Symplectic
A CDT Research Skills session from Cambridge University Libraries.

Title slide
Welcome to this short video about Symplectic Elements – the University’s research management system.

What is Symplectic?
Symplectic is a tool which enables Cambridge authors to keep track of their publications. This is useful for your own records and when you need to compile grant applications or an academic CV.

It’s a closed system rather than a public profile but you can share information within the University of Cambridge community. Accounts are automatically created for all new researchers, graduate students and academics when they join the University.

A major use for Symplectic data is REF submissions. The Research Excellence Framework is a regular exercise during which the University selects and submits its best research for assessment. The better the outcome of the assessment, the more funds the University receives for research so it’s an important exercise.

What can you do with Symplectic?
Symplectic is a sophisticated tool which can make creating a research profile simple for even the most time poor researcher:

- You can automatically populate your profile by setting up search criteria for your research across various databases such as PubMed or Web of Science. An email is then sent to you whenever a new output is found and you are given the chance to approve or decline it for your publications list. You can of course also add any outputs manually. Once you have claimed or added an output to your list it contributes to citation counts and other statistics collected by the system.
- A range of research outputs can be added from the traditional such as books, articles and presentations through to more innovative outputs such as media, datasets and conference posters. You can also record information about your teaching responsibilities, any prizes or awards and other professional activities such as committee or editorial board memberships. This is especially useful if you’re not yet publishing formally and can be used to create a solid basis for your future online profile.
- You can link your Symplectic account to your ORCiD profile if you have one. Whereas Symplectic is a closed system, ORCiD can create a public profile for your research, employment, awards and other activities. The two work together well to create an online academic profile.
- Symplectic also integrates with other systems such as Apollo, the University repository. Publications can be submitted to Apollo via Symplectic, saving you time. When submitting an authors accepted manuscript to Apollo it will be
checked by the Open Access team and they will either contact you with questions or approve your submission. This is a straightforward way to make your eligible publications REF compliant.

- You can also export your information from Symplectic in other ways. One of the most useful of these is the option to automatically download a professional looking academic CV at the click of a button based on your profile. This saves a lot of time for the busy researcher!

Your Symplectic profile

Let’s have a look at an example of a Symplectic profile. This view of a profile is what you will see on logging in. The ‘My publications’ section displays a list of your outputs including publication details, metrics and altmetrics and whether it counts as an Open Access submission.

A closer look at a publication shows some additional options including the option to hide or highlight a particular item in the public version of the profile. Remember that this public version is only available to members of the University and this may influence your choice of what to promote. You can also remove any duplicate items or reject a publication completely if it doesn’t belong to you.

Adding outputs to Symplectic

Manually adding your outputs to Symplectic couldn’t be easier. Once your work has been accepted for publication you can use the corresponding icon on the homepage to deposit your work into both Symplectic and Apollo. The following screens will guide you through the process of depositing your publication. The Open Access team will then check your submission and be in touch if there are any issues.

It’s worth noting that you can also add professional activities, teaching responsibilities or grants on the same page by selecting the add button next to the relevant heading. You will then be prompted to add some information on a form. Once you are done this will be added to your profile.

Key takeaways

Every researcher at the University of Cambridge automatically has a Symplectic profile and it can save you a lot of time when it comes to sharing your work.

- Even if you are not publishing right now, Symplectic can be a valuable tool which will become more useful to you over time. When you do begin to publish it can save a lot of effort by automatically uploading work to Apollo.
- Hopefully this video has given you some context for how and why we use Symplectic at Cambridge. Not only does it allow you to upload work to Apollo but also to showcase your wider impact and the link any grants to outputs you have produced. It works with a host of other research systems to ensure that the process is joined up and nothing is missed.
- Although it is an internal tool it can be used to make your research visible on publically available sites such as ORCiD or Apollo. In this way it’s a vital part of your online profile.
Thanks for watching
Many thanks for watching this video – we hope it was helpful!