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Steve Dudley / Social media use in ornithology

# Social media use in ornithology

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Presented as the introduction to the BOU & RSPB Science  
'the role of social media in ornithology' Round Table at  
#EOU2015, Badajoz, Spain, 27 August 2015



# Social media use in research

We are beginning to see papers on social media use in research sector appear in recent years, including:

## **Social media use in the research workflow**

Rowlands et al. 2011. *Learned Publishing*

[http://www.uib.no/sites/w3.uib.no/files/attachments/nicholas\\_rowlands\\_social-media\\_research-workflow\\_2011.pdf](http://www.uib.no/sites/w3.uib.no/files/attachments/nicholas_rowlands_social-media_research-workflow_2011.pdf)

## **Online collaboration: Scientists and the social network**

Van Noorden. 2014. *Nature*. [Open Access/Open Data]

<http://www.nature.com/news/online-collaboration-scientists-and-the-social-network-1.15711>

## **Quantifying the role of online news in linking conservation research to Facebook and Twitter**

Papworth et al. 2015. *Conservation Biology*

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.12455/abstract>





Source: Rowlands et al. 2011

Table 2: Use and non-use of social media in research by narrow subject discipline

*Percentages within disciplines*

	Use social media tools in research	
	No	Yes
Earth sciences	5.0	95.0
Environmental sciences	10.0	90.0
Physics	11.1	88.6
Pharmacology and toxicology	12.5	87.5
Neuroscience	13.0	87.0
Life sciences	15.8	84.2
Social sciences	16.0	84.0
Mathematics and computer science	16.3	83.7
Chemistry and chemical engineering	17.8	82.2
Materials science and engineering	17.9	82.1
Arts and humanities	20.8	79.2
Biological sciences	21.7	78.3
Health sciences	25.2	74.6
Business and management	26.3	73.7
<b>All disciplines</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>79.7</b>

Rowlands et al (2011) showed that our sector was among the highest users of social media for our research needs



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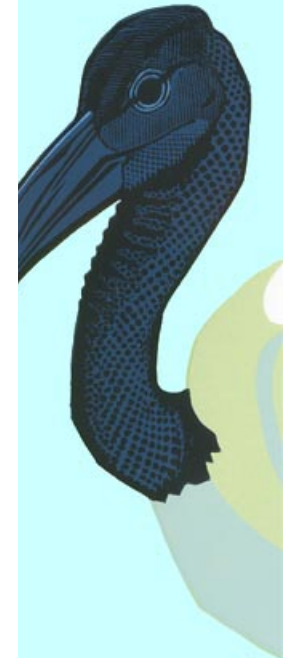
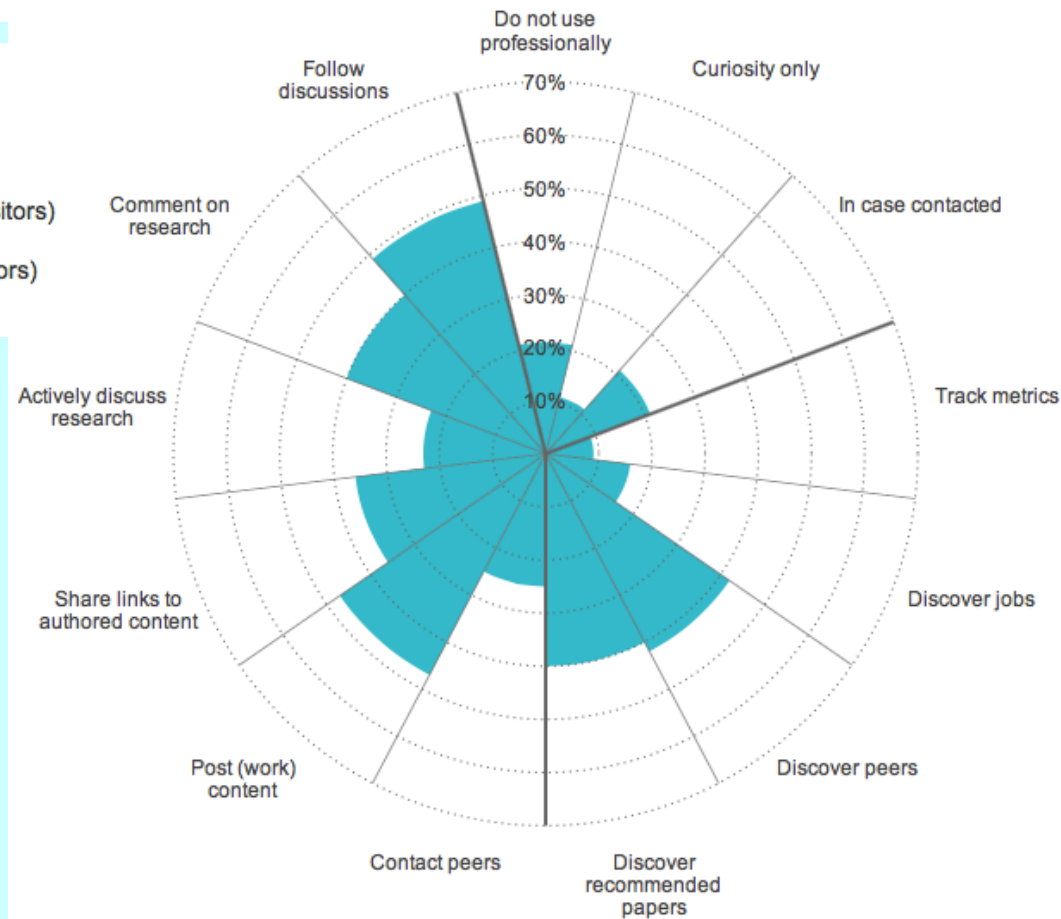
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## Interactive: Why scholars use social media

In *Nature*'s survey, a subset of scholars who said they 'regularly visited' social media sites were quizzed in detail about their activities.

**Source:** Van Noorden. 2014.

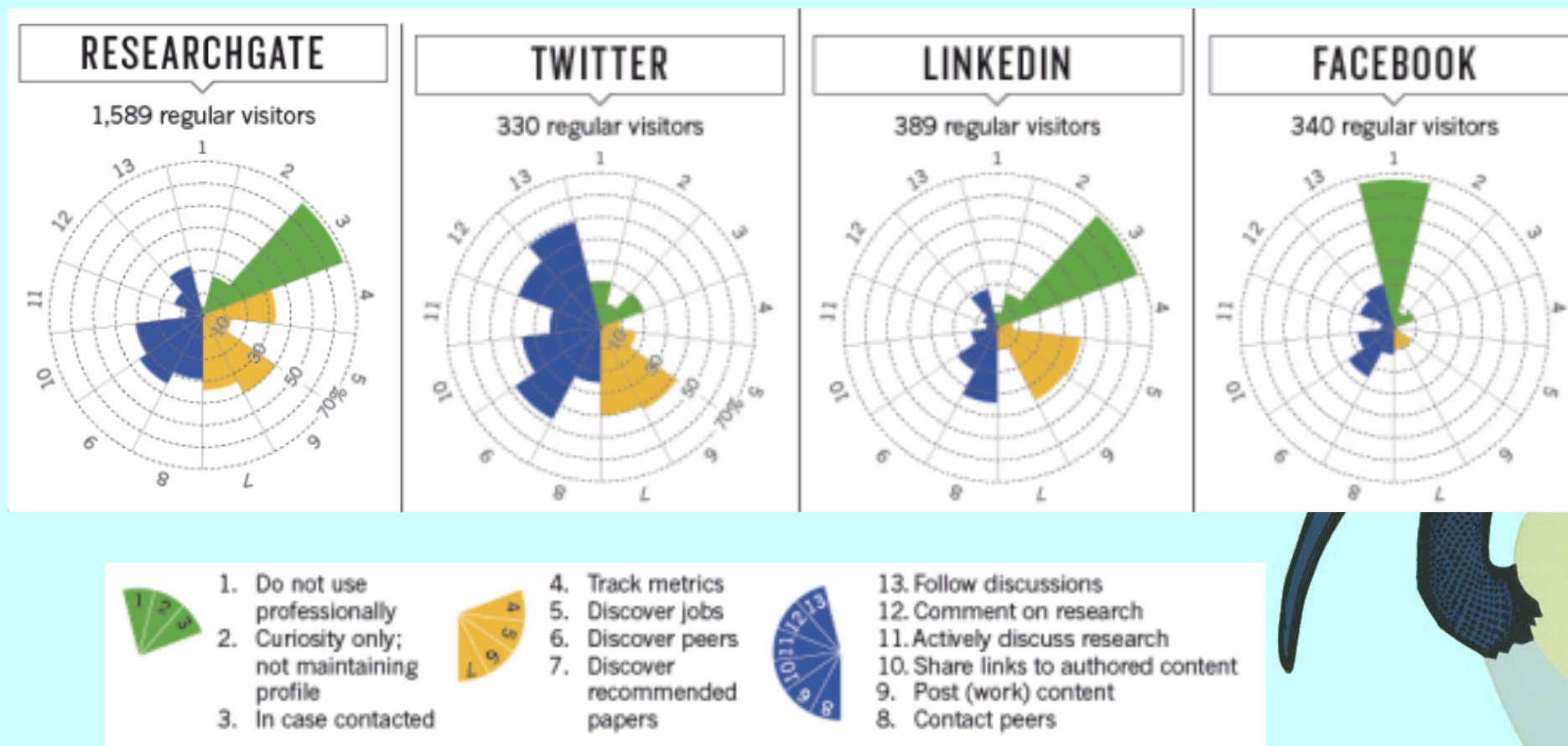
- ✓ Twitter (330 regular visitors)
- Facebook (340 regular visitors)
- LinkedIn (389 regular visitors)
- ResearchGate (1,589 regular visitors)
- Academia.edu (283 regular visitors)
- Mendeley (198 regular visitors)



The *Nature* survey (2014) found increasing numbers of researchers using social media



Source: Van Noorden. 2014.



The *Nature* survey illustrated how different social media are being used by researchers, with Facebook being largely dismissed as irrelevant, and Twitter being used to actively promote research way ahead of the so-called professional platforms of ResearchGate and LinkedIn which are largely used 'to be found/contacted' and for searching for papers and peers.

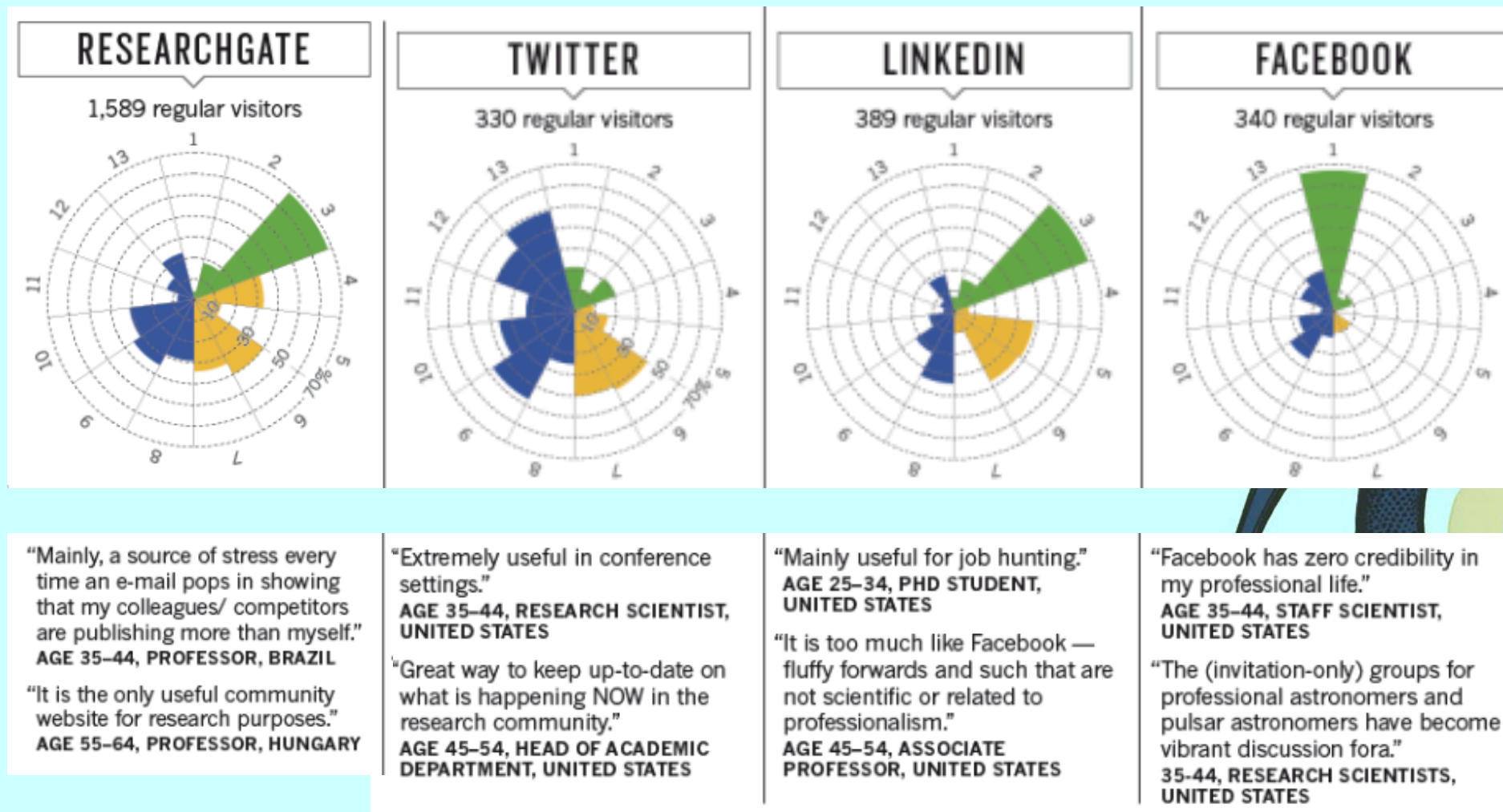




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Source: Van Noorden. 2014.



The survey participants comments are also quite telling



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## Social media aims of BOU/IBIS:

- to establish an active online #ornithology community
- to promote research output/publications
  - all journals/sources – not just IBIS
- to collaborate with other organisations and researchers
- to engage other researchers
- to promote ornithology within the wider ecology community





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## Social media tools used by BOU/IBIS:

### Social networking

Twitter	@IBIS_journal
Facebook	/ibisjournal

### Blogging

#theBOUblog



We have kept things simple and focused on three main outlets for our social media and engagement





## Social media output growth by BOU/IBIS:

	2012	2013	2014
Twitter	2,254	4,321	6,340
Facebook	1,130	2,317	5,805
Blogs	6	9	32



Our social media output has grown considerably in the three years to the end of 2014



**1.7 Which social media platforms do you use for work or for personal use?**

responses			171
	Work	Personal	Both
Facebook	1	54	32
Twitter	17	11	22
Research Gate	17	0	0
LinkedIn	17	0	0
Academia.edu	2	0	0
Google Scholar	2	0	0
Pinterest	0	8	0
Tumblr	0	2	0
Instagram	0	2	0

Overall workplace  
users

19%

22%

10%

10%

Source: BOU Survey 2015

In 2015 we surveyed our IBIS readers and took the opportunity to ask them about their social media use.

Twice as many IBIS readers use Twitter and Facebook than ResearchGate and LinkedIn



Source: BOU Survey 2015

1.8 Do you have an online profile? If so, where?	
responses	171
	%
ResearchGate	51.5%
Institute website	50.3%
LinkedIn	40.9%
I use my Facebook account	17.5%
No profile	17.0%
I use my Twitter account	15.8%
Personal website	13.5%
Academia.edu	12.9%
Mendeley	7.0%
about.me	2.3%
Google Scholar	3.5%
Other	2.0%

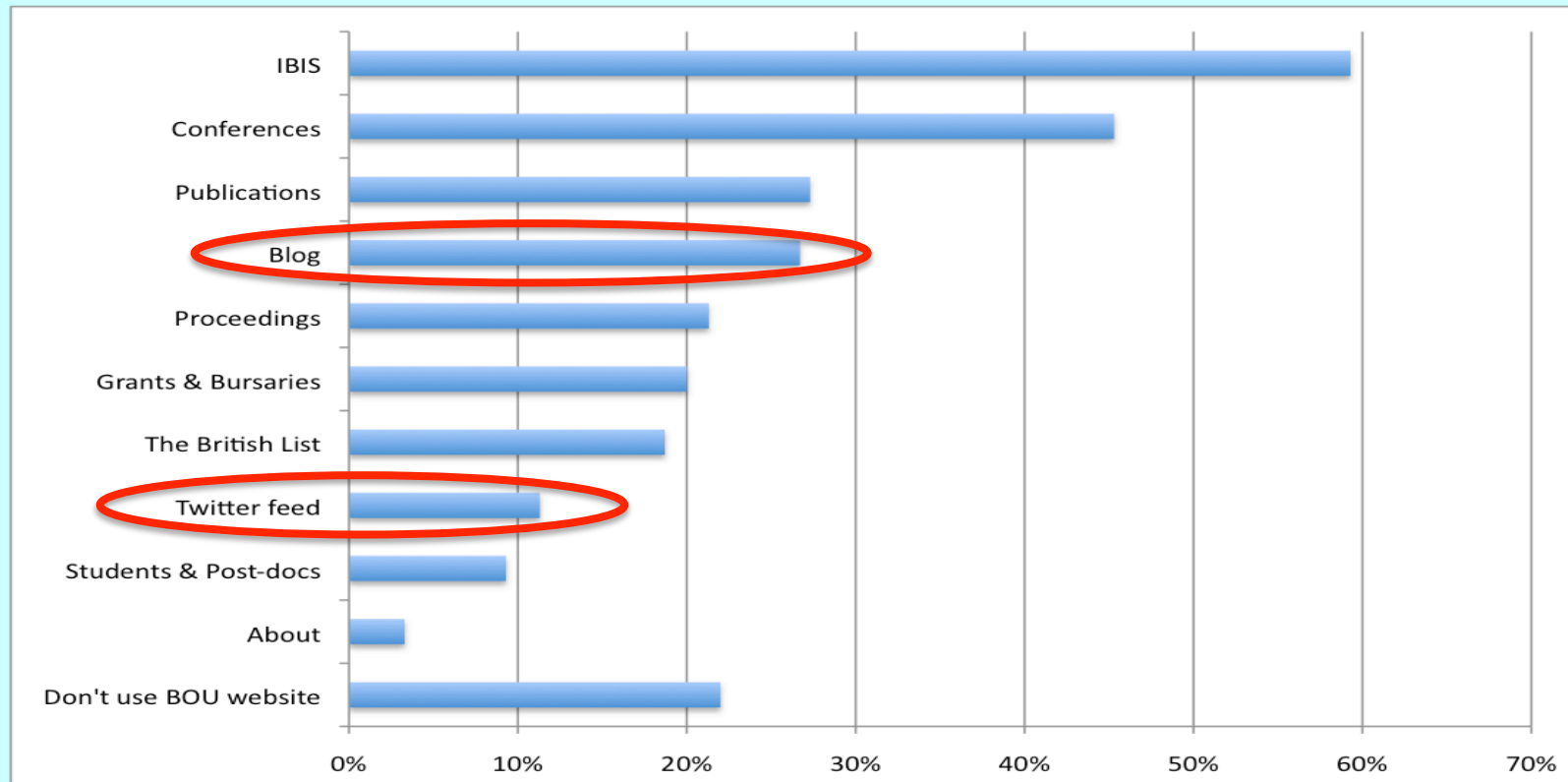


Whilst most IBIS readers had their online profile on a professional platform, over 30% use Twitter and Facebook for this. BEWARE – it is not always good to mix personal and professional needs on social media which are seen by all – friends, peers, employers, collaborators and potential future employers. Be careful of those late night boozy tweets/posts you might regret later. It may be best to keep things separate.



## What content on the BOU website ([www.bou.org.uk](http://www.bou.org.uk)) do you access?

Source: BOU Survey 2015



Both #theBOUblog and our website Twitter feed are accessed regularly by our IBIS readers. We promote the blog heavily on Twitter and Facebook and overall it accounts for 12% of all page views on our society website.



## Where do IBIS readers get their IBIS content alerts from?

Source: BOU Survey 2015

BOU e-newsletter	60.2%
Wiley journal alerts	32.8%
BOU social media	21.1%
NA / Other	15.7%



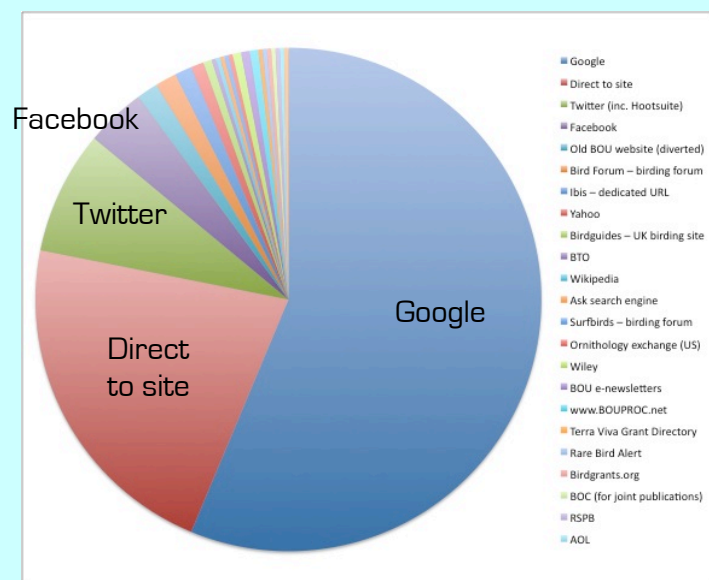
Over 20% of our IBIS readers obtain their IBIS content alerts from our social media output. This fits with increasing numbers of people telling us that they have cancelled individual journal alerts and follow us on Twitter as their primary source of alerts for online papers as they are published.



## Social media originating sources to . . . (% of overall traffic)

Source: BOU Survey 2015

	BOU website	IBIS website
2012	4%	1%
2013	6%	1.5%
2014	11%	2.5%



We can also track the amount of traffic social media delivers to our society and journal websites, with each receiving nearly a 3x increase in three years.







# The #ornithology hashtag on Twitter

Source: BOU

Introduced for 2014

**Table 4.** Summary of #ornithology usage at 31 Dec 2014

#ornithology	
Active users	>260
Engaged accounts	>29,000
Original tweets	54%
Retweets	44%
Avg. weekly reach	>400,000



In January 2014 we introduced the #ornithology hashtag on Twitter and by the end of the year it had clearly delivered a distinct group actively using the tag. Tags can be saved as a stream by users in their dashboards for immediate access to ornithology content.



## The #ornithology hashtag on Twitter

BOU tweets focus on promoting papers

- 94% linked to online papers
- 6% linked to other #ornithology content



@IBIS\_journal output on Twitter focuses primarily on promoting published research (mainly direct links to papers in journals) with a small amount linked to ornithological news items on the more mainstream science news sites (such as ScienceDaily, Phys.org).



## Individual article metrics (Altmetrics)

Often referred to simply as Altmetrics (which is actually one company in this sector), a score is given to each published paper and is essentially a social immediacy impact factor, i.e. how much your paper is being talked about online.

- measures the attention generated by, not quality of, an article
- only tracks public online attention
- tracks direct attention (that is items with direct links to the article)
- provides a single metric per article

Different media ranked as follows –

- News media (highest score)
- Blogs
- Social media
  - Twitter
  - Facebook (lowest score)

All items **MUST** have  
a direct link to your  
paper!

No link = no score ☹





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## Individual article metrics

But is it important?

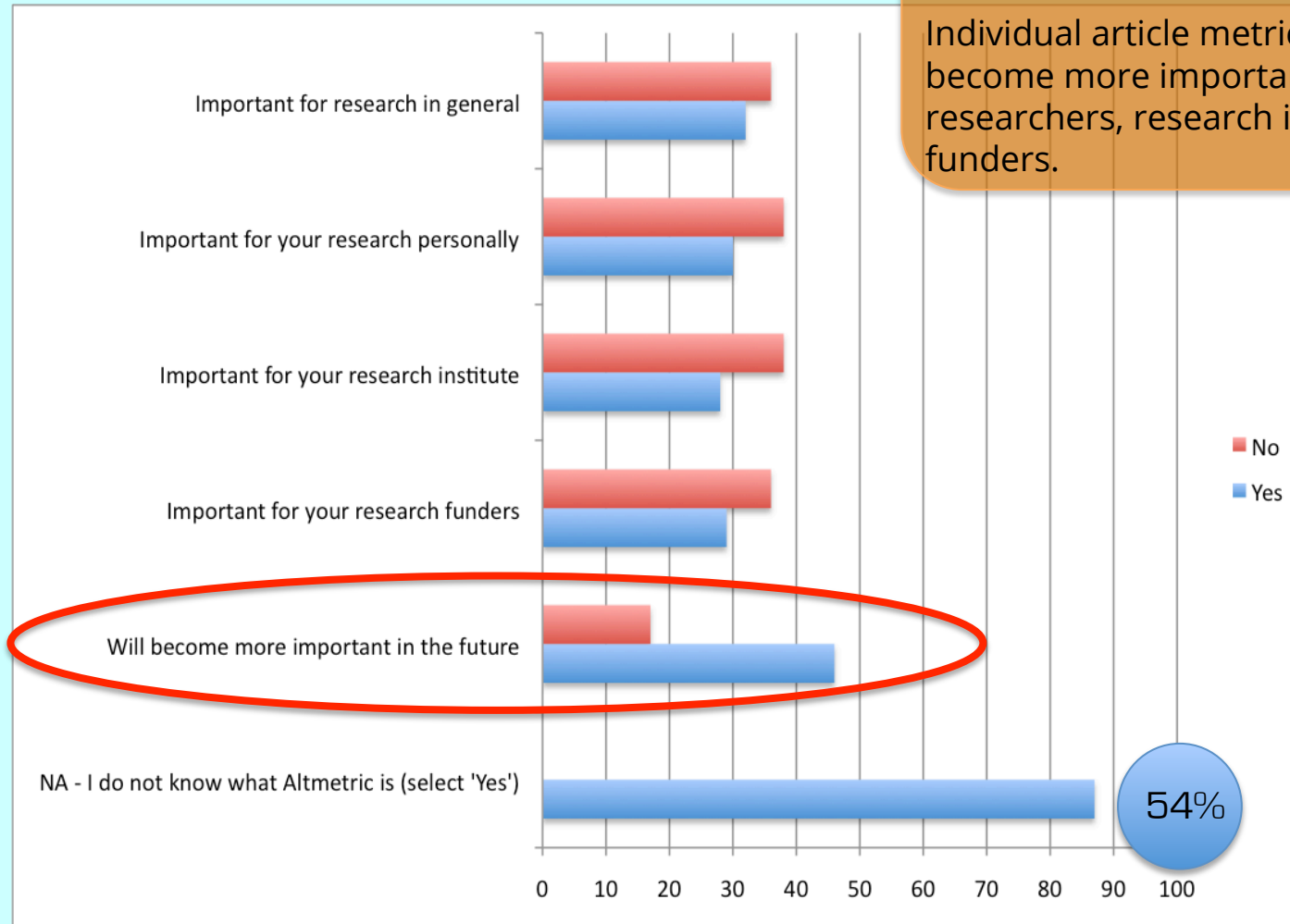




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## Do you consider Altmetric . . .



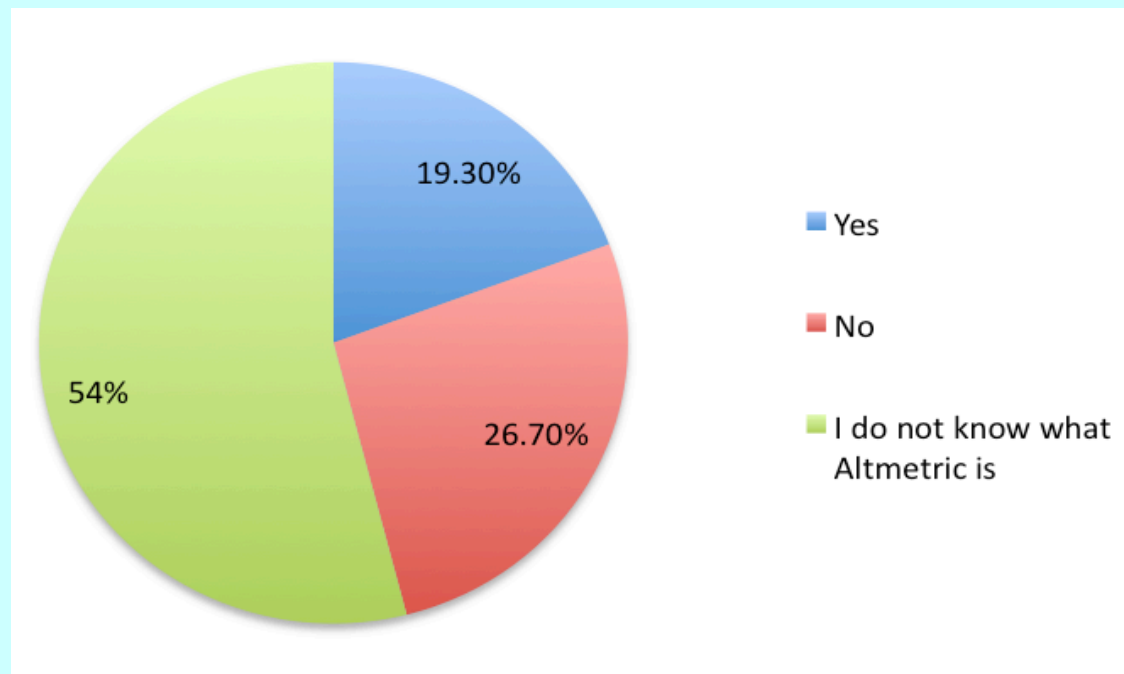
We were very surprised to find over 50% of our IBIS readers didn't know what Altmetric was.

Individual article metrics are certain to become more important in the future for researchers, research institutes and funders.





**Would you choose to submit your work to a journal based on their Altmetric performance (i.e. as a measure of how well the journal promotes their content)?**



Source: BOU Survey 2015



Those already engaged with Altmetric see the advantages to the extent that 20% of those surveyed would submit their paper to a journal which actively promotes their content on social media in order to drive their papers' Altmetric score.





Source: Altmetric

**Table 12.** Breakdown of scoring activity for top 10 IBIS Altmetric papers (2014)

Paper	Score	Blogs	TW	News	FB
A review of the impacts of corvids on bird productivity and abundance	183	1	208	3	140
Geolocator tagging reveals Pacific migration of Red-necked Phalarope breeding in Scotland	92	1	115	0	4
Assessing the potential for Grey Squirrels to compete with birds at supplementary feeding stations	60	0	47	3	2
A horizon scanning assessment of current and potential future threats to migratory shorebirds	40	1	43	0	3
The decline of Afro-Palaeartic migrants and an assessment of potential causes	36	1	53	0	5
Age-specific survival and movement among major African Penguin colonies	28	2	26	0	2
Understanding bird collisions with man-made objects: a sensory ecology approach	26	1	22	0	1
Exposing hidden endemism in a Neotropical forest raptor using citizen science	27	1	29	0	4
A Plains-wanderer (Pedionomidae) that did not wander plains: a new species from the Oligocene of South Australia	25	1	25	0	1
Supplementary feeding increases Common Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i> productivity but only in poor-quality habitat	24	0	17	1	5

As seen here, we largely drive IBIS papers' Altmetric score via twitter.



**Table 13.** Breakdown of Twitter activity for top 10 IBIS Altmetric papers

Paper	Score	Tweeps	Tweets	BOU Ts	BOU RTs	BOU + RTs	Men	Reach
Corvids	183	208	225	10	22	14%	28%	486k
Red-necked Phalarope	92	115	174	17	53	40%	38%	142k
Grey Squirrels competing with birds	60	47	46	6	10	35%	36%	89.1k
Threats to migratory shorebirds	40	43	51	4	4	16%	49%	513k
Decline of Afro-Palaeartic migrants	36	53	66	6	27	50%	45%	82.9k
African Penguin colonies	28	27	44	10	24	77%	82%	25.5k
Endemism Neotropical forest raptor	27	29	35	8	24	91%	98%	37.6k
Understanding bird collisions	26	22	25	4	14	72%	28%	60.3k
Plains-wanderer (Pedionomidae)	25	25	14	6	8	100%	100%	17.5K
Common Buzzard supp feeding	24	17	17	1	4	29%	29%	15.7k

The **BOU + RTs** column is the % share of Twitter activity which can be tracked to @IBIS\_journal. The **Men** column indicates the overall % of tweets that mentioned @IBIS\_journal.

We help to drive a paper's Altmetric score jointly with the author (top, Corvids with @arjundevamar – see Arjun's talk summary for more on this), with the research institute (second top, Red-necked Phalarope with @RSPBScience) or on our own (second bottom, Plains-wanderer) when neither the author or institute is on Twitter.



Source: Altmetric

**Table 18.** Altmetric data for ornithology journals to 31 Dec 2014. *Top performing journal in each category highlighted*

Journal	Score	Media	Blogs	Twitter	Facebook	Google+	Mendeley	CiteULike
IBIS	2,578	19	77	2,508	275	19	7,526	43
J of Avian Biology	2,043	19	38	1,983	217	83	3,919	25
Auk	1,628	36	76	935	105	20	4,685	5
Bird Study	1,286	2	9	1,691	103	1	1,026	5
J of Ornithology	1,147	36	30	812	131	16	2,366	64
Condor	857	17	26	673	74	7	2,299	6
Wilson J Ornithology	853	12	20	745	104	5	1,308	0
Bird Conservation Int	820	16	8	842	61	0	1,145	2
J Raptor Research	784	53	9	347	42	0	427	1
Emu	405	12	6	350	49	4	684	0
J Field Ornithology	267	2	1	333	43	1	912	10
Ostrich	179	2	6	150	29	0	156	1
Ardea	188	0	1	225	48	2	172	0
Acta Ornithologica	80	0	0	111	14	0	171	0
Avian Conserv & Ecology	43	1	0	31	6	0	172	0

IBIS is the top Altmetric performing journal in ornithology in 2014, coming top in four out of the above seven social media platforms in Altmetric, second in another and third in the remaining two.



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Acta Ornithologica	80	0	0	111	14	0	171	0
Avian Conserv & Ecology	43	1	0	31	6	0	172	0

75% -  
95%

None of the boxed journals had a dedicated Twitter account in 2014 (most still don't).

Between 75% - 95% of their respective Twitter scoring within their overall Altmetric score can be tracked back to @IBIS\_journal. We are working for all authors irrespective of journal.



Source: Altmetric

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Ardea	188	0	1	225	48	2	172	0
Acta Ornithologica	80	0	0	111	14	0	171	0
Avian Conserv & Ecology	43	1	0	31	6	0	172	0

55% -  
85%

Even for the three journals that did have a dedicated Twitter account, @IBIS\_journal still contributed between 55% - 95% of their Twitter scoring, further illustrating our wider role of promoting ornithology, not just the BOU and IBIS.



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# If Altmetric is important to you

## **Publish in IBIS**

- we will drive your paper
  - 4+ original tweets per paper
  - priority access to #theBOUblog

## **Publish in any journal**

- we will still cover your paper!

**Through social media the BOU works  
for ornithology, not just for ourselves**







# My articles on #theBOUblog

- What is Altmetric?
- Social media is relevant to your research
- Making social media and the web work for you
- Twitter #masterclass 1 – 8 . . . and counting
- Community blogs
- See **[www.bou.org.uk/social-media/](http://www.bou.org.uk/social-media/)**

