



From open to **impact**: Sharing your ideas beyond academia

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MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Open Science

“ ... a set of principles and practices that aim to make multilingual scientific knowledge accessible and reusable for everyone, for the benefit of science and society. ”



What is impact?

**Different
(hopefully better)
decisions**

4.3. Policy Implications and Future Directions

Our findings have implications for policy development in medical € gender differences in approaching self-employment suggest the n

group is at higher risk. Overall, these results demonstrate the impact of communication strategies on acceptance of crisis management measures: Our findings have implications for policy makers who design communication strategies to enforce restrictive policies in times of

Implications for policy and practice

Our findings have implications for policy and practice. Collectively

having reliable systems in place to identify mental health problems

subject to fiercer competition among employees, which impr
our findings have implications for policy makers and regula
providing tournament incentives to top executives.

these differ across population subgroups.

Our findings have implications for policy. The UK Government pla
“smokefree generation” policy, which would prohibit the sale of to



Impact

1. Relevant
2. Timely
3. Understood
4. Meta-research

The Economist

Fantastic, Friedrich

Can Winston Starmer pull it off?

Time to lift Syria's sanctions

RIP foreign aid

MARCH 8TH-14TH 2025

**The
revised
economic
outlook**





Impact

1. Relevant
2. Timely
3. Understood




Relevant

How to do research that can generate impact







Survey enquiries

Contact details for social and business surveys.

Last updated: 10 March 2025

Social surveys

Phone:

0800 298 5313

9am to 6pm Monday to Friday

9am to 1pm Saturday

Minicom (for the deaf or hearing impaired):

18001 0800 298 5313

Email:

surveyfeedback@ons.gov.uk





Relevant

How to do research that can generate impact

Do relevant research

Make your research relevant



Relevant

How to do research that can generate impact

Do relevant research

Make your research relevant

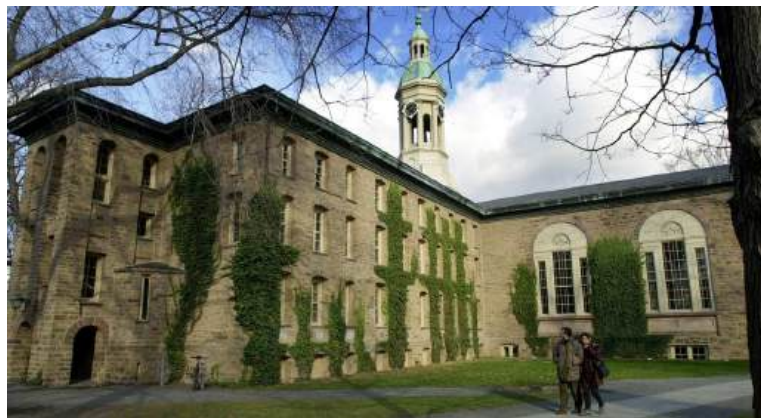
Do relevant research

Not everyone has to

Relevance is
unpredictable



Collatz conjecture



Ivory tower



Do relevant research

What information are
people missing?

What insights would
make for better
decisions?

What is my comparative
advantage?



MAXAR



Bad or no data

- Deaths in Sudan in last two years
- Russian misinformation efforts in Europe
- Population of the DRC (accurately)
- GDP of China (accurately)
- What climate change is likely

The information we have is terrible



The ~~information~~ opportunity we have is ~~terrible~~ enormous





The ~~information~~ opportunity we have is ~~terrible~~ enormous

**1. Schedule one hour to
think carefully about the
work you want to do over the
next decade from the
perspective of the decisions
it can influence**




Relevant

How to do research that can generate impact

Do relevant research

Make your research relevant



Make your
research
relevant

Make your research relevant

Sometimes easier

Almost always faster

Reexamining the Effect of Refugees on Civil Conflict: A Global Subnational Analysis

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 28 June 2021

YANG-YANG ZHOU  and ANDREW SHAVER 

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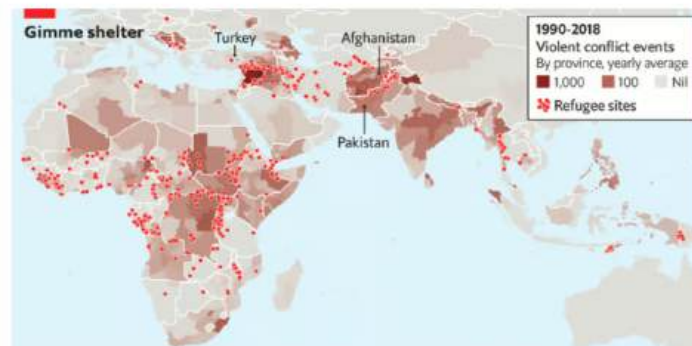


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Graphic detail | Daily chart

Neighbours fear that Afghan refugees could spark civil conflict

New research shows those fears are misplaced



Source: "Reexamining the Effect of Refugees on Civil Conflict: A Global Subnational Analysis", by Yang-Yang Zhou and Andrew Shaver, June 2021.

The Economist



Impact

1. Relevant
2. **Timely**
3. Understood



Timely

How to do research that can generate impact

Timely

Relevance is time-dependent

Decisions are often discrete events

Decisions are sticky





You need to plan

Timely

When can decisions be
impacted



Timely

When can decisions be impacted

Typically:

- Around the time they are being made



Timely

When can decisions be impacted

Typically:

- Around the time they are being made

However:

- Diffusion of ideas can take time



Timely

When can decisions be impacted

Typically:


- Around the time they are being made

However:

- Diffusion of ideas can take time

Tips:

- If working with journalists, know that they want to plan too
- Preprints are useful



2. If you could have one person read a paragraph about your work so that they could make a better decision, who would it be, and when? Can you make that happen?

Timely

- *Be on the lookout for decisions you think you can influence*
- *Stay on top of events relevant to those decisions (e.g. google alerts, reading the news)*
- *Strive to reach the people making these decisions in ways that make them have your information in mind when they make them*



Impact

1. Relevant
2. Timely
3. **Understood**




Understood

How to do research that can generate impact



The world as it is, not as it should be



What matters is not what you say, but what
those you seek to reach understand



Calibrate your message

- Think carefully about who you want to reach
- Figure out how they typically communicate and understand



Calibrate your message

- The compression needed for **effective communication is hard work, and not lossless.**
- Strategically **reducing nuance** is essential.



Calibrate your message

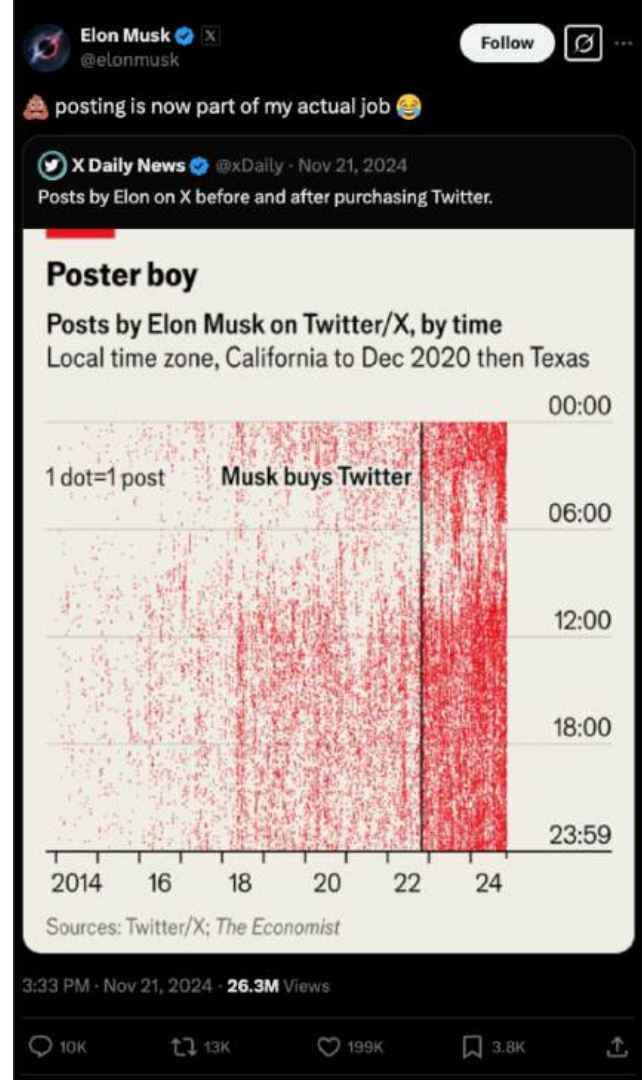
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Special: social media

- You have 5-6 seconds to establish interest, perhaps 1 min if you can do that
- Phone screen
- It can be fun to go viral, but impact is unclear


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SIMPLER = BETTER



3. How would you summarise your most recent paper in two sentences, without any jargon?



If in doubt, return to the three key questions:

1. What is it you are trying to explain?
2. What is your explanation (and perhaps, what are other, competing explanations)?
3. Why does it matter?



Impact

1. Relevant
2. Timely
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Three challenges

1. Schedule one hour to **think carefully about the work you want** to do over the next decade **starting with the impact you want it to have**

2. If you could have one person read **one paragraph about your work so that they could make a better decision**, who would it be, and when?
Can you make that happen?

3. Can you summarise **your most recent paper in two sentences**, with **no jargon?**



Meta-research



Meta-research

Approach how you think about
your research, and its impact,
scientifically

Based on the evidence before me
and what I know, how can I make
my work matter beyond academia?



Thank you!

From open to **impact**

Make sure your work is

1. **Relevant**
2. **Timely**
3. **Understood**

Meta-research: Approach maximizing your impact-and whatever else you seek to do-as a research question

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