

2019: Annual Report to the CAG/ACG on The Canadian Geographer – Le Géographe canadien

Overview

This is my ninth year of editing *The Canadian Geographer-Le Géographe Canadien*. During the first few years, I initiated many changes including the redesign of our graphics, changes in work flow, and expansion of the categories of papers that we welcome. Since then, our rate of change has stabilized, but we continue to respond to challenges and welcome opportunities to enhance the content and dissemination of our journal. This report summarizes our position in the industry and in the discipline of geography, and focuses on persistent challenges as well as emerging trends.

This report also summarizes and explains a number of metrics that describe the situation at *The Canadian Geographer-Le Géographe Canadien* at the end of 2019.

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Emphasis in 2019

The editorial team is always trying to improve and enhance the content and reach of *The Canadian Geographer-Le Géographe Canadien (TCG-LGC)*. Moving to online-only has allowed us to publish far more colour graphics and maps, although we are finding there is a lag in authors taking advantage of this opportunity. We are working to encourage them to use more graphical content. Part of the challenge is that, while readers are moving increasingly to consuming video and pictorial content, authors often do not have the skills to produce graphical content that might add dimension to the message of their text. We have a very skilled cartographer at Simon Fraser University (where I am based) who can create maps and graphics on a freelance basis for all authors.

As in past years, we continue to struggle to find reviewers (in a timely manner) for papers submitted and resubmitted. We have a long-term goal of reducing the time from submission to publication for all papers to under 60 days. Our only real obstacle in achieving that timeline is the difficulty of finding reviewers—followed by a persistent challenge with reviewers returning their reviews late and, at times, defaulting altogether. We urge geographers to accept and honour reviewer requests. We also profoundly thank the members of our editorial board and broader community who regularly and generously review for us. It has been a longstanding tradition for us to publish a salute to our reviewers, which we have done bi-annually. Starting next year, we intend to do this at the end of each calendar year.

2018 marked the start of our transition from special issues to special sections. We encourage Canadian (and international) geographers to submit ideas for special sections. This is an opportunity to collate papers that generate conversations and a range of ideas related to a specific topic. Special section papers are available to read and distribute as soon as they are posted to Wiley's EarlyView service and all contain a DOI at that point.

We continue to encourage authors to submit video abstracts. A number of key journals such as *Science* offer video abstracts and we view them as a means of distilling complex ideas so that readers can 'sample' a paper before committing to reading it. However, so far very few authors are submitting video abstracts, perhaps because it seems like another layer of work and there is a lack of institutional support for shooting and producing such videos. This lag is related to the lack of support in most institutions for creation of video and graphical content (see above).

As I mentioned in the 2012-2018 reports, all manuscripts are run through iThenticate – an online plagiarism detection program provided by our publisher, Wiley. This was the eighth year that we have used this service and when there are high scores, they continue to be principally to do with self-plagiarism. This is often legitimate as submitted papers can be based on white papers previously published online; they also draw from theses and dissertations. And the good news is that in 2019, we noticed a trend towards lower scores.

Manuscript submissions

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
English manuscripts	66	53	39	63	69	61	68	68
French manuscripts	9	2	5	1	8	5	6	3
TOTAL	75	55	44	64	75	66	74	71

Table one: Original manuscript submissions 2012–2019.

The submission count for 2019 shows a slight decrease from the previous year, due to a smaller number of French submissions. The numbers of French submissions tend to vary year over year, as you can see in Table one above. The trend for low numbers of physical geography and humanities submissions persists, with no manuscripts in either of those categories in 2019. As a consequence, we have stopped tracking these categories and are now reporting our submissions by language of manuscript.

We ran two special sections in 2019. The first was *Borders, borderlands, and bordering in Canada*, which was guest-edited by Victor Conrad and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly. The second was *Place-based policy in practice and Syrian refugee resettlement: The role of local immigration partnerships in three Ontario second-tier cities*, guest-edited by Margaret Walton-Roberts. These special sections have proven successful for us, and there are a number planned for 2020.

There were 11 book review submissions in 2019, which is somewhat lower than previous years, but we came into 2019 with a large backlog and had good representation of book reviews in each of the 2019 issues. We also published a special collection of reviews for a book by Josh Lepawsky, *Reassembling Rubbish: Worlding Electronic Waste*, that included a response from the author.

TCG/LGC: 2019 submissions by manuscript type

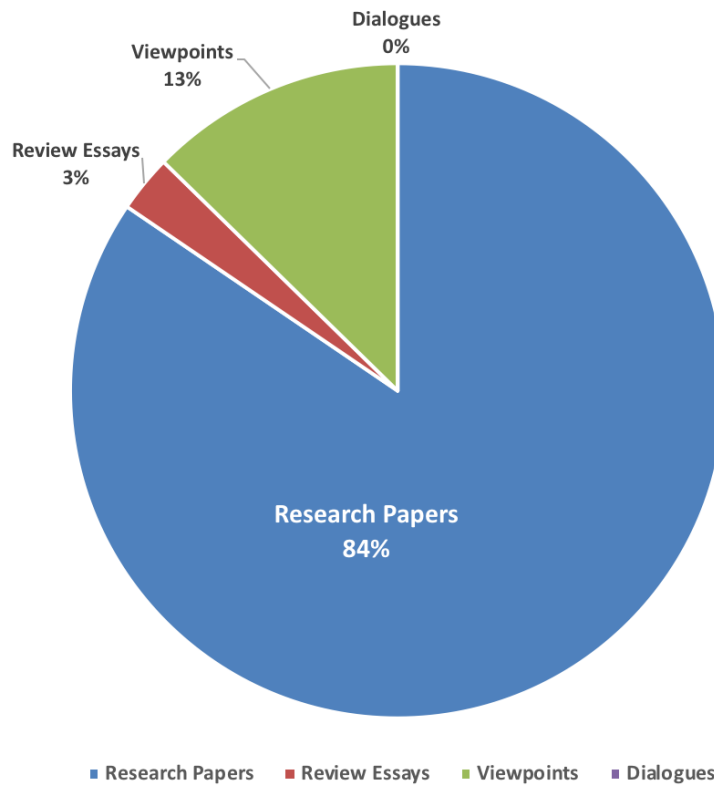


Figure one: Original submissions, by type in 2019. Research papers continue to comprise the bulk of our journal. Viewpoints have, however, gained significant traction even over the previous year.

Dispositions

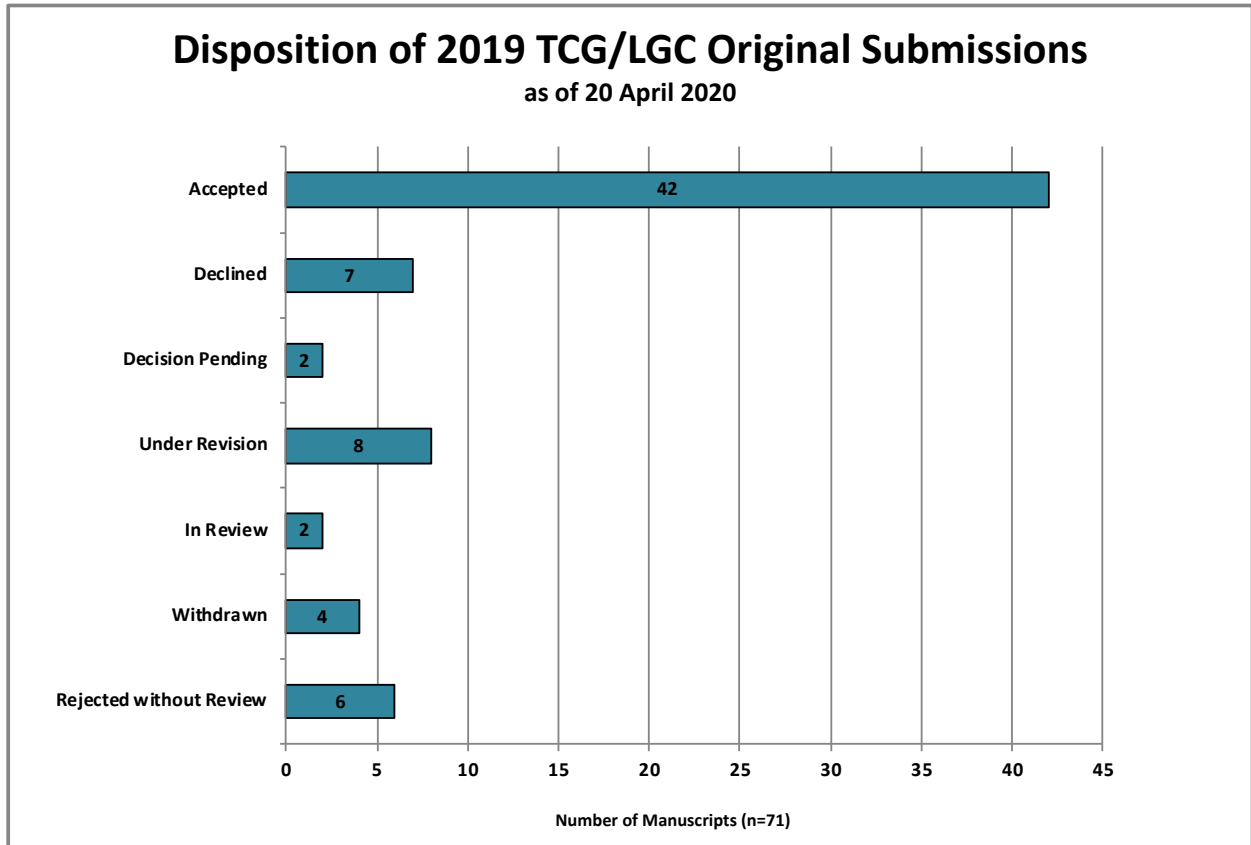


Figure two: Disposition of original manuscripts in 2019.

Our acceptance rate was high in 2019—largely a function of the high number of manuscripts submitted in 2019 for special sections that ran in late 2019 and will run in 2020. These papers tend to be vetted prior to submission. Our rate for manuscripts that received a Reject without Review decision decreased this year, likely a function of the high number of invited manuscripts.



Reviewing

2019 was a year of two trends pertaining to reviewing. Editors of special sections are tasked with securing reviewers in advance of their section papers being submitted, and for the most part this has happened and aided in each of these papers having three committed reviewers in a timely manner. It did not, however, always prove possible to find three reviewers; some special section papers have only had two. Further, while these reviewers have been secured in advance, they too have often been late returning their reviews—in some cases, months late, and there has been the odd default altogether.

Finding reviewers for regular papers proved even more challenging in 2019 than 2018. We worked with a limit of 8 invitations and while we did not use our new option of rejecting a paper for failure to find reviewers, we increasingly settled for two reviewers per paper. While this is not an uncommon practice, it elevates the risk of not having sufficient reviewers if a paper has to go out for a second round of reviewing. It is typical that at least one of the original reviewers declines to review a revised manuscript.

Our time from submission to original decision was worse in 2019 than the previous year. In 2018 the average time was 66 days; in 2019 that increased to 79 days. We have had a discussion about what we can adjust in our process to further address this—and have resolved to move more swiftly to accepting two reviewers instead of trying for three; and to “write off” a review if it is more than two weeks late and the reviewer has not responded to our queries.

Bibliometrics and rankings

ISI impact factors and rankings are reported in late June for the preceding year. The TCG-LGC impact factor for 2018 was calculated as a quotient in the following way:

$$\frac{\text{Number of citations in 2018 to TCG-LGC articles published in 2017 and 2018}}{\text{Number of source items published in 2017 and 2018}}$$

Our most recent Impact Factor is for 2018 and is 1.141. This is a considerable improvement over low point in 2002 and our more recent trough in 2015 and 2016 when the impact factor dropped to 0.88 and 0.89. However, it is a decrease from 2017 when our impact factor reached an all-time high of 1.477.

ISI Rankings are published by Thomson-Reuters as Journal Citation Reports, a part of the Web of Science.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
ISI Impact Factor	0.426	0.561	1.263	1.172	1.179	0.878	0.896	1.477

Table two: Journal Citation Reports Rankings and Impact Factors from 2010 to 2017.

We are keenly aware of the importance of impact factors. We wait with anticipation for the impact factor to be released every June. Moreover, we work very hard to attract “citable” papers by “star” authors while also working to fulfill our mission to Canadian Geographers in general. On the other hand, we remain cognizant of the fact that Geography is a small discipline and we are the flagship journal for the small discipline in a small country. These two defining factors mean that we will always struggle to increase our impact. There is simply a smaller pool of potential authors to cite papers.

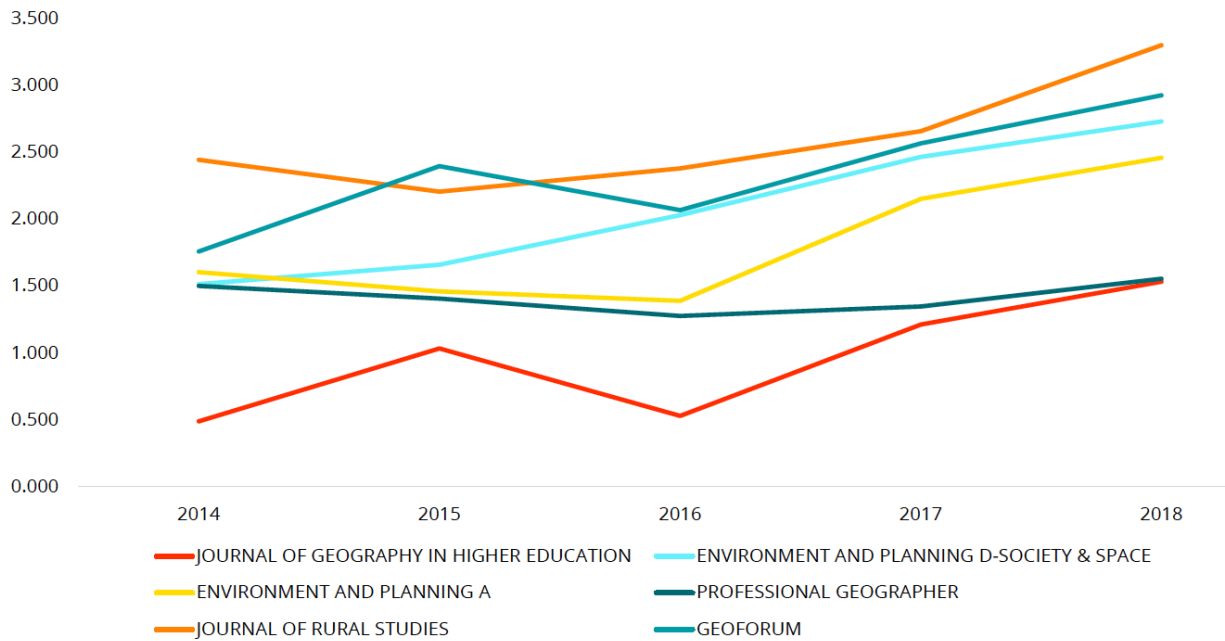


Figure three: Comparable journals and their impact factors between 2014 and 2018. Note that our impact factor compares with that of the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* as well as that of the *Professional Geographer*.

Academic citations

Academic citations remain the most important metric attributed to papers – as they are the basis for assessment of impact factor. For calculation of the 2018 impact factor, the top-cited paper was Laurence Berg’s description of the neoliberal academy. The second most cited paper was Daigle’s on spatial politics as they relate to indigenous self-determination.

DOI	Article	Lead Author	Institute	Country	Issue	Year	2018 Cites
10.1111/CAG.12261	Producing anxiety in the neoliberal university	BERG, L	The University of British Columbia	Canada	60:2	2016	10
10.1111/CAG.12260	Awawaneitakik: The spatial politics of recognition and relational geographies of Indigenous self-determination	DAIGLE, M	The University of British Columbia	Canada	60:2	2016	8
10.1111/CAG.12256	Transit-oriented development and gentrification along Metro Vancouver’s low-income SkyTrain corridor	LEY, D	The University of British Columbia	Canada	60:1	2016	6
10.1111/CAG.12338	Can big data tame a "naughty" world?	SALMOND, J	The University of Auckland	New Zealand	61:1	2017	6
10.1111/CAG.12329	Slow science, the geographical expedition, and Critical Physical Geography	LANE, S	Universite de Lausanne	Switzerland	61:1	2017	5
10.1111/CAG.12257	What is the fracking story in Canada?	OLIVE, A	University of Toronto	Canada	60:1	2016	3
10.1111/CAG.12275	Cultivating an ethic of wellness in Geography	MULLINGS, B	Queen’s University	Canada	60:2	2016	3
10.1111/CAG.12337	Going unscripted: A call to critically engage storytelling methods and methodologies in geography and the medical-health sciences	DE LEEUW, S	University of Northern British Columbia	Canada	61:2	2017	3
10.1111/CAG.12354	Core themes in textbook definitions of physical geography	DAY, T	OKANAGAN COLL	Canada	61:1	2017	2
10.1111/CAG.12315	The integration of Human and Physical Geography revisited	GOUDIE, A	University of Oxford	United Kingdom	61:1	2017	2

Table three: Top cited papers used for the calculation of the 2018 impact factor – the most recent that we have received. These papers must, by definition, be published during the two preceding years.

One of the challenges we face is that the majority of papers included in *TCG-LGC* are never cited. Below in Figure four, we see the number of papers that have not been cited represented in red. It has held steady over the last three years between 50% and 60%. By comparison, *Professional Geographer* sees between 40% to 50% uncited papers per year, while *Big Data and Society* has only 20% to 30% of their papers uncited. This rate of uncited papers is partly compounded by the mission of our journal to represent scholars in Canada—and also reflects the currency of the subject matter in our literature. Our increasing focus on special sections is an attempt to identify and deliver content that is timely and “of the moment”.

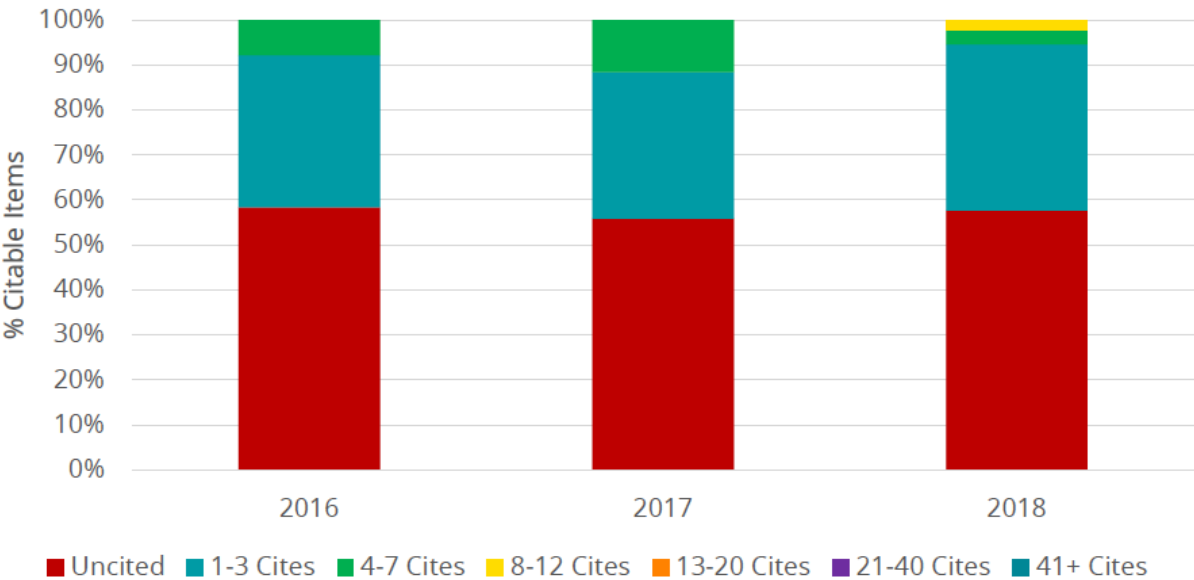


Figure four: Between 50% and 60% of papers published in *TCG-LGC* are not cited at all. This represents a higher percentage of uncited papers than in other comparable journals.

Institutional subscriptions and access to *TCG-LGC* worldwide

On the upside, our download numbers are trending up and *TCG-LGC* articles continue to be downloaded around the world – as illustrated in Figure five. Wiley is largely responsible for our impressive download rates as they market the journal through social media as well as email campaigns and through their international consortiums of journals that are sold to libraries. Figure six shows the top ten countries where downloads of our papers are happening.

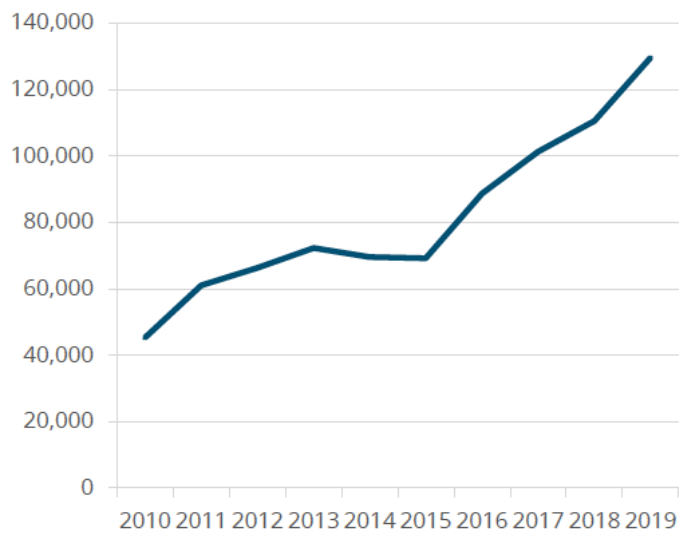


Figure five: Article download trends are positive.

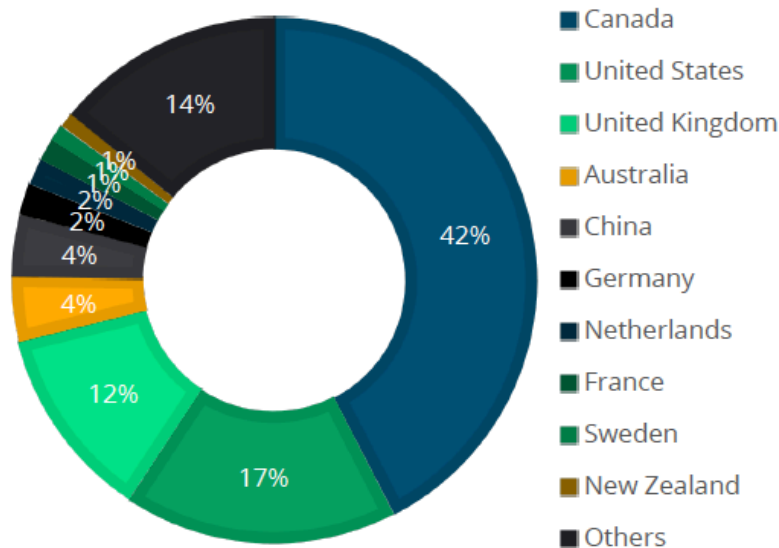


Figure six: Top ten countries that download papers from our journal.

The ten most downloaded papers in 2019 are from a surprising range of years past, again demonstrating that the 2 year and 5 year impact factors are not really relevant to *TCG-LGC*. Our papers have a much longer life than two years in terms of relevance.

Rank	Author(s)	Article title	Volume	Issue	No. of accesses
1	Lepawsky, J. & McNabb, C.	Mapping international flows of electronic waste	54	2	2,417
2	van der Werf, P., et al.	Food for naught: Using the theory of planned behaviour to better understand household food wasting behaviour	63	3	1,364
3	Liu, S., & Bromley, N.	Making news and making space: Framing Vancouver's Downtown Eastside	57	2	1,186
4	Dalby, S.	Canadian geopolitical culture: Climate change and sustainability	63	1	1,165
5	Pavlovskaya, M.	Critical GIS as a tool for social transformation	62	1	1,105
6	Castleden, H., et al.	"I spent the first year drinking tea": Exploring Canadian university researchers' perspectives on community-based participatory research involving Indigenous peoples	56	2	1,099
7	Jones, C. E., & Ley, D.	Transit-oriented development and gentrification along Metro Vancouver's low-income SkyTrain corridor	60	1	1,076
8	Lave, R., et al.	Intervention: Critical physical geography	58	1	1,042
9	Berg, L., et al.	Producing anxiety in the neoliberal university	60	2	985
10	Dyck, I.	Feminist geography, the 'everyday', and local-global relations: hidden spaces of place-making*	49	3	917

Figure seven: The ten most downloaded papers in 2019.

Altmetrics and the use of media exposure to measure relevance

Large publishing companies have started keeping track of which articles get media and social media exposure. This is another way to measure relevance especially outside of the academic community. A number of papers published by *TCG-LGC* have attracted such exposure as illustrated in Table four below. Clearly broadcasting newly published papers on social media will increase our Altmetric scores.

Score	Author(s)	Article title	doi
21	van der Werf, P., et al.	Food for naught: Using the theory of planned behaviour to better understand household food wasting behaviour	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12519
19	Pirani, N., et al.	Feminist cartography and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality: Emotional responses to three thematic maps	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12575
17	Pottie-Sherman, Y., and Lynch, N.	Gaming on the edge: Mobile labour and global talent in Atlantic Canada's video game industry	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12522
16	Shah, T., et al.	Geographic accessibility to primary care providers: Comparing rural and urban areas in Southwestern Ontario	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12557
10	MacDonald, S., and Birchall, S. J.	Climate change resilience in the Canadian Arctic: The need for collaboration in the face of a changing landscape	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12591
10	Olive, A.	The politics of water security in southern Saskatchewan	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12583
9	Decosse, S., and Norcliffe, G.	Regional restructuring of industrial sport: The case of elite hockey player production in British Columbia	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12569
9	Norman, M. and Andrews, G. J.	The folding of sport space into carceral space: On the making of prisoners' experiences and lives	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12540
7	Kendall, R. A., and Giles, P. T.	Satellite image analysis of changes in glacier cover in Canada's northern Mackenzie Mountain Range (1987–2017)	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12533
7	Nejad, S., et al.	"This is an Indigenous city; why don't we see it?" Indigenous urbanism and spatial production in Winnipeg	https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12520

Table four: Articles, published in 2019, with the highest Altmetric scores.



Final word

TCG-LGC remains in a strong position in terms of metrics, marketing, and readership. We continue to attract readers, citations, and downloads. This is comforting given the immense changes facing the academic publish industry including Open Access journals and a proliferation of publishing choices. Our aim is to hold this course in 2020 and beyond.

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