

Editorial

A Brief Guide to Author Self-Promotion

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Every researcher hopes to publish their research. It affirms the value of our work, allows us to engage with our peers, and contribute to discussions and debates within our field. However, it is not enough to be published. As researchers, we also want our work to be read and quoted, to know that our own studies are helping others develop their work – not languishing on a dusty shelf or unused website.

Authors can think that their involvement with their article ends with the acceptance letter from a journal's Editor-in-Chief. Once, this might have been true: the published article would be printed, and copies of the journal sent to various libraries, where it waited to be read by the small coterie of relevant experts. The best way to ensure an article's impact was to publish in a high-impact journal, and the only additional promotion opportunity open to the author would be self-citations in future articles. This is no longer the case.

In our digital era, with the increasing prominence of electronic education resources and the huge popularity of social media platforms, there are now a wealth of opportunities and avenues for authors to promote their research and enhance their impact. Authors now have the ability to dramatically increase the visibility of their articles and boost readership levels – especially when publishing in Open Access journals like the *Sudan Journal of Medical Sciences*. This editorial will outline some of the key steps authors can take to promote themselves and their research to a global audience and increase their impact.

1. Professional profiles

An up-to-date online professional profile is vital for academics and researchers. The profile should include qualifications, career history, any awards or funding received, a list of invited positions held, and a complete list of publications.

This information is sometimes included on the professional page with an employer/institution. However, it can be difficult to update this page with new information, and it can be lost when moving to a new institution.

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Platforms such as ORCID (orcid.org) address this issue by allowing researchers to collect all their professional and publication information in one place, connecting their research with their permanent digital profile. Researchers can also create Scopus and Google Scholar profiles, which incorporate the information from the ORCID account.

2. Enhancing visibility

The proliferation of digital content and social media platforms lets authors promote their research to global audiences. Authors can post summaries and links to articles on mainstream platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, and academic platforms such as Research Gate and Academia.Edu. They can write engaging blog posts about research and submit them to relevant scientific communities and list serves, and attract a far larger readership than would be possible with traditional print publications.

In addition to making content more visible to readers around the world, researchers can also make it more accessible. Published research is typically written for a niche audience of specialists in a specific field. This means the content can often be quite dense and difficult to understand for researchers in other fields and people outside academia. Authors can address this issue by offering engaging summaries which showcase their work to broader non-specialist audiences. For example, a short video abstract discussing the key points in the article can present research in a new way, making it more accessible to non-specialists. There are also services such as Kudos (which our publisher, Knowledge E, provides for free to our authors) which helps researchers to maximise and measure the impact of their research, explain their work to a new audience and track its dissemination across multiple platforms.

3. Engaging with the community

Finally, authors can increase the impact of their research by engaging with their scholarly communities. Formerly, this was only really possible at conferences, but now authors can use social media to forge new connections and debate key issues with people all over the world.

New connections and communities can be identified via relevant hashtags and key organizational social media accounts. Researchers can also subscribe to list serves and association websites in our subject or subfield and engage with new publications and

events via online comments and discussion forums. Liking, commenting upon, sharing content, and tagging people will also help to increase visibility.

The more connections a researcher makes, the more visible they will be, and the more opportunities there are for people to learn about their research and read their work.