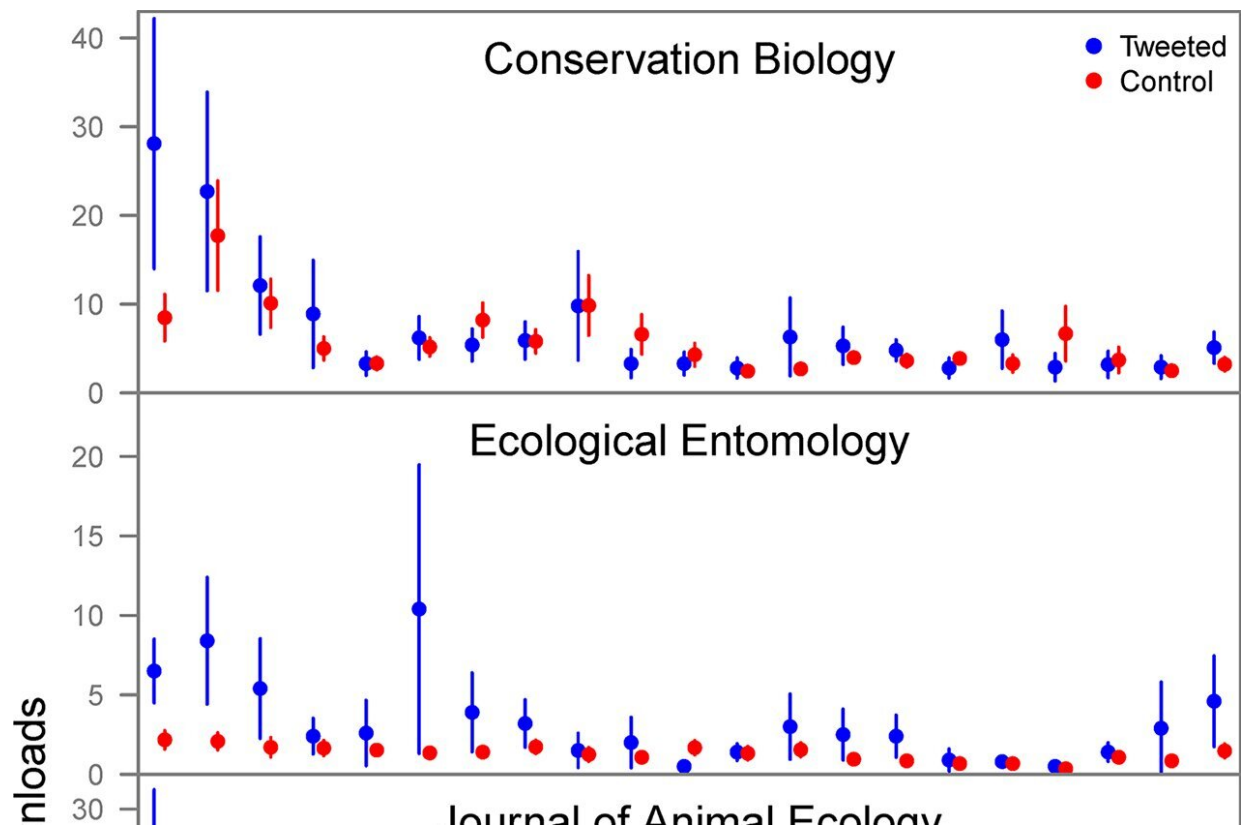


Using Twitter/X to promote research findings found to have little impact on number of citations

March 22 2024, by Bob Yirka



Daily article downloads for tweeted vs. control articles after the tweeting date. Data obtained from John Wiley & Sons for five journals for the experimental (blue, n = 10 per journal) and control (red, n = 40 per journal) articles, aligned to

the number of days after tweeting occurred for each experimental article. Credit: *PLOS ONE* (2024). DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0292201

A team of researchers with varied backgrounds has found that using X (formerly Twitter) as a means to increase citations on research papers has little impact. In their [study](#), published on the open-access site *PLOS ONE*, the group compared the number of citations for papers that had been promoted on X and those that had not.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that research papers gain increased respect when they are cited by others working on similar research. And an increase in respect can lead to promotions, grants and other less tangible benefits for those who publish them. Researchers therefore often work actively to promote both their work and its associated published paper.

In recent years, many in the science community have taken to [social media](#) as a way to promote their work. In this new effort, the research team wanted to know if doing so had any real, measurable impact.

The researchers tracked and counted the citation history of papers they had published or cited over the prior three years after promoting it, or not promoting it, on X. In compiling and comparing their results, they found that promoting papers on X had no measurable impact on the number of [citations](#) they received.

But they did find huge improvements in Altmetrics scores. Such scores are a measure of how widely posts, downloads, views or links are distributed. Such improvements showed that while their paper may not have been more cited, the research it described was reaching a larger

audience.

The research team suggests that despite the lack of increased citations, tweeting about their work brings other benefits, such as an increased awareness of their work both in and out of the [scientific community](#). And such increased awareness, they add, benefits society and the researchers, as well—it can lead [public officials](#) to support their efforts, for example.

They suggest that anything that promotes science helps to bring about more new science. They also point out that sharing their findings is both fun and exciting when non-scientists respond excitedly about their work.

More information: Trevor A. Branch et al, Controlled experiment finds no detectable citation bump from Twitter promotion, *PLOS ONE* (2024). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0292201](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0292201)

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