

THE CONVERSATION

Monthly readership and metrics report - September 2014

- During September, UK-commissioned content was read over **3.6 million times** (including where re-published). See below for an explainer on what we mean by these figures.
- UK-commissioned content on The Conversation's website attracted just over **500,000 unique users** with **just under 1.3 million pageviews**. Again, these figures are explained in more detail below.
- From launch (mid-May 2013) until the end of August 2014, UK content had been read **more than 36 million times**.
- There are currently **17,240 active subscribers** to the TCUK daily newsletter, which delivers a daily round-up of the UK-commissioned content published in the previous 24 hours.
- Last year, as new university terms started, there was a marked increase in readership and engagement. This was thanks in part to the efforts of our university partner press teams in raising awareness of The Conversation among students and staff. Importantly, this increase in numbers was then sustained. We are of course very keen to replicate that this year. Partner institutions can help by:
 - Encouraging staff and students to sign up to the newsletter [here](#).
 - Mentioning us in any publications going out to staff and students. For example, our editors are happy to be interviewed and this could make for an interesting article. [Louise King](#) can provide you with any statistical information you might want.
 - Our editors are available to visit every member institution, speaking to academics and building engagement levels. This applies both to new and existing members. Louise King will help with the arrangements.
- IFL Science, a hugely popular science website which has been taking TCUK science content for the past few months (and thereby adding huge numbers to our readership) has unfortunately decided to change the way it does this. Rather than republishing academics' articles, they have decided to have one of their writers re-write them as news articles. Academics and their institutions are still named and quoted as the expert behind the story (see [this interpretation](#) of [this article](#) for example) and in this sense, the exposure possible for those writing science content for The Conversation has not changed; but we are no longer able to measure this exposure in the same way.

Highlights

- One of the biggest stories of the month was the Scottish Independence Referendum. TCUK has had the benefit of a Scotland Editor, Steven Vass, since February this year. He has been able to work more closely with academics at Scottish institutions and has ensured there has been a focus on this important issue for the last few months. As the vote neared, Steven was joined in Scotland by TCUK Editor Stephen Khan.



TCUK ran [its first video interview](#) with Aberdeen's Michael Keating a couple of days after the vote, and experimented with other things along the way such as [this interactive referendum map](#).

Our [Scotland Decides '14](#) panel has featured academics from Aberdeen, Cardiff, Durham, Glasgow Caledonian, Leeds, Warwick, The Open University, Coventry, Essex, Leicester and Southampton among many others. Coverage really ramped up as the vote drew closer, with those experts acting as a valuable counterbalance to what became a polarized and political debate.

*Scotland Decided: experts react to the no vote*¹, TCUK's rolling panel coverage on the day after the vote, was republished in [Business Insider](#) and has been read more than 21,000 times.

Scotland's indyref: history will now be decided in a final battle between hope and fear by Starthclyde's John Curtice's was quoted and linked to in the [Guardian's Scottish Independence Live-blog](#) (at 5.09pm):

- Following an article last month about graffiti and copyright issues², City University academic Enrico Benito was interviewed on BBC World Service's Business Daily on 4th September. The episode can be listened to [here](#).
- *The Human Race evolved to be fair for selfish reasons* by Durham's Rachel L Kendal³ was picked up by the [Washington Post](#) and [Guardian](#) and read 12,786 times across the different publications.
- Lancaster's Nigel Paul is co-chair of the UN Panel on ozone depletion. His article *After 30 years of protecting the ozone layer some reasons to be cheerful* was re-published by [The Washington Post](#) and [The Ecologist](#). About the access to statistical and readership information provided via TCUK's author dashboard, Professor Paul noted that "Your stats are brilliant. Having just led my department through the REF we are all being encouraged to deliver impact through "public engagement" but it's incredibly hard to capture anything quantitative around that. Your figures fill a real gap."
- Kevin McDonald of Middlesex University's *Islamic State's 'medieval' ideology owes a lot to revolutionary France*⁴ was picked up and republished by the [Guardian](#) where it was featured prominently on the site and widely discussed by readers with over 700 comments appearing below the line. Overall it was read over 86,000 times across the different publications which featured it.
- *Nine blows to the head and then he was dead: forensics shed light on killing of Richard III*⁵ by

¹ <https://theconversation.com/scotland-decided-experts-react-to-no-vote-31908>

² <https://theconversation.com/graffiti-copyright-battles-pitch-artists-against-advertisers-30291>

³ <https://theconversation.com/the-human-race-evolved-to-be-fair-for-selfish-reasons-31874>

⁴ <https://theconversation.com/islamic-states-medieval-ideology-owes-a-lot-to-revolutionary-france-31206>

⁵ <https://theconversation.com/nine-blows-to-the-head-and-then-he-was-dead-forensics-shed-light-on-killing-of-richard-iii-31751>

Leicester's Sarah Hainsworth was republished by the [New Statesman](#). It was then translated into Danish and republished by the website [Videnskab.dk](#). Overall, the article was read over 22,000 times.

Retsmediciner afslører: Så dramatisk var Richard III's død

17. september 2014 kl. 11:02 [0 kommentarer](#)

ForskerZonen Tilstanden af Kong Richard den tredjes jordiske rester vidner om, at han havde en dramatisk afgang til det hinsides. Se, hvordan han døde i videoen her.

Emner: [Arkæologi](#), [Historie](#), [Kriminalitet](#)

[Send](#) [PDF](#) [Print](#)

Af: [Sarah Hainsworth](#), professor, Materials Engineering, University of Leicester

Richard III: how was the king killed?



With thanks to



- Liverpool's Joao Pedro de Magalhaes wrote for The Conversation twice over the course of the month, with both articles being re-published and gaining large readerships.

*Here's to wine, chocolate and a long healthy life*⁶ was republished in the [Independent](#) and [medicalxpress.com](#) and read over 17,000 times.

*Ageing isn't fixed – we can manipulate it to live longer*⁷ was also re-published in the [Independent](#), as well as [livescience.com](#) and [businessinsider.com](#). It was read over 14,000 times. Liverpool also republished the article [on its own site](#), a great example of how universities can bring some of an article's traffic to themselves directly. It is worth bearing in mind that creative commons allows universities to do this as with any other re-publisher.

- *Could there really be such a thing as volcano season?*⁸ by UCL's Robin Wyllie was picked up and re-published by the [Washington Post](#), [ARS Technica](#) and [livescience.com](#) amongst others after originally appearing on The Conversation on 25th September. In total it has now been read over 111,000 times and is currently still one of our most read articles.
- *Invasion of the strange sailor jellyfish – what are they, and will they sting us?*⁹ by Southampton's Cathy Lucas was one of our most read articles this month. Picked up by the [Business Insider](#) and [IFL Science](#) sites, it has been read over 300,000 times.

⁶ <https://theconversation.com/heres-to-wine-chocolate-and-a-long-healthy-life-31587>

⁷ <https://theconversation.com/ageing-isnt-fixed-we-can-manipulate-it-to-live-longer-31808>

⁸ <https://theconversation.com/could-there-really-be-such-a-thing-as-volcano-season-32060>

⁹ <https://theconversation.com/invasion-of-the-strange-sailor-jellyfish-what-are-they-and-will-they-sting-us-31131>

- In September, two TCUK academics were invited onto the BBC's Women's Hour programme:

Fran Bigman of the University of Cambridge [spoke on the subject of abortion in film](#) on 16th September following publication of her article *Obvious Child: finally, an abortion film that's not all about the guy*¹⁰.

Josephine Collins of the University of the Arts London [spoke about normcore in fashion](#) on 23rd September following TCUK article *Normcore: when being ordinary becomes a fashion statement*¹¹.

COMING UP

Arts + Culture

There are lots of important films due for release this month so we are keen to hear from any aspiring film-reviewers. This might be a particularly good way for PhD students to get involved.

The Booker Prize winner is also due to be announced next week and we will have full coverage.

Politics + Society

We will be gearing up for coverage of the American midterm elections, following the likely second round poll in Brazil, and continuing to closely follow the fight against Islamic State and its knock-on effects.

Science + Technology

Our technology Editor Michael Parker will be covering the Wired Conference (next week) and Techcrunch Disrupt conference (week after). He would love to hear from any academics that are going along.

Education

A series is planned about higher education systems in Europe, starting with Germany. Pitches are welcome on reforms in Spain and the Netherlands.

Readership metrics – key data:

	September 2014	August 2014	Since Launch
New author profiles	290	174	3,765
Articles	427	380	5,209
Readership (including republications)	3,618,234	3,557,755	36,596,039
Average daily readership	120,607	114,766	72,755
Unique users visiting TCUK content	501,672	601,514	5,338,140
% of total TC global traffic	20.16%	23.1%	18.31%
% new visitors	60.4%	65.2%	-
Total page views on UK Commissioned content on TCUK website	1,277,957	1,379,796	12,752,151

¹⁰ <https://theconversation.com/obvious-child-finally-an-abortion-film-thats-not-all-about-the-guy-31205>

¹¹ <https://theconversation.com/normcore-when-being-ordinary-becomes-a-fashion-statement-31608>

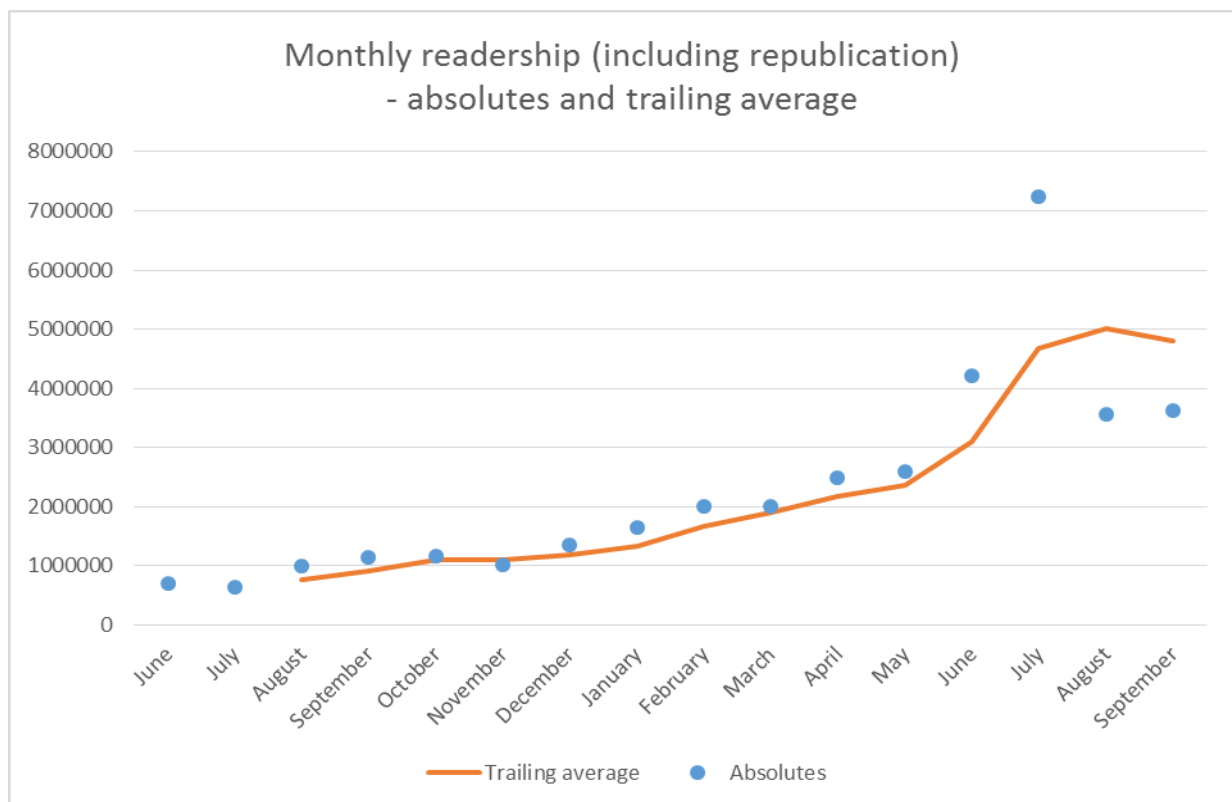
Total readership of UK-commissioned content (including where re-published):

Explainer:

Feedback from last month's report indicated that some clarification on what we mean when we talk about 'total readership (including re-publishing)' as opposed to 'unique users to the site' might be helpful.

As you will be aware, other publications are able, and encouraged, to take TCUK content and republish it. We ask that they follow certain rules when they do this, and one of these is that they electronically count how many times the page is accessed and feed this back to us. We can then give a total number of reads for the article, from all sources. These figures can be accessed via the author and institutional dashboards and are what is meant by "total readership". We normally state "(including where republished)" or "(including republishing)" for clarity.

So, **total readership** is the total number of times the article has been read on any site, be that The Conversation or a site which has republished and followed the rules about taking the counter. Occasionally, despite being asked to, sites do not use count the readership or do not feed it back to us but this could only mean that readership is then higher than it appears on the dashboards and in this report.



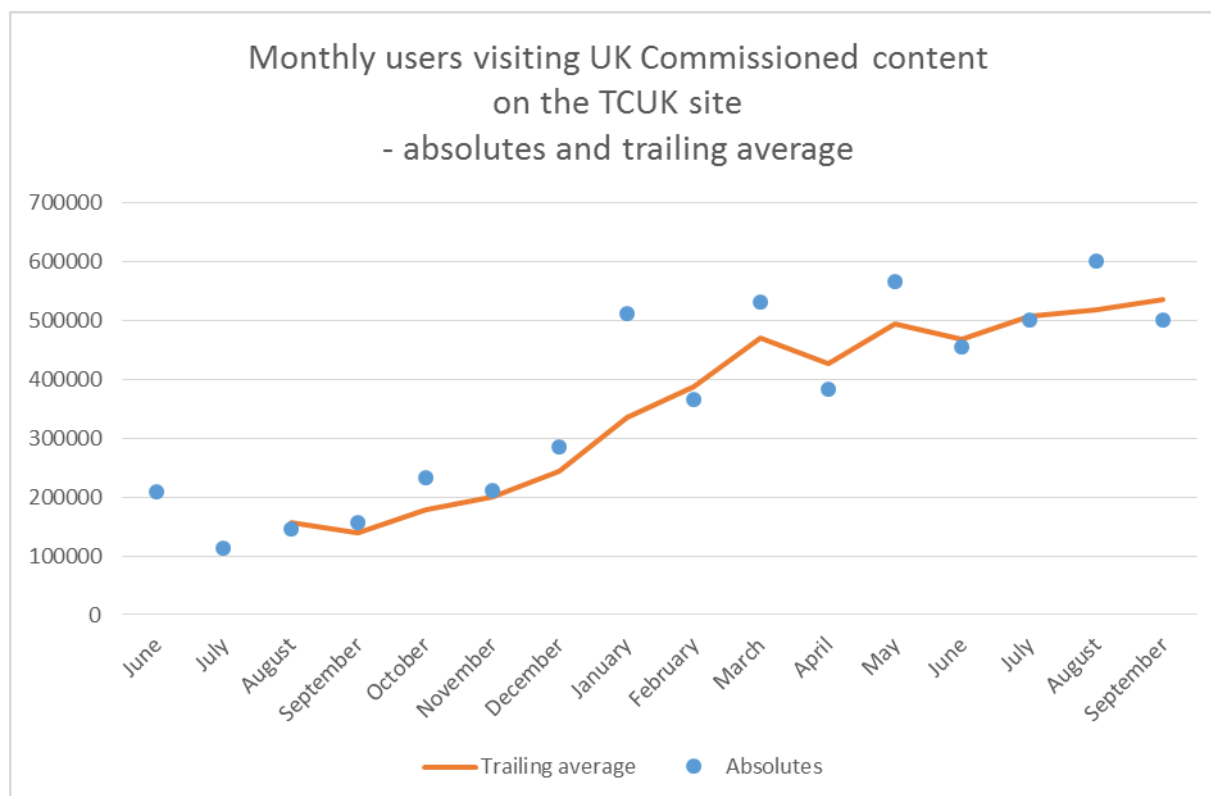
Unique users accessing UK-commissioned content on The Conversation:

Explainer:

The downside of measuring readership is that people who read the same article twice will be counted twice. To build a strong brand The Conversation also needs a focus on building traffic to its own site as well as on getting partners' articles into prestigious and well-read publications. For this reason, we also provide a breakdown of **unique users to the site**. This only counts users visiting the TCUK site, not those reading TCUK content on other sites. If someone views the site more than once over the course of the month, they are counted only once.

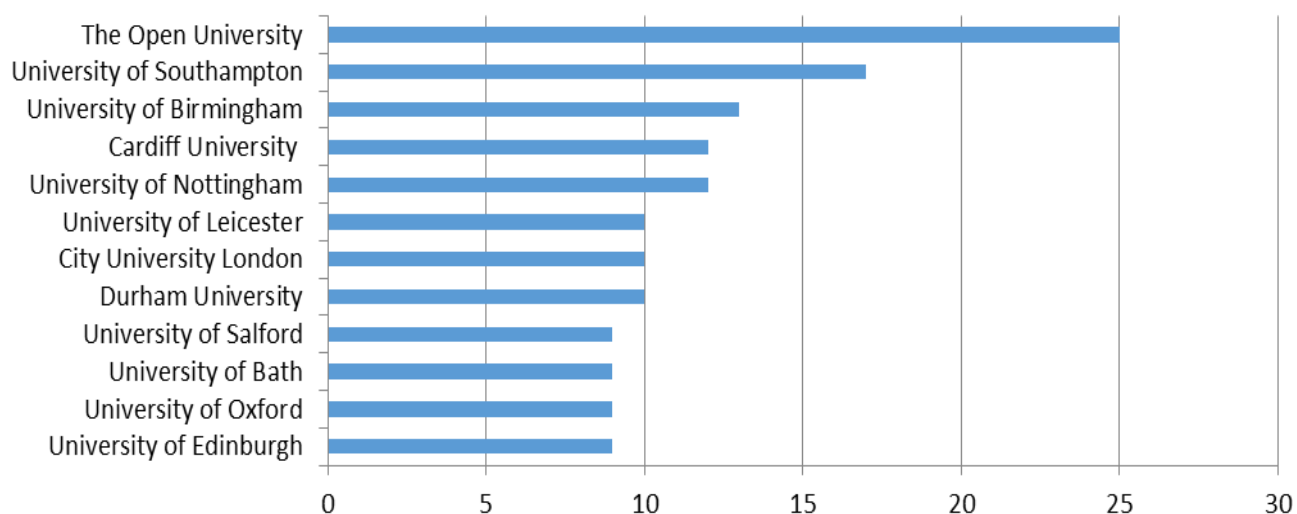
What we count as a visitor to TCUK has recently changed, however. Previously, anyone viewing content through theconversation.com/uk was counted. However, whether someone views content through theconversation.com/uk or theconversation.com/au largely depends on their geographical location. We felt that partner universities would be more interested in knowing the numbers of people accessing UK-commissioned content, regardless of the geographical location of the reader, so the number of users now excludes people in '/au' areas looking at Australian content and includes people in '/uk' areas looking at UK content. Last month we retrospectively calculated the figures since launch using the new method so comparison over time is still possible, though it should be noted that direct comparisons with the headline figures from previous reports would not be accurate.

It has been suggested that this figure is less useful to university partners than overall readership figures and that perhaps providing it just adds an element of confusion. We would welcome feedback on this.

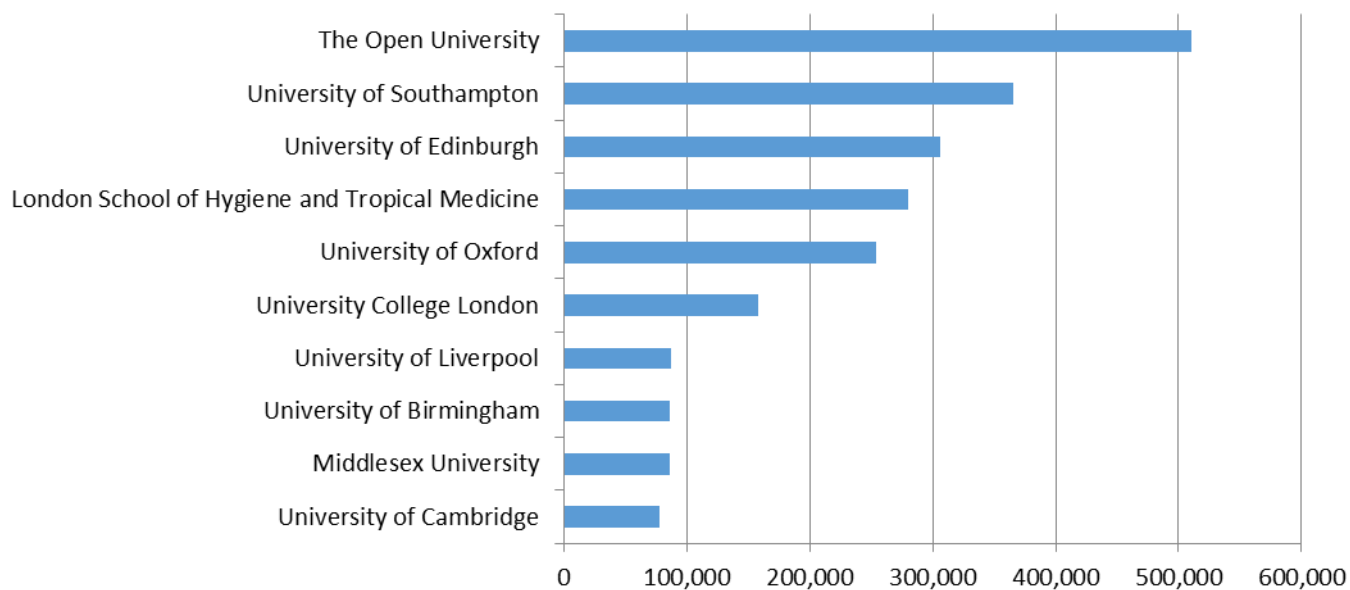


University contributions this month:

Top 10 universities by articles published

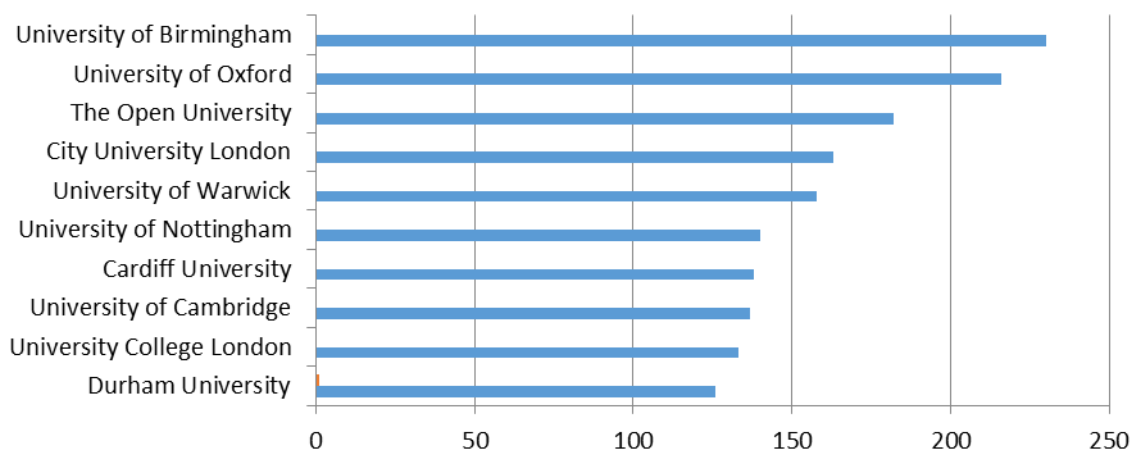


Universities by readership (September)

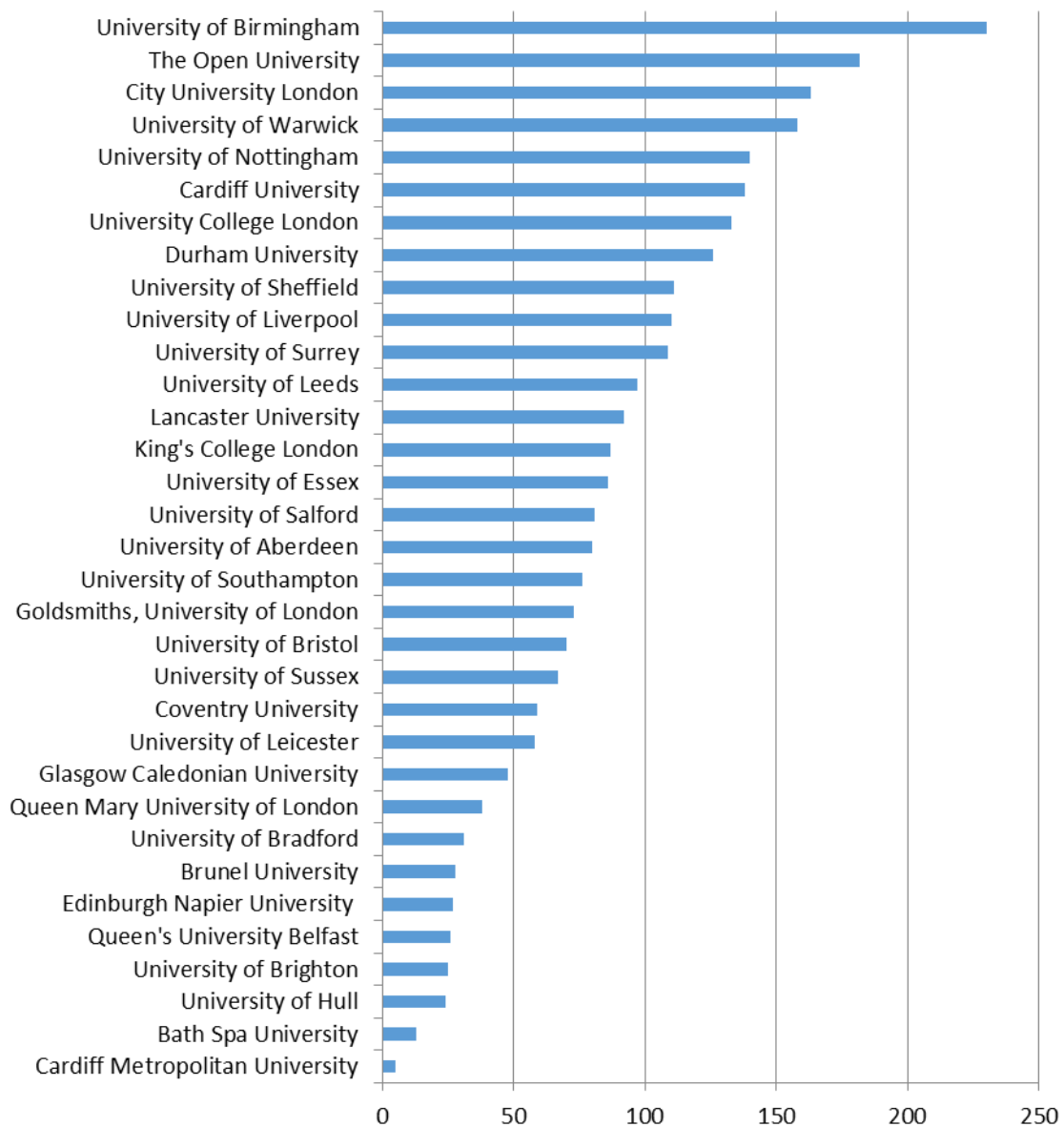


University contributions since launch:

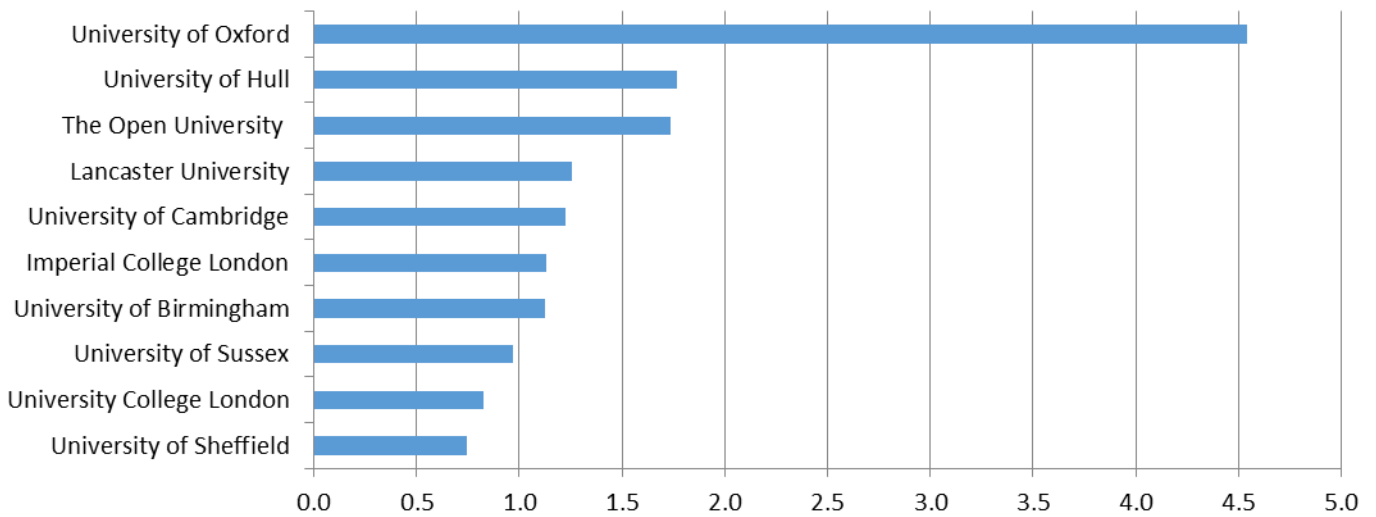
Top 10 universities by articles published (all time)



Articles written by Founding Partner and Member Universities (all time)



Top 10 universities by readership (since launch) (in millions)



Principal publications and media outlets which republished content this month:

Washington Post
Guardian
Independent
NZ Herald

The Ecologist
New Statesman
Discover Magazine
The Week

Videnskab.dk

Inosmi.ru

Slate.com
Mashable.com
IFL Science
Business Insider
The Epoch Times
Raw Story
Juancole.com
Phys.org
Disinfo.com
Thespiritscience.net
ARS Technica
Citizenpariah.com
Livescience.com
Io9.com
Wpcomwidgets.com
Lifehacker.com.au

Sbs.com.au
Qz.com
Science20.com
Workingoutwhatworks.com
Thatslikewhoa.com
Popsci.com
Digg.com
Psypost.org
Medicalxpress.com
Chemistry-blog.com
Realclearscience.com
Theoldreader.com
Goodmenproject.com
Opendemocracy.net
Tasmaniatimes.com