enhancing the visibility of your research.

Before submitting your work to a journal, make sure:

- that you can easily find the journal in a web search engine,
- that you can easily find articles from the journal in academic search engines, and
- that the journal is covered by all major indexing & abstracting databases commonly used in your field.

If you are not sure which databases are commonly used in your field, ask a few colleagues what they are using (this may also help you develop better strategies for you to find relevant content).

If you have a hard time finding the journal and its content in search engines and A&I databases, readers too will have a hard time finding your paper once it is published in this journal.

Strategy 2) Offer a free copy of your research paper

Considering that over 50% of journal content delivery is through free copies of the content, you need to make sure the full-text of your paper is available for free somewhere. The academic search engine Google Scholar, for example, displays direct links to free copies in search results. Offering a free copy therefore increases the visibility and click rate of your paper. You can offer free copies of your paper in a variety of ways:

- Publish your paper in an open access journal under a CC-BY or equivalent license (the final publication is freely available and can be freely redistributed by anyone)
- Upload a preprint of your paper to a preprint archive. There are plenty of alternatives, such as arXiv in physics, RePEc in economics, or general repositories such as [Zenodo](#) or [Figshare](#). Before uploading a preprint, make sure that you comply with the copyright and self-archiving policies of your publisher to avoid copyright infringement. You can quickly obtain an overview of a publisher's policy by consulting [SHERPA/RoMEO](#).
- You may also be required to submit the refereed manuscript or the final published paper to a national or institutional repository. You can search for relevant repositories in the [Registry of Open Access Repositories \(ROAR\)](#) or the [Directory of Open Access Repositories \(DOAR\)](#). Such repositories, however, may release your paper only after an embargo period determined by the publisher.
- If you have not yet done so, create user profiles with [ResearchGate](#) and [Academia.edu](#). Both of these sites are specialized social networks for scientists and offer the possibility to upload preprints. Again, make sure that the publisher's copyright policies allow for such online posting on social networks.
- If your journal or publisher of choice does not allow the posting of preprints, you can at least offer a "Request a copy" button on your personal website: simply let readers know that they can obtain a copy of the manuscript from you by email. There are tools such as the [Open Access Button](#) that are readily available for this purpose. If you do not have a personal website, ask the IT department of your university about possibilities for university-hosted websites, or build your self-administered online presence with a tool such as Wordpress.com. Wordpress.com offers a free and a premium version, where the premium comes with the possibility to register your own .com domain name.
- If you are working in the medical field, note the "PubMed Central effect": over 25% of readers access papers from this free resource. Make sure that the journal of your choice is included in [PubMed Central](#). PubMed Central feature papers from open access journals as well as from subscription journals. The latter are released after an embargo period defined by the publisher.

Note that it is generally better to wait until your paper is accepted for publication before posting the preprint. Many journals desk-reject manuscripts that are already posted as preprints, as these can be considered as having already been published.

Strategy 3) Build your online presence

While most researchers do not start their search for content on social media, many are active on such platforms. Build an online presence on the main social media channels used in your field to build an audience and communicate your latest research findings. Building an audience is a slow process, and you will have to continually share your insights, opinions and links in order to attract a sizable number of followers. You can consider using a tool such as [BufferApp](#), which allows you to post the same content multiple times spread over the day and on several

social media sites at the same time. The basic version is free and connects with your Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ accounts.

Unlike Twitter, the other major platforms allow for longer posts. When publishing posts with larger amounts of content, consider the timing. During work hours, users tend to skip long stories, and are more likely to engage with them during prime time (evening hours). Try to experiment by posting your content at different times during the day to find time windows that work best for the kind of messages you want to communicate.

Strategy 4) Choose a Publisher that supports link resolver technologies

Over last few years, the importance of discovering scholarly content through library platforms has steadily increased. Libraries offer access to their electronic resources via these platforms. Make sure that the content from your preferred journal is accessible in your own library portal via link resolvers – usually a button in the search results of the library portal, which will take you directly to the publisher’s website of the concerned article. Link resolvers are also used by some search engines such as Google Scholar to direct users to copies of articles held at the local university library.

Strategy 5) Choose a mobile-friendly publisher

Ten percent of scholarly content is accessed from mobiles phones (smartphones). Publishing with a journal that offers a website tailored for mobile phones, including full-text articles optimized for reading on small screens, will greatly enhance the usability of your paper.

Mobile phone usage across the wider Internet has already reached 50% and is still climbing. It is thus likely that usage of content on mobile devices will climb further over the coming months. Further, websites with poor mobile design tend to have much less traffic from mobile phones. You may therefore be missing out on traffic to your paper when choosing a publisher or journal with poor mobile phone compatibility.

Version 1 (11 April 2016). This guide was written by Dietrich Rordorf. For questions, please send a message to Dietrich Rordorf, E-mail: dr@edigo.com. Refer to the [Author Resources Center](#) on the Edigo website for more guides and checklists.



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