Online Academic Profiles:
How popular are they?

Li Zhang
University of Saskatchewan Library
May 2, 2019

What is online academic profile?

- Academic profile is an online platform that allows researchers to create a professional profile, to organize and showcase their research, and/or to interact with other researchers

- Examples of research profile websites:

  ➢ **Author identifiers**: Google Scholar Citation, Scopus Author ID, ORCiD (Open Researcher and Contributor ID)

  ➢ **Academic social networks**: ResearchGate, academia.edu, Mendeley

  ➢ **Researcher's personal websites**

*Definition adapted from University of Newcastle, Australia:

Advantages of creating a research profile

- **Greater visibility** of your research and scholarly outputs, thus greater potential to attract students, collaborators, and industry partners

- **Accurate identification** of your works through use of a unique identifier (e.g., distinguishing between you and authors with the same name, variation in your name and how it is published)

Who is who?

Burgess, David John
Burgess, D. J.
Burgess, Diana J.
David Burgess
Burgess, Daniel James

Advantages of creating a research profile, cont'd

- **Demonstration of impact** of your work through citation metrics and altmetrics
- **Greater awareness** of research and scholarly activities on similar topics being done by others

Objectives of the Research

- What is the percentage of science researchers that have established a research profile on academic profile websites? Which website is most popular?

- What are their activities on academic profile websites?

- Are there differences in the activities from different groups (e.g. disciplines, professional ranks, gender)?

Methods

- Four academic profile websites are studied:

    Google Scholar Citations, ORCiD, ResearchGate, and academia.edu

- 129 faculty members at the science departments of the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) of Canada as the study object

- Searched the four profile websites to find if the faculty member had established a profile on each of the sites,

- Recorded relevant information and activities as provided on these sites.
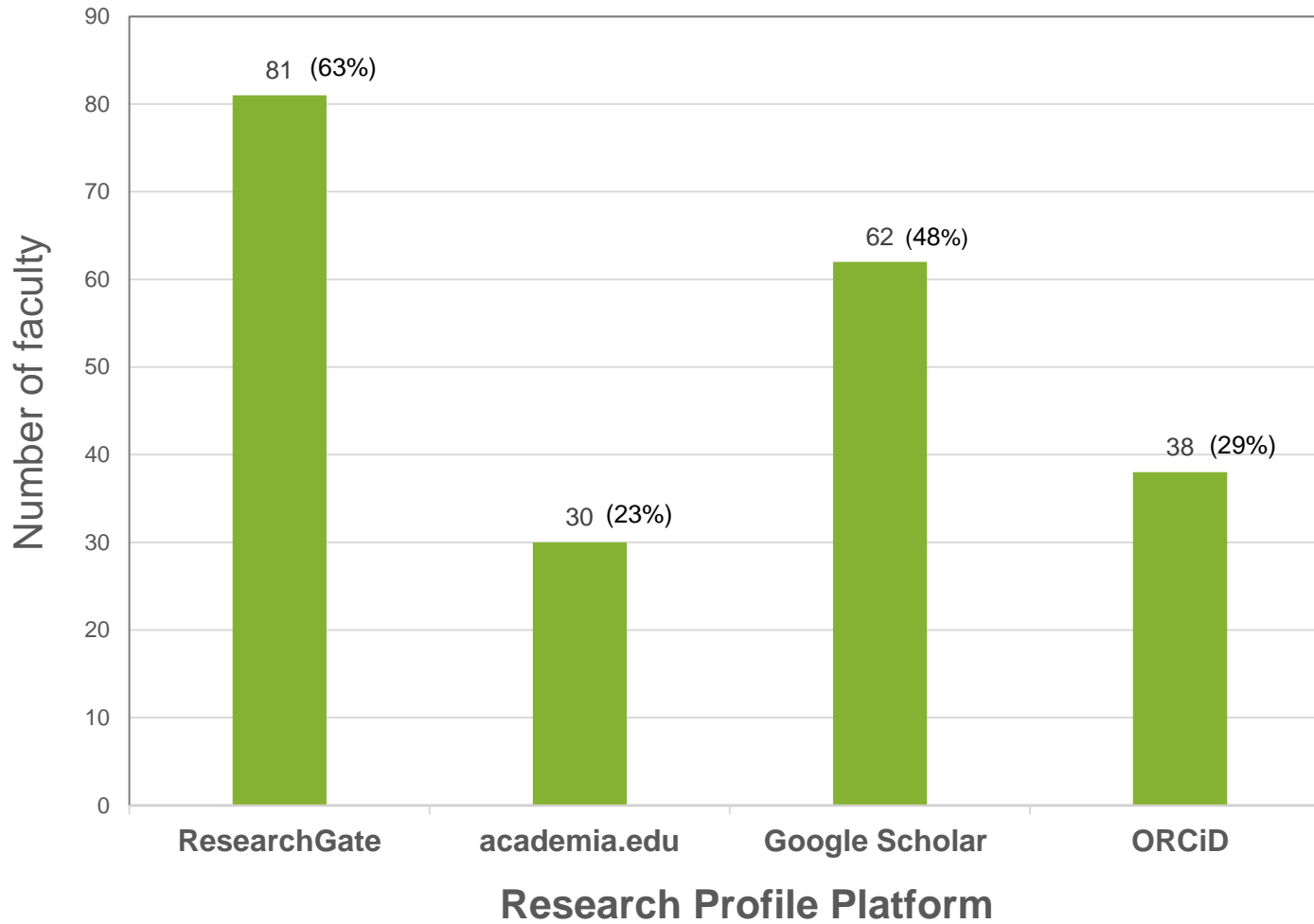
Information Recorded on Each Platform

Information Recorded	ResearchGate	academia.edu	Google Scholar Citations	ORCiD
number of publications	X	X	X	X
number of projects	X			
views	X	X		
followers	X	X		
following	X	X		
number of questions asked by the researcher	X			
number of answers provided by the researcher	X			

Presence Rate

- 101 of 129 (**78%**) faculty members had established at least one academic profile.

- Highest presence rate:

    Department of Computer Science (96%)

- Lowest presence rate:

    Department of Chemistry (65%)

- Presence rate of faculty members at different ranks (assistant, associate, and full professor) did not differ significantly

Popularity of Each Online Profile Platform

Average Number of Publications Listed

Department	ResearchGate	academia.edu	Google Scholar	ORCiD
Biology	55	4	80	22
Chemistry	72	1	48	58
Computer Science	107	49	155	43
Geology	151	63	175	105
Mathematics	32	25	32	9
Physics	168	45	169	8
All Department	**101**	**43**	**129**	**38**

Symbolic Profiles

A research profile without a list of works or any other interactions

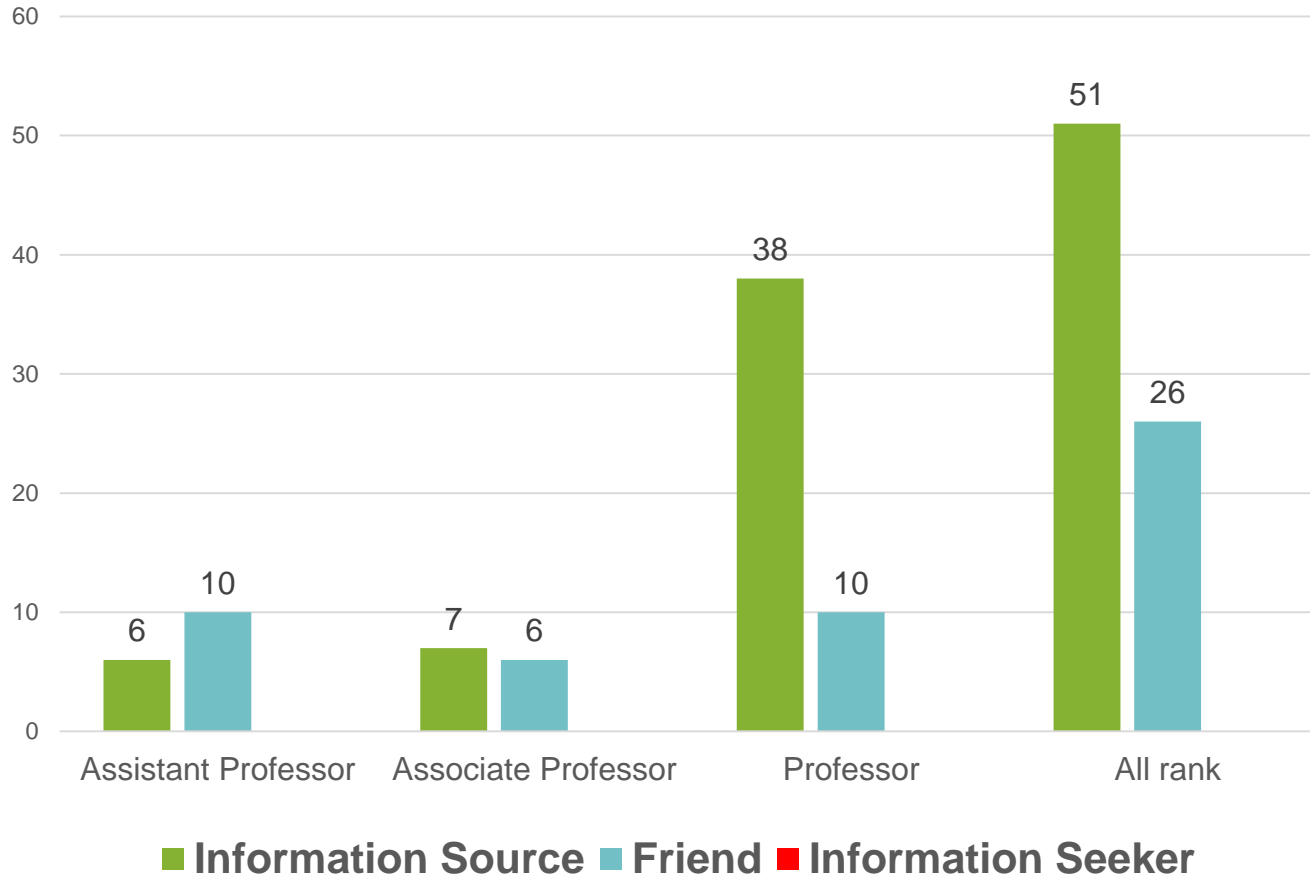|	ResearchGate	academia.edu	Google Scholar	ORCiD	All platforms
# of Symbolic Researchers	2	3	0	14	19
% within each platform	2%	10%	0%	35%	19%

Follower-following ratio

- Follower-following ratio was used to categorize users into three information behaviour groups:
  - ➢ **Information Source** users: ratio >= 3
  - ➢ **Friend** users: 1/3 <ratio<3
  - ➢ **Information Seeker** users: ratio<=1/3
- Attempt to measure the level of reputation, popularity, and influence

Information Behaviour Groups

No Information Seeker users.
Data from ResearchGate

Conclusions

- Age is probably no longer a significant factor determining social media use in research

- Higher percentage of symbolic researchers in ORCiD:

  ➢ A strong need to promote the importance of using ORCiD to distinguish their publications for name ambiguity.

  ➢ Assist users on how to add their publications to ORCiD.

Conclusions

- Academic social networks are mainly used for showcasing researchers' publications, and seldom used for discussion or interaction as very few conversations happed and very few questions asked and/or answered.

- Most of the science researchers at the U of S are Information Source users, none is information seeker, which confirms the University's research reputation from alternative perspectives.

Acknowledgements

- This project was funded by PSSHRC, University of Saskatchewan

- I am extremely grateful to Li Chen, the research assistant, for his invaluable contribution to the project.

Questions?

Li Zhang

University of Saskatchewan Library

Email: li.zhang@usask.ca