A need for research optimization?
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We believe that communication is essential. Here, we therefore would like to highlight a new approach that focuses on communication via the social media to evaluate how science can spread through society. In addition we propose a model that can help fund high-impact research based on communication approaches.

How could relevance be measured?
The Altmetric approach to measure spread of scientific work: First, all scientific papers containing the below mentioned keywords (blue, red, green, purple) that were published in the Nature, Science, or PNAS high-ranking journals between August and December 2012 were identified by the search engine PubMed. Next, the spread of this scientific work in new media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and newspapers was evaluated. This results in the Altmetric score.

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Increasing the funding of “relevant” research

Step 1: Identification of relevant questions
Is there a significant overlap between a problem that society faces and the applicant’s proposed study project?

Step 2: Statistical return assessment
Have similar studies yielded a benefit for society? This can be measured by analyzing patents, examining policy effects, access insurance information, etc.

Step 3: Prospective and retrospective analysis by peer-review
Personal interviews by experts in the field to assess potential in more detailed manner. Surveys work in the past can be used to estimate future effects.

Some proposal are accepted for funding. Their real impact will later be estimated on short, medium, and long-term basis.

Becoming one: Science and Society
It has been proven that sharing advice and expertise enhances productivity. We therefore suggest the creation of a friction surface concept between science and society. This can be promoted by a. valueing all research products, b. stimulating interaction between researchers and society and c. promotion of student networking. Novel tools such as Altmetrics could assist researchers and universities to monitor the spread of their scientific ideas. In addition, novel and multifaceted selection procedures might help to make better funding decisions.