



## Researchgate Social Networking Site for Researchers

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### INTRODUCTION

Social networking plays a very eminent role in the modern era of globalization. By its introduction to scientific community through academic networking sites like ResearchGate, Academia.edu and Mendeley; researchers around the globe have been attracted more to it and have been able to display and share their research work. Open access publishing has added more to increased visibility of research work and easy access to information related to research, and scientists have been highly inspired by this, with reputable organizations taking initiatives and getting involved in developing the scenario further in a better way. However, there has also been a dark side to academic writing due to emergence of fake publishers, magical scientific indicators (that do not really exist in real terms in the research world) and bogus websites. The researchers almost always feel proud and eager to display their scientometric indicators to the scientific community but this notion has been blurred by introduction of academic pollution (in the form of predatory journals and fake impact organizations) in researchworld particularly, if this pollution is able to find a space in platforms like the ResearchGate. This communication aims to discuss concerns associated with leniency in ResearchGate policies and its impact on the scientific community.

ResearchGate has been regarded as one of the most attractive academic social networking site for scientific community. It has been trying to improve user-centered interfaces to gain more attractiveness to scientists around the world. Display of journal related scientometric measures (such as impact factor, 5-year impact, cited half-life, eigen factor) is an important feature in ResearchGate. Open access publishing has added more to increased visibility of research work and easy access to information related to research. Moreover, scientific community has been much interested in promoting their work and exhibiting its impact to others through reliable scientometric measures.

However, with the growing market of publications and improvements in the field of research, this community has been victimized by the cybercrime in the form of ghost journals, fake publishers and magical impact measures. Particularly, ResearchGate more recently, has been lenient in its policies against this dark side of academic writing. Therefore, this communication aims to discuss concerns associated with leniency in ResearchGate policies and its impact of scientific community.

ResearchGate's mission is to connect researchers and make it easy for them to share and access scientific output, knowledge, and expertise. On ResearchGate the researchers find what they need to advance their research. ResearchGate is an European commercial social networking site for scientists and researchers to share papers, ask and answer questions, and find collaborators. According to a 2014 study by Nature and a 2016 article in Times Higher Education, it is the largest academic social network in terms of active users, although other services have more registered users. While reading articles does not require registration, people who wish to become site members need to have an email address at a recognized institution or to be manually confirmed as a published researcher in order to sign up for an account. Members of the site each have a user profile and can upload research output including papers, data, chapters, negative results, patents, research proposals, methods, presentations, and software source code. Users may also follow the activities of other users and engage in discussions with them. Users are also able to block interactions with other users.

The site has been criticized for sending unsolicited email invitations to co-authors of the articles listed on the site that were written to appear as if the email messages were sent by the other co-authors of the articles and for automatically generating

apparent profiles for non-users who have sometimes felt misrepresented by them.

### **ResearchGate**

ResearchGate was initiated in 2008 as an academic social networking site aiming to help researchers cooperate, communicate and share information. An important feature of ResearchGate is social network support, which helps effective scientific communication among its members. It ensures that the publications are visible and accessible to the scientific community. Recently, Bill Gates and others have invested 35 million US\$ in ResearchGate. This reflects a significant interest in social networking tools in the field of scientific communication. Currently, ResearchGate reports over 8 million users and it appears to be the most popular social networking site. The substantial contribution comes from fields of medicine, life and physical sciences. Moreover, social sciences and humanities are less represented in it. ResearchGate leads over the other academic networking sites like Academia.edu and Mendeley by providing various user-centric interfaces to scientific audience resembling Facebook and LinkedIn. ResearchGate is free, and it allows its members to upload or list their publications on their profile page with their brief information. Metadata on publications, article level metrics and the recent initiative "RG score" is also available for each member. On the journal level, ResearchGate displays current impact factor of journals and other scientometric indicators.

### **Signing up for ResearchGate**

To start connecting and collaborating with researchers around the world:

Go to [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)

Click Join for free

Select which type of researcher you are

Enter your name, institutional email address, and choose a password

To finish creating your account, you will need to click the link in the activation email you receive.