# United States Environmental Protection Agency

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was formed in 1970 as an agency of the federal government of the United States with its headquarters in Washington, DC. The EPA was created for the purpose of protecting human health and the environment by writing and enforcing regulations based on laws passed by congress.

Bruce Sorge is an Information Technology Specialist within the Office of Research and Development, based at the National Center for Environmental Research, part of the EPA. In addition to this, Bruce leads the organisation's Publications workgroup, a team tasked with keeping the EPA's database of funded publications up to date and look for new ways to analyse publication impact. We spoke to Bruce about how his workgroup are using the Altmetric Explorer for Institutions to track and report on the attention for the research the EPA funds.

## Using the Explorer for Institution

One of the main goals for the EPA is to educate the public and provide research and tools to support environmental policy around the world. Bruce and the workgroup's main objective for using Explorer for Institutions is to track and report on how the EPA's funded research is having an impact on the public.
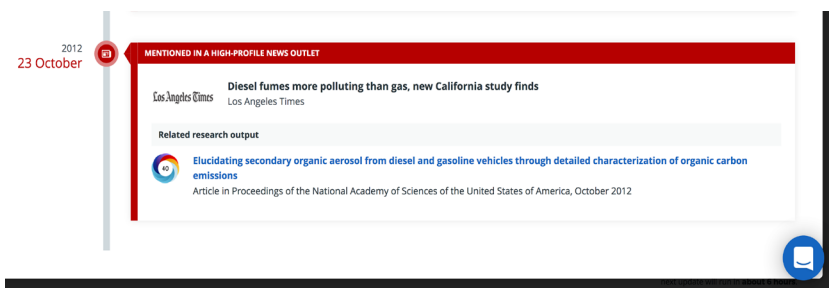
To do this the workgroup use the Explorer to conduct a variety of different searches for groups of funded publications. Using the Explorer's powerful search functionality, they can bulk upload DOIs and perform searches to quickly identify how much online attention was given to specific groups of funded research. Prior to using altmetrics, Bruce and his team only used traditional citation metrics and manually searched for mentions of their funded research in news stories and in policy documents. By introducing Altmetric data the EPA can now get a broader understanding of the engagement its research is receiving.

## Reporting on attention

Bruce and his team use the reporting visualizations within the Explorer to quickly understand the types of attention that specific groups of publications have received.

The team have used Altmetric data to create a poster, for internal use, showcasing the quantity, variety and quality of attention being received for EPA funded research. The poster was put together by an AAAS fellow, within the Office of Research and Development, and displays a timeline of the overall mentions for one of the EPA's research portfolio including the numbers of mentions from news, blogs, policy documents, Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit.

Bruce and his team were also able to use the mentions highlights tab within the Explorer to find high profile attention examples for use in the poster: one from the Los Angeles Times and a policy mention by the Publications Office of the European Union.



> From using the Altmetric tools and data Bruce's department appreciate that just because an article has a low Altmetric Attention Score does not mean that the article was not useful. They have also learned that there are many factors that go into promoting research online and what it takes to get an article noticed.

## Next Steps

Bruce and the workgroup plan on using the Explorer to track and report on the positive impact their funded research has on the health and safety of the people and the environment in the U.S as well as showing how their research has impacted the environmental policies of other countries. Having incorporated the Explorer into their workflows, the workgroup have been surprised to discover that their research has been mentioned in a number of unexpected outlets such as YouTube and other sources that would not have been noticed using manual discovery methods.

Going forward individual project officers and division managers within the EPA have expressed interest in looking at mentions for their portfolios, which may help them identify publications to highlight in synthesis reports as well as in the EPA's weekly newsletter.

**altmetric.com**