

Academic social network Mendeley generates 100 million API calls a month

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(Phys.org)—Publishing scientific papers is big business, so is connecting the dots between papers that are published and offering reports to those looking for reliable information about them. To fill the first need, scientific journals have evolved from paper only publications to online portals that offer researchers a very public platform for showcasing their work, even if most of those that wish to read the papers must go through a pay-wall. To satisfy the second need, two types of establishments have come about. The first is where companies charge people to access information about published papers and the second is where they offer it for free to anyone who wishes access under a Creative Commons agreement. At this point, it appears the second approach is winning.

Sadly, there is just one large open source site where academics can go

for vital information about papers published in their field; Mendeley, which was originally started as just a social network, ala [Facebook](#) for scientists. Over time though, as more people joined and used the site as a means for [peer review](#), the popularity of the site grew, so much in fact that the people that started the site added a database that linked not just papers being shared on the site, but information about those papers, and other papers published elsewhere. Once a database was in place, there needed to be a way to access data on the site, and rather than trying to write a bunch of apps themselves, the company chose to allow others to do it for them, releasing the APIs to the public in 2010, and because of that, the site now boasts 240 research apps, and is posting some hundred million API calls a month.

The other model, charging for access has proven profitable for companies such as [Elsevier](#) and Thomson [Reuters](#), but only because universities have been willing to pay large chunks of change for access by staff. That may be changing as the popularity of Mendeley grows. Documents pooled on Mendeley add up to some sixty five million, which is close to eighteen million more than the closest corporate site. Mendeley also reports that its toolset "touches" nearly two million researchers and covers ninety seven to ninety nine percent of all research documents published.

Popular apps on the site include ReaderMeter.org, Total-Impact.org and Hojoki. Each reaches into the site's database and extracts information that is useful in unique ways. Thus far, funds to run Mendeley come only from a dashboard app written in-house and which company founder and CEO Victor Henning has been quoted as saying, runs into the tens of thousands of dollars.

More information: www.mendeley.com/

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