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Scientific Summaries that Move

An interview with Wiley's video supplier on the use of video abstracts

To communicate to wider audiences, more and more academic journals are attaching videos to their written scientific articles. The giants of academic publishing such as Elsevier, Taylor & Francis and Wiley are slowly adopting video content. Nordicom Information had a conversation with Dr. Michele Avissar-Whiting, Operations Manager for video productions at Research Square, which partners with the publishing company John Wiley & Sons.

Wiley has outsourced their video abstract production to Research Square. What is Research Square?

Yes, we have a very successful partnership with Wiley, working with many of their proprietary and society-owned titles across a wide range of disciplines.

Our core business is the English language editing company known as American Journal Experts, which started up in 2004. The Research Square brand was established several years later in order to support our broader endeavors to find novel ways of helping authors publish their research and maximize its impact following publication. We are based in Durham, North Carolina, and currently employ nearly 250 individuals based both locally and in various locations around the US and the globe. A majority of our staff hold advanced degrees across a variety of fields, mostly in the life sciences.

When did the first journal you are co-operating with start using video abstracts?

We were fortunate enough to co-develop the video abstract product with Nature Publishing

Group in an intensive pilot performed in 2015. Since then, we have produced a large number of videos for SpringerNature, specifically for their BMC Series and Springer journals as well as for their Open Access title, *Scientific Reports*.

The use of video abstracts seems, indeed, to be most frequent in natural sciences, the field to which a majority of your customers belong. I see that in many journals, video abstracts are marked as “electronic supplementary material” and published elsewhere than on the journal's page, even on YouTube or Vimeo, which makes them harder to find. How do you perceive journals' adoption of the content?

The use of video abstracts varies a great deal among journals. Some journals have clearly prioritized this medium and feature many videos with each publication, others choose only to publish one video per issue for stand-out articles, and still others seem more or less oblivious to the trend. Among those journals that are adopting the medium, few have the necessary online infrastructure to incorporate the video into article pages or other parts of the website. Indeed, this requires an investment in engineering that journals may not

Maarit Jaakkola, Editor for Nordicom Information.

The Impact of a Video Abstract

Articles with **Research Square Video Abstracts** have **Altmetric scores that are 140%** higher than articles without video abstracts.¹

Those articles rank **33%** higher than non-video articles published in the same journal...²

and **18%** higher than papers published in all journals.³

Articles with **Research Square Video Abstracts** are accessed **80%** more frequently than non-video articles.⁴



¹n = 93, p = 0.02; ²n = 93, p = 0.001; ³n = 93, p = 0.0006; ⁴n = 40, p = 0.15

yet be prioritizing, so in the short term, outsourcing video hosting to brand-specific adjacent video platforms is the easiest and most cost-effective option.

Another barrier to large-scale adoption is likely the price. The price of a custom animated video abstract may be cost prohibitive for a smaller journal if their aim is to feature them abundantly and regularly, and it is likely cost prohibitive even for a large publisher to adopt at a significant scale.

Therefore, we are in the process of deve-

loping a simpler and less expensive video for journals or publishers that are looking to make such content a ubiquitous hallmark of their publication.

Many of the most eager video abstract adopters have been rather small but developing scientific journals. The use of videos seems to be regarded as one way for a journal to increase their impact factor. Is there any proof that a video abstract increases the outreach of a study?

This is a great question and one that we didn't have a clear answer to until quite recently.

Six months out from our initial pilot with Nature Publishing Group, we had data indicating that the articles with video abstracts had a moderately greater number of page views and substantially higher Altmetric attention scores compared with similar articles lacking a video abstract. Our

more recent analysis, on nearly 100 articles with our video abstracts, is even more compelling: their Altmetric scores are 140 per cent higher. They rank 33 per cent higher than similar articles within the same journal and 18 per cent higher than similar articles across all journals analyzed. In addition, they are accessed with 80 per cent greater frequency than similar articles without videos.

Perhaps it's worth noting that all statistics mentioned above, with the exception of the article-access stat, are statistically significant.

Examples of Video Abstracts

Hofstede, Gert Jan (2015.) Culture's Causes: The Next Challenge. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* 22(4): 545-569.

http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/suppl/10.1108/CCM-03-2015-0040/suppl_file/hofstede.mp4



Warne, Russell T.; Larsen, Ross, Anderson, Braydon & Odasso, Alyce J. (2015). The Impact of Participation in the Advanced Placement Program on Students'

College Admissions Test Scores. *The Journal of Educational Research* 108(5): 400-416.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVi-wSlcu2F0>



Our sample size for the last analysis likely limited our power, since data on article views/accesses are not universally easy to obtain.

Have researchers, according to your experience so far, welcomed the video abstract this way – as a new way of improving the impact of their research? How would you answer to the question of a routinized mid-career researcher: why bother?

First-time customers, whether they be early adopters or introduced via a partner journal or organization, are nearly unanimously delighted with their video and are frequently surprised by the quality of animation we deliver. Some researchers are beginning to see the inherent value of breaking out of their bubble and making their work accessible to a wide audience.

I see the stigma around personal-brand elevation and self-promotion in academia gradually dissolving. Our increasing uptake among individual researchers is a testimony to this. But publishers, particularly in an increasingly Open Access landscape, have a major role to play in this – authors want their videos prominently featured by the journals who publish their work!

Once an author decides this is a useful medium, perhaps the area of greatest challenge or, you could say, misalignment, is in convincing them that plain language need not yield an impoverished interpretation of their work. As Schopenhauer famously wrote, “one should use common words to say uncommon things”. In fact, this is the only way to effectively reach

a wider audience – one made up of voters, policy makers, and funding bodies – those upon whom the future of academic research depends!

How many people are involved in the production of one video abstract?

I’ve never had anyone ask the question in quite this way, but it’s a good one!

The production of each video abstract involves a script writer, a voiceover artist, and an animator. Correspondence between this production team and the client – typically, a researcher, a journal editor, or both – is conducted by a liaison, whom we’ve dubbed a Video Support Partner.

So, in general, four people are intimately involved with each project; however, the remaining members of the team, myself included, frequently operate in a consultative role, providing both technical and stylistic feedback on scripts, narrations, and animations. Each project is truly a team effort.

How do you think that the use of video is going to develop under the next years within scientific communication?

The trend toward communication via video and its integration into online editorial media and social media are indomitable, but the giants of academic publishing have been notoriously slow to adopt such trends. Nevertheless, the ongoing shift to paperless publishing will likely usher in acceptance to new and engaging ways of communicating, and the accompanying Open Access movement is prompting

Im, Eun-Soon; Pal, Jeremy S. & Eltahir, Elfatih A.B. (2017). Deadly Heat Waves Projected in the Densely-Populated Agricultural Regions of South Asia. *Science Advances* 3(8). <https://vimeo.com/227357064>



Leifeld, Philip (2014). Polarization of Coalitions in an Agent-Based Model of Political Discourse. *Computational Social Networks* 1(7): 1–22.



<https://lt.org/publication/what-are-core-mechanisms-drive-dynamics-political-discourse>

publishers to rethink how they do business.

As a result, I think we will see videos and other forms of creative media – animated and interactive figures and tables, for example – become commonplace alongside, or embedded within, traditional articles. I would like to see videos communicating “incremental research”:

it’s important for people to understand that the vast majority of published findings add a small piece to the large puzzles that make up human health, quantum mechanics, and environmental sciences. Most research findings do not represent a paradigm shift, but all good research deserves a spotlight.

What Is a Video Abstract?

- Video abstract is an equivalent of a written abstract, realized in the motion picture form. In addition to motion-picture abstracts, some journals also use visual or graphical abstracts as an alternative to written abstracts.
- The purpose of a video abstract is to help the viewer to get a quick overview on a scholarly article that it accompanies.
- Video abstracts are typically not longer than 5 minutes.
- Big journal publishers accepting video abstracts include, for example, Elsevier, Emerald Group Publishing, Springer Link, Taylor & Francis and Wiley.
- Examples of journals by big publishers that have been using video abstracts include *European Sociological Review* (Springer), *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *Information, Communication & Society*, *Journal of Children and Media* (Taylor & Francis), *European Journal of Marketing*, *Library Management* and *Young Consumers* (Emerald).
- Film studios specialized in the production of video abstracts include, for example, Latest Thinking and In Motion Science (IMS).

Publishers’ Tips & Guidelines

- *Make it short.* Writing out a script (even just bullet points) in advance can help you with this.
- *Be clear.* Tell others the purpose of your research, what methodology you used, what you found and its implications. Make people want to find out more.
- *Use images.* Pictures speak a thousand words so include images, charts, tables – anything that helps you explain the focus of your article.
- *Be heard.* Make sure your audio is clear, so others can easily hear you. Speak clearly.
- *Make it readable.* If you use slides, make sure there’s not too much on the slide.

Taylor & Francis: <http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/video-abstracts/>

Elsevier: <https://www.elsevier.com/authors/author-schemas/artwork-and-media-instructions/media-specifications>

Elsevier (graphical abstracts): <https://www.elsevier.com/authors/journal-authors/graphical-abstract>

Emerald: <http://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/multimedia/abstracts.htmf>

As the first Nordic media and communication research journal, the Finnish journal *Media & viestintä*, published in Finnish only, produced its first video abstract in June 2017. Watch our video on our webpage to hear about their first experiences, and a lot more: <http://nordicom.gu.se/en/nordicom-information-video-0217>.



Did you know that there are entire peer-reviewed scientific journals based on video? For example, the *JoVE Video Journal* publishes videos within natural sciences, with an Impact Factor 1.232: <https://www.jove.com/journal>. The typical length of time between a submission being received to publication is 5 to 8 months.

