



Press Release: *9th July 2020*

Call for Supporters: How Readers Discover Content in Scholarly Journals 2021

Tracy Gardner and Simon Inger have announced they are seeking supporters for the 6th version of their large-scale research project identifying how readers discover academic content.

Since 2005, Gardner and Inger have led three-yearly wide-ranging surveys of user behaviour, mapping the changing nature of how readers, from all over the world, find academic content.

The 2021 survey builds upon previous surveys, allowing for longitudinal analysis over the sixteen-year span, and allowing for trend analyses over time. In addition, the 2021 survey explores discovery of Open Access content in more depth, asks specific questions about the discovery of the Version of Record, and builds on the 2018 questions about discovery of academic video content.

Tracy Gardner said “Our research provides the scholarly communications community with vital information about how researchers find content, and shows the difference in discovery behaviour across disciplines, regions, sectors, and job roles. We are able to make the report openly available to our community with the support of publishers, societies and intermediaries, and are very pleased that several organisations have already expressed interest in supporting our new study.”

Simon Inger said “How researchers discover Open Access content is not as straight forward as many believe. Maximising content discovery is crucial for publishers, and we hope this research will demonstrate how we, as an industry, can make the quality content that is published Open Access as widely discoverable as possible. Please come and talk to us about how you can support this research.”

The survey will be carried out between October 2020 to January 2021.



About “How Readers Discover Content 2018”

The full 2018 report, published under a CC-BY NC license, can be found at <http://renew.pub/discover>

Key findings from the 2018 research concluded the following:

- In the academic sector as a whole, abstracting and indexing databases (A&Is) appeared to be the most important starting point in search. Academic search engines (such as Google Scholar) were more important than general search engines (such as Google).
- Library discovery seemed to have peaked in its importance-rating and was only holding a strong position in Humanities, Education and Social Sciences.
- In 2012 we noted the particularly low traction of social media as a discovery tool in Humanities and Social Science, and it is in these two areas where we saw some of the greatest increases. Some other subjects are showed a real decline indicating social media was less important as a discovery tool in some subjects.
- Academic researchers (therefore excluding students etc.) rated academic search engines as the most important discovery resource when searching for journal articles.
- A&Is were significantly more important in the medical and academic sector than for all other sectors, and for the medical sector, of more importance than academic search engines.
- Librarians behaved quite differently to everyone else in search, preferring professional search databases and library-acquired resources.
- There were significant differences in search behaviour from high to low-income countries, with people in lower incomes countries using a wider range of search resources than those in wealthier countries who seemed to settle on just a few methods.
- Only the academic sector used Google Scholar more than Google. The corporate sector continued to make the least use of Google Scholar.

A list of presentations related to the research can be found at: <https://renewconsultants.com/showcase/>

Contact tracy@renewconsultants.com for more information.

Sign up for updates and news about the Discovery survey: <http://eepurl.com/gWnvID>