Altmetric

readcube

About
- asha.org and pubs.asha.org
- Headquarters: Rockville, Maryland, USA
- Professional association for audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists

People
- **Michael Cannon**
  Director of Serial Publications & Editorial Services, ASHA

Goals
- Improve dissemination of research findings to broader association membership
- Promote interdisciplinary best practices based on evidence
- Grow international awareness and use of research published in the ASHA journals

Approach
- Use Altmetric to pinpoint articles and associated materials of interest to practitioners
- Use ReadCube Discover to index articles and drive awareness to larger audience

Results
- Quick integration of new features into existing systems
- Essential addition of context to published material
- Greater awareness and use in international markets

Michael Cannon

ASHA spreads word of new research to drive collaborative best practice

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the professional, scientific, and credentialing association for audiologists, speech-language pathologists, speech, language, and hearing scientists, audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel and students. It has more than 182,000 members and affiliates in the US and internationally.

Approximately 4,500 of its total membership are primarily involved in research activities, the fruits of which are disseminated in four journals and 18 special-interest group Perspectives published by the Association.

Michael Cannon, as Director of Serial Publications and Editorial Services at ASHA, oversees everything to do with these publications, which are delivered via ASHAWire, the Association's publications portal. His role extends from management of production to being the editorial strategist for serial content.

Spotlight on the key research

Michael sees his main challenge as being to ensure that research published in the association's journals is brought to the attention of the membership as a whole, of whom the majority are practicing in the field where they are needed.

"Of our 182,000 members and affiliates, the vast majority are in the field delivering services," he says. "With the volume of research currently being published in this discipline, it is challenging for busy practitioners to keep up with it, yet it is highly important to do so. We have a big mission to get the research work of the smaller group to translate across the board to the much larger group of practitioners."

Achieving interdisciplinary insights

Another key strategic concern for Michael is to foster interprofessional education and practice. The Association's clinicians often work as part of interdisciplinary teams in, for example, a hospital setting, where a speech-language pathologist specializing in swallowing might be working on a team focused on post-stroke rehabilitation. "The more that members of such teams know about our research and its application, the better the outcomes will be for patients. We need tools that help users of research dive into the discussions about it among our practitioners."

Applications for Altmetric

Michael found that Altmetric was a useful tool for generating and spreading interest among the association's practitioners. Because Altmetric tracks the attention and impact of a published piece of research, practitioners could easily click on an article and see all the social discussion surrounding it. ASHA started using Altmetric as soon as it became available on the Silverchair SCM6 publishing platform.

Altmetric is also a more reliable tool for helping practitioners identify articles of interest than traditional metrics such as Impact Factor, *cont.*

says Michael. "The Impact Factor gets at the quality of the journal overall but doesn't provide the depth of insight into how valuable any individual article is," he says. "With our continuous publishing model and semantically connected content, we want to direct effort into broadening awareness of articles so that practitioners can more effectively engage with research and more easily see its relevancy. To many users, it doesn't matter as much how often an article has been cited. Clinicians need something that helps them sift through the research, to help them spot the material that is most applicable to what they do or need to know more about."

Rather than be "limited to our table-of-contents alerts to get the word out on our articles or issues" as he puts it, Michael says that ASHA is now also pursuing social media as a strategy with the support of the Altmetric score. In addition to the score itself, use of the Altmetric Explorer platform helps ASHA see how its research is faring compared with similar articles from other publishers. "This helps us get a better idea of what our users are interested in more broadly, and of where we're doing well or could be doing better."

"Altmetric gives us real-time awareness of article usage and insight into how or where to best promote particular studies further," he says. "We want people out in the world talking about our research, so connecting those conversations to the individual research articles helps provide valuable context."

Michael thinks that such impact assessment is an exciting development in publishing. "It is a barometer of the actual usage of the research paper itself, providing a better gauge of the impact of the content, not just the container. To be able to see that quantitatively through the score as well as qualitatively through the actual discussions and other material about the articles is a fantastic service for publishers," he says. "It lights a fire under us to more actively promote the research rather than just the publication itself."

Arresting attrition

Another challenge facing the ASHA publications is subscription attrition and market saturation. Libraries' budgets are being cut and there is little room left for growth in the US market, so Michael is looking at expansion abroad. To promote discoverability of its articles and grow audience, ASHA has had its complete corpus of article content indexed in ReadCube Discover to create a new channel of discovery for its publications. It is also promoting ReadCube Desktop as a tool for its members to use. "Researchers often like to get a PDF and save it, but that divorces the content from the platform. ReadCube's Discover helps rebuild that connection by recommending related articles and integrating with the broader literature," says Michael.

Ease of implementation

Michael was also impressed by the speed and ease with which Digital Science tools were integrated into ASHA's journals on Silverchair. "The average time taken for any integration with the Digital Science solutions was less than two weeks," he says. "It has been plug and play. There were no errors, no misunderstandings of requirements. Options are clear, and the project staff are efficient, knowledgeable, and dedicated to your integration and your success."