



Laidlaw Research and Leadership Programme 2026 Summer Report

FROM VISIBILITY TO EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

Evaluating and growing the Accounting Streams community through digital analytics, benchmarking and user research

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Research period

Report date

Main text word count

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Six-week Laidlaw research project, Summer 2026

September 2026

2,800 words (excluding acknowledgement, tables, references and appendices)

Accounting Streams: open accounting education, digital community and evidence-led impact reporting

Abstract

Accounting Streams is a free, open-access accounting education initiative that aims to build a global community around innovative teaching resources. This project examined how far its LinkedIn presence is reaching the intended education community, what types of content generate engagement, and where the current evidence base is insufficient to demonstrate wider educational impact. The research was motivated by Accounting Streams' strategic priorities to map analytics to impact metrics, develop an impact report, strengthen internationalisation and grow an active community of educators, students and partners. I analysed LinkedIn Page Admin exports covering 4 July 2025 to 3 July 2026. Using Python, I cleaned and standardised follower, visitor and content data, calculated key indicators, coded posts into content themes, and compared results with external education and LinkedIn benchmarks. I also designed two short Qualtrics surveys for educators and students to address questions that platform analytics cannot answer. The analysis found 3,626 followers, including 1,359 new followers during the export period; 61.9% of followers were in Higher Education. Forty-six posts generated 46,908 impressions, 3,896 clicks and an aggregate engagement rate of about 10.0%. However, the dashboard showed zero custom-button clicks, and comments averaged only 0.63 per post. The evidence therefore demonstrates strong audience fit and attention, but not yet resource adoption or learning outcomes. I recommend moving from a visibility dashboard to a conversion dashboard using UTM links, GA4, clearer calls to action, two posts per week, individual-level community mapping and repeated quarterly data exports. The proposed surveys provide the next step toward measuring why users engage, what prevents greater use, and what would increase adoption.

Keywords: Accounting education; open educational resources; LinkedIn analytics; impact measurement; digital engagement; user research.

0. Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Professor Susan Smith for supervising this project and for helping me refine the research from a descriptive social-media analysis into a more rigorous impact-reporting exercise. I am also grateful to the Accounting Streams team for providing access to the LinkedIn administrator dashboard and project strategy documents, and to UCL and the Laidlaw Foundation for supporting the six-week research placement. Their feedback encouraged me to think critically about the difference between visibility, engagement and demonstrable educational impact.

1. Introduction

Accounting Streams describes its mission as transforming accounting education by developing versatile decision-makers who value accountability and sustainable development. Its wider aim is to create a globally recognised ecosystem of innovative, open resources around accounting education. This makes communication data strategically important: the project needs to know not only how many people encounter its materials, but whether the audience is relevant, whether engagement is sustained, and whether visibility eventually produces adoption, contribution or other forms of educational value.

The internal strategy document already identifies strong early reach. By early 2026, Accounting Streams reported approximately 70,000 interactions since September 2024 and engagement from 126 countries. It also sets 2026 targets of 135 countries, 100,000 annual interactions, 50 active contributors, more than 30,000 in external grants, one major award and one publication, and 10% non-UCL funding. The longer-term 2028 vision is more ambitious: Accounting Streams should be recognised by global educators as a benchmark for sustainability-integrated accounting teaching and should have an active community of more than 500 contributors and adopters.

These targets reveal an important measurement problem. A high number of impressions or followers is useful evidence of awareness, but it does not by itself show that teaching resources are used, that students learn from them, or that educators become active contributors. My research therefore treats LinkedIn as one stage in a wider evidence chain rather than as a complete measure of impact. The central question is:

“To what extent has Accounting Streams built and engaged an education-relevant digital audience, where does the measurable evidence pathway currently break down, and what additional evidence is needed to assess educational impact?”

This framing moves the project from a descriptive dashboard towards an impact-reporting framework that can support strategic decisions, future funding bids and long-term evaluation.

2. Project Overview

The project was completed over six weeks and combined data analysis, benchmarking and user-research design. In the first stage, I clarified the supervisor’s questions and reviewed the Accounting Streams strategic document to identify the metrics that matter for educational impact, community development, visibility and internationalisation. I then accessed the LinkedIn administrator dashboard and exported Followers, Visitors and Content analytics. Search-appearance data, which was visible on the dashboard but not available in the same export format, was recorded separately from screenshots.

The quantitative dataset covered a consistent twelve-month window from 4 July 2025 to 3 July 2026. I used this period as the principal empirical baseline. Earlier project-level figures from 2024/25 were used only to build a multi-year narrative because they measure different forms of interaction and are not directly comparable with LinkedIn impressions or clicks. The final stage of the placement focused on benchmark comparison, gap diagnosis, practical recommendations and the design of two short surveys for future use in Qualtrics.

The research therefore produced five linked outputs: a cleaned LinkedIn dataset, a set of Python-based summary metrics and visualisations, a benchmark and gap analysis, a concrete measurement and communication plan, and survey instruments for educators and students.

Table 2. Six-week research workflow

Week	Main activity	Output
1	Define research question; review strategy and dashboard	Impact-measurement framework
2	Export Followers, Visitors and Content; record search evidence	Raw data archive
3	Clean and standardise data in Python	Analysis-ready datasets
4	Audience segmentation, content coding and visualisation	KPI tables and charts
5	External benchmarking and gap analysis	Benchmark/gap framework
6	Recommendations and two Qualtrics survey designs	Future measurement plan

3. Aim and Objectives

The main aim was to evaluate whether Accounting Streams’ digital visibility is developing into an engaged and strategically relevant education community, and to identify what evidence is still needed to demonstrate impact.

Four objectives supported this aim. First, I analysed follower growth and audience composition by industry, job function, seniority, company size and location. Second, I examined visitor and content data to understand the pathway from exposure to page visits and deeper engagement. Third, I compared Accounting Streams with external education and LinkedIn benchmarks to identify strengths and gaps. Fourth, I designed an evidence-building plan that links LinkedIn data with GA4, individual-level community mapping and future survey responses.

4. Methodology

The study used a mixed-method evidence design. The quantitative component consisted of LinkedIn Page Admin exports for followers, visitors and content. The qualitative and interpretive components consisted of manual review of search-appearance screenshots, thematic coding of posts, comparison with external benchmarks and the design of future user surveys.

I used Python and pandas to clean the exported spreadsheets. This included standardising dates, converting numeric fields, handling missing values and creating comparable summary tables. Follower data were aggregated by demographic categories; visitor data were used to calculate total page views, unique visitors and device use; and content data were used to calculate impressions, clicks, reactions, comments, reposts and an overall engagement ratio. For content analysis, I coded the 46 posts into themes such as teaching resources/cases, conference/community, sustainability/public value, student learning activity, open-textbook promotion and general updates. This thematic classification is exploratory rather than definitive, because individual posts can contain more than one theme.

Several derived measures were calculated. Approximate annual follower growth was estimated by dividing 1,359 new followers by the implied starting follower base of 2,267, giving 59.9%. Click-through rate was calculated as total clicks divided by impressions: $3,896 / 46,908 = 8.3\%$. An aggregate engagement rate was calculated as clicks + reactions + comments + reposts divided by

impressions: 4,688 / 46,908 $\approx$ 10.0%. This measure is useful for internal comparison but should not be treated as directly equivalent to every external benchmark, because benchmark providers define “engagement” differently.

Benchmarking was therefore used directionally. Hootsuite reports a 2.8% average LinkedIn engagement rate for education organisations and suggests that education accounts posting two to three times per week achieve the highest average LinkedIn engagement. Socialinsider reports 24.5% average 2025 follower growth for LinkedIn Pages with 1,000-5,000 followers. Rival IQ provides a higher-education comparison set, but its universities are much larger and its definitions are not a close match; I therefore used it only as contextual evidence of posting intensity. For click-through rate, I used a third-party organic LinkedIn benchmark as a directional comparison rather than a strict target, because “clicks” can represent different actions across datasets.

Finally, I designed two Qualtrics surveys, each with fewer than 20 questions. The educator survey covers discovery, teaching use, perceived value, barriers to adoption, preferred resources and willingness to contribute. The student survey covers discovery, learning needs, resource preferences, barriers to independent use and future-use intentions. These surveys were designed during the project but had not yet been administered; therefore no survey results are claimed in this report.

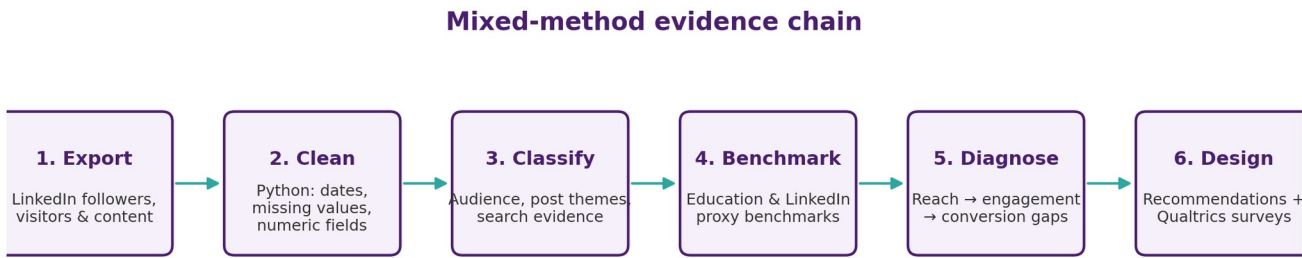


Figure 1. Research workflow linking platform data, Python cleaning, thematic analysis, benchmarking and survey design.

5. Findings

Table 3. Core LinkedIn results, 4 July 2025 - 3 July 2026

Indicator	Result	Interpretation
Total followers	3,626	Established community base
New followers	1,359	Entirely organic in export
Higher Education followers	2,244 (61.9%)	Strong education-sector audience fit
Content impressions	46,908	Awareness / reach
Clicks	3,896 (8.3% of impressions)	Strong interest; not equivalent to off-site adoption
Reactions / comments / reposts	745 / 29 / 18	Engagement exists, but discussion depth is modest
Page views / unique visitors	957 / 602	Smaller pool moves from feed to page
Custom button clicks	0 in dashboard screenshot	Conversion pathway not yet established

The first finding is that Accounting Streams has built a substantial and highly relevant LinkedIn audience. The dashboard showed 3,626 total followers, while the twelve-month export recorded 1,359 new followers. All recorded new followers were organic: sponsored and auto-invited follower fields were zero. The implied annual growth rate of approximately 59.9% is notably above Socialinsider’s 24.5% average growth benchmark for LinkedIn Pages with 1,000-5,000 followers. This comparison is not proof of impact, but it indicates that the page is expanding rapidly without paid acquisition.

Audience fit is particularly strong. Higher Education accounted for 2,244 followers, or 61.9% of the total. Education was the largest job function at 1,977 followers, followed by Accounting, Finance, Business Development and Research. More than half of followers were classified as Senior, while Entry, Manager and Director categories were also substantial. This matters because the account is reaching people who could plausibly become resource adopters, reviewers, workshop participants or institutional partners rather than only general-interest followers. Geographic data also showed an international audience, with the United Kingdom dominant but visible clusters in South Africa, Australia, India, Egypt, the United States and other countries. These patterns support the project’s internationalisation ambitions and suggest where partnership outreach could be prioritised.

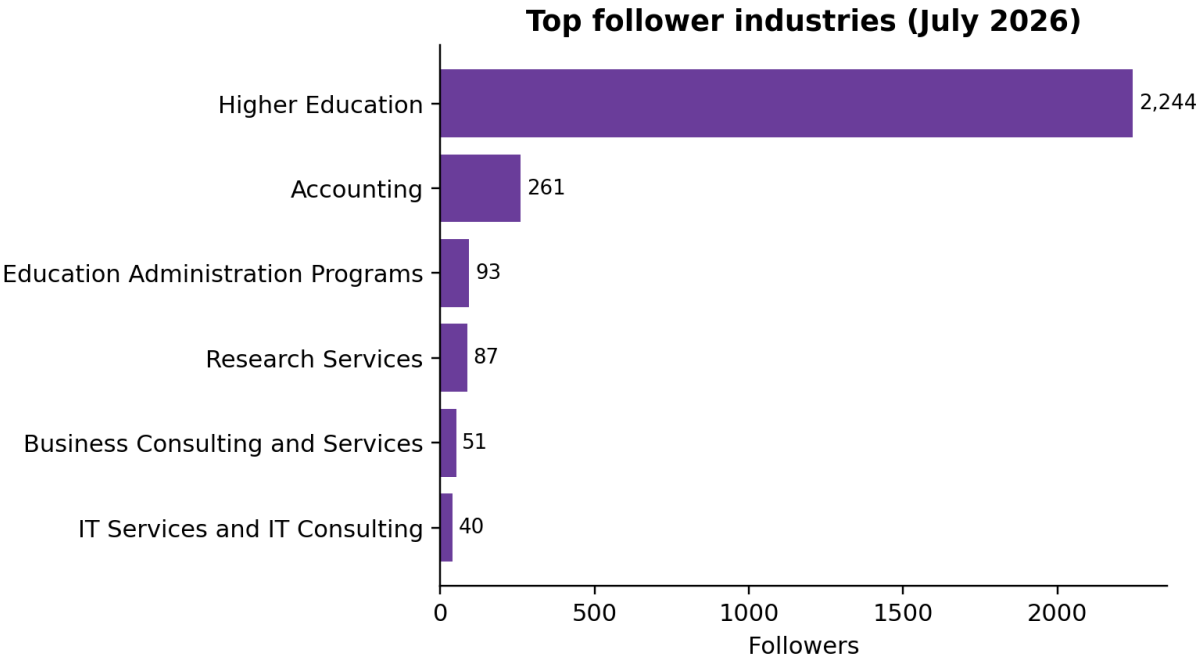


Figure 2. Top follower industries at the July 2026 export. Higher Education accounts for 2,244 followers (61.9% of the 3,626-page total). Source: LinkedIn Page Admin export.

The visitor data show a much narrower stage of the funnel. Across the same period, the page recorded 957 page views and 602 unique visitors, equivalent to 1.59 views per unique visitor. Mobile accounted for 502 page views and desktop for 455, so the experience must work effectively on both formats. Importantly, a dashboard screenshot showed zero custom-button clicks. This is the clearest conversion gap in the current evidence. People see posts and some visit the page, but the administrator data do not yet show a strong transition to a measurable next action such as

downloading a resource, joining the mailing list, registering for a workshop or offering to contribute.



Figure 3. Attention-to-action funnel. Content generates visibility and clicks, but the page-level custom button recorded zero clicks in the screenshot, so off-platform conversion remains unmeasured.

Content performance provides evidence of strong attention. The 46 posts in the export generated 46,908 impressions, 3,896 clicks, 745 reactions, 29 comments and 18 reposts. The resulting internal engagement ratio was approximately 10.0%, while the overall click-through rate was approximately 8.3%. These values indicate that Accounting Streams posts can stimulate action beyond passive exposure. However, the depth of conversation is modest: 29 comments across 46 posts equals only 0.63 comments per post.

Thematic analysis helps explain what drives attention. Teaching resources and cases produced the largest aggregate reach, followed by conference/community content and sustainability/public-value content. The strongest individual post, published on 13 August 2025, generated 1,958 impressions and 1,568 clicks. A workshop post on 1 September 2025 generated 1,997 impressions and 712 clicks. This pattern suggests that practical teaching material, timely academic-year content and specific invitations to events are more effective than generic organisational updates. The implication is not simply to “post more”, but to repeat the content formats that give educators or students a clear reason to act.

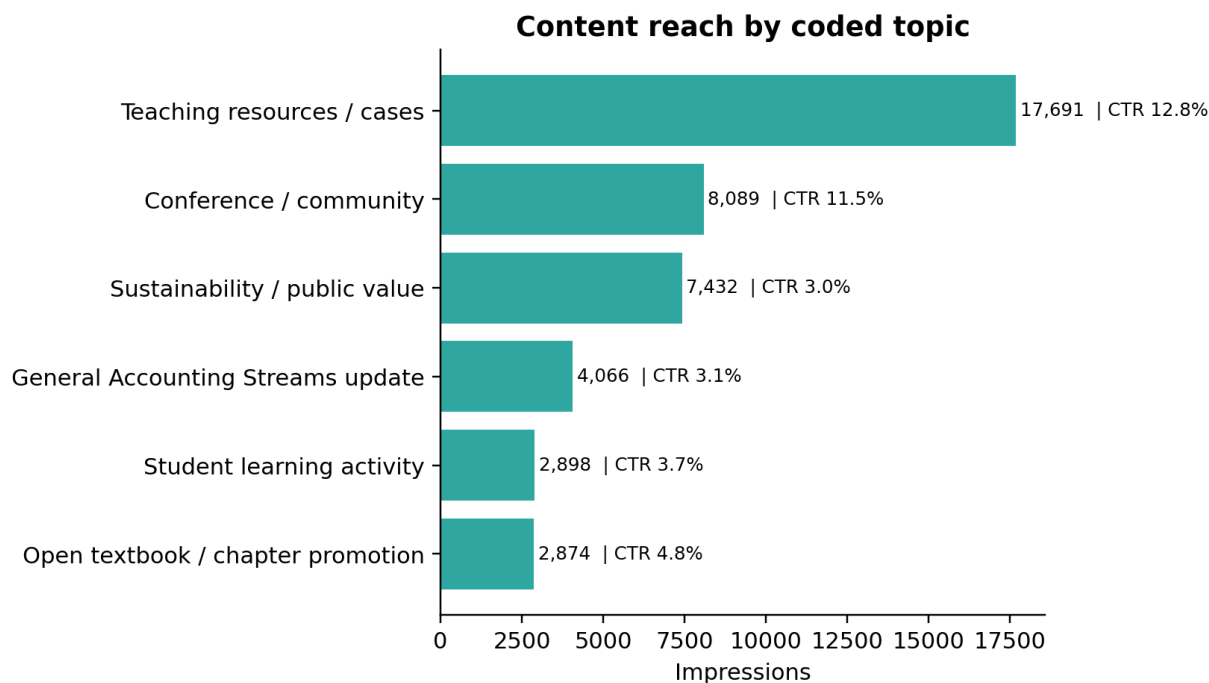


Figure 4. Content reach by researcher-coded theme. Posts were assigned to a dominant topic using keyword rules and manual checking; categories are exploratory because some posts contain multiple themes.

Search-appearance data reinforce the audience-fit finding. A screenshot showed 129 search appearances, although this had declined by 23.2% over the displayed comparison period. The strongest searcher industry was Higher Education at 91.4%. Leading job titles included Lecturer, Professor of Accounting, Professor, Accountant and Lecturer in Finance, and several universities appeared among the top searcher organisations. This is strategically valuable because the people discovering the page are plausible adopters and collaborators. At the same time, search keywords such as “Accounting” and “Cafe” were narrow and partly noisy, suggesting an opportunity to strengthen phrases such as “accounting education”, “open accounting textbook”, “sustainability accounting” and “teaching resources”.

6. Discussion, Benchmarking and Limitations

The results suggest that Accounting Streams’ main weakness is not reach. Its follower growth is strong relative to a page-size benchmark, its audience is highly concentrated in education, and its content attracts substantial clicks. The more important weakness is the break between attention and demonstrable impact.

This distinction matters when external benchmarks are interpreted. Hootsuite’s education data indicate an average LinkedIn engagement rate of 2.8% and the strongest engagement at two to three posts per week. Accounting Streams’ internal 10.0% engagement calculation is higher, but it includes clicks and is therefore not directly like-for-like. The safer conclusion is that content is generating significant interaction, not that Accounting Streams is definitively “four times better” than the sector. By contrast, posting frequency is more comparable: the 46 exported posts span roughly 50

weeks, or about 0.92 posts per week, clearly below the two-to-three-post education guidance. Increasing cadence to two purposeful posts per week is therefore a defensible first target.

Table 4. Benchmark and gap analysis

Metric	Accounting Streams	Directional benchmark	Interpretation
Follower growth	≈59.9%	24.5% average 2025 growth for 1-5K LinkedIn Pages (Socialinsider)	Growth appears strong for a page of this size
Engagement	≈10.0% internal calculation	2.8% average education LinkedIn engagement (Hootsuite)	Positive signal, but not like-for-like because definitions differ
Posting cadence	≈0.92 posts/week	2-3 posts/week associated with strongest education LinkedIn engagement (Hootsuite)	Clear, actionable frequency gap
CTR	8.3% internal click/impression ratio	Published organic education ranges around 1-2% (directional third-party benchmark)	Strong interest signal; needs UTM/GA4 validation before impact claims
Higher-ed context	Specialist page, 3.6K followers	Rival IQ live universities post at much higher volume	Useful context only; not a fair direct target

CTR requires similar caution. The internal 8.3% click rate is high relative to published organic LinkedIn ranges, but LinkedIn’s exported “clicks” do not by themselves prove that a user reached or used an Accounting Streams resource. A post click can indicate interest without creating off-platform impact. UTM-tagged links and GA4 are therefore necessary before click performance can be translated into claims about resource access, downloads or registrations.

The study has several limitations. First, the LinkedIn export covers one twelve-month window, while the broader project story extends back to 2024; earlier internal interaction figures are useful context but not directly comparable. Second, LinkedIn demographic data are aggregate and do not fully identify individual followers, commenters or mentioners. Third, topic coding is researcher-generated and some posts could reasonably fit more than one category. Fourth, benchmarks differ in population, platform mix and metric definitions. Fifth, survey instruments were designed but not administered, so the research does not yet contain direct evidence of user motivations, learning outcomes or barriers. These limitations mean the report should be read as a rigorous baseline and measurement design, not as a final evaluation of educational impact.

7. Recommendations and Future Research

My central recommendation is to move from a visibility dashboard to a conversion dashboard. LinkedIn should remain a reach and engagement channel, but each major content series should direct users towards a measurable action.

First, every external resource link should use UTM parameters and the LinkedIn Page should have a clear custom button such as “Access free resources” or “Join the Accounting Streams community”. GA4 should then record LinkedIn-referred sessions, resource-page visits, downloads, mailing-list registrations and event sign-ups. This would connect social visibility to observable behaviour.

Second, posting should increase from about 0.92 posts per week to two posts per week. The content plan should use repeatable series: Teaching Resource of the Week, Sustainability Case in Class, Student Insight, and Workshop/Community Update. This creates a controlled way to compare reach, click-through and comments by content type rather than treating every post as unique.

Third, the project should create an individual-level community-mapping file. A manageable first sample would include 100 recent followers plus all commenters and mentioners on the highest-performing posts. Each record should be coded by role, institution, country and engagement source. This would allow Accounting Streams to distinguish passive followers from potential adopters, contributors, reviewers, professional-body contacts and institutional partners.

Fourth, the educator and student surveys should be piloted in Qualtrics. The key questions are deliberately practical: How did users first encounter Accounting Streams? Which resources have they used? What prevents them from using the resources more often? What would increase adoption? For educators, additional questions should test willingness to review, contribute or embed resources in teaching. For students, questions should focus on clarity, accessibility, preferred formats and learning challenges. Survey findings can then explain the “why” behind platform behaviour.

Finally, data should be archived quarterly. Followers, visitors and content exports should use consistent date ranges, while search appearances should be manually recorded if LinkedIn does not provide a comparable export. Repeated snapshots will allow genuine year-on-year analysis and will help the team assess progress toward strategic targets such as active contributors, international reach and the 2028 goal of more than 500 contributors/adopters.

Table 5. Proposed 90-day action plan

Priority	Action	Reason	Proposed measure
1. Track	Add UTM parameters, GA4 referral tracking and a clear custom button	Clicks are strong but conversion is unverified	100% external links tagged; button clicks > 0; monthly LinkedIn referral baseline
2. Engage	Publish two purposeful posts per week	Current cadence is ~0.92/week	8 posts/month; track CTR and comments by series
3. Map people	Code 100 recent followers plus commenters/mentioners	Aggregate analytics cannot identify active community members	Role, institution, country and engagement-source fields completed
4. Listen	Pilot educator and student Qualtrics surveys	Platform data do not explain motivations or barriers	Pilot, revise, then launch wider survey
5. Archive	Export Followers, Visitors and Content quarterly	Multi-year reporting requires comparable snapshots	Quarterly archive and year-on-year dashboard

8. Conclusion

This six-week project shows that Accounting Streams has already built a strong digital foundation. The LinkedIn audience is growing organically, is heavily concentrated in higher education, and responds particularly well to practical teaching resources, workshop activity and values-based accounting content. These findings support the claim that Accounting Streams is reaching the right professional and educational community.

At the same time, the research demonstrates why visibility should not be confused with educational impact. The current data can show who is broadly being reached and what attracts attention, but it cannot yet show whether a follower adopts a textbook, uses a case in class, learns more effectively, becomes a contributor or creates an institutional partnership. The most important output of the project is therefore not a single performance score; it is a clearer evidence pathway.

The next phase should link LinkedIn activity to UTM and GA4 data, collect individual-level community evidence, implement the educator and student surveys, and archive comparable quarterly datasets. This would allow future reports to move from “people saw and clicked our content” to stronger claims about adoption, contribution and educational outcomes. In that sense, the project has moved Accounting Streams from a social-media dashboard towards an accountable impact-measurement framework.

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Appendix A. Proposed Educator Survey (Qualtrics)

Purpose: To understand how educators discover, use and evaluate Accounting Streams, what limits adoption, and what would encourage greater use or contribution. The survey contains 18 questions and is designed for approximately 5-7 minutes.

1. Which best describes your current role? (Lecturer/Assistant Professor; Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor; Professor; Teaching Fellow; PhD/ECR; professional-body educator; practitioner involved in teaching; other.)
2. What type of institution or organisation are you mainly affiliated with?
3. In which country are you currently based?
4. Which subjects do you teach or support? (Select all that apply.)
5. How did you first come across Accounting Streams?
6. Before this survey, how familiar were you with Accounting Streams?
7. Which Accounting Streams resources or activities have you seen or used?
8. Have you used Accounting Streams resources in teaching, course design or student support?
9. If used or considered, what was your main purpose?
10. How useful are the resources for introductory accounting, sustainability/accountability, student engagement, international examples, open-access teaching and curriculum innovation? (Matrix.)
11. What is the most valuable aspect of Accounting Streams for educators?
12. What challenges limit your use of Accounting Streams resources?
13. How easy is it to find the resources you need?
14. What would make you more likely to use Accounting Streams resources in your teaching?
15. Would you be interested in reviewing resources, contributing a case, joining a workshop or recommending Accounting Streams?
16. Which communication channels would be most effective for keeping you updated?
17. How likely are you to recommend Accounting Streams to another educator? (0-10.)
18. What is one concrete improvement that would make Accounting Streams more useful to you?

Appendix B. Proposed Student Survey (Qualtrics)

Purpose: To understand how students discover and use Accounting Streams, what learning challenges they face, and which formats or features would increase use. The survey contains 18 questions and is designed for approximately 4-6 minutes.

1. What is your current level of study?
2. What subject area best describes your degree?
3. In which country are you currently studying?
4. Have you studied accounting before?
5. How did you first come across Accounting Streams?

6. Before this survey, how familiar were you with Accounting Streams?
7. Which Accounting Streams resources have you seen or used?
8. How often do you use open online resources to support your accounting learning?
9. If you have used Accounting Streams, what did you use it for?
10. What type of accounting learning support is most useful to you?
11. How useful would short chapters, visual summaries, worked examples, practice questions, sustainability cases, interactive games, short videos and student discussion activities be? (Matrix.)
12. What are the main challenges you face when learning accounting?
13. What might stop you from using Accounting Streams more often?
14. How easy would you expect Accounting Streams resources to be to use independently?
15. What would make you more likely to use Accounting Streams resources?
16. How would you prefer to receive updates about Accounting Streams resources?
17. How likely are you to recommend Accounting Streams to another student? (0-10.)
18. What is one thing Accounting Streams could add or improve to better support students?

Appendix C. Key Formulae and Data Definitions

Metric	Calculation
Estimated annual follower growth	$1,359 / (3,626 - 1,359) = 59.9\%$
CTR	$3,896 \text{ clicks} / 46,908 \text{ impressions} = 8.3\%$
Internal engagement ratio	$(3,896 \text{ clicks} + 745 \text{ reactions} + 29 \text{ comments} + 18 \text{ reposts}) / 46,908 \text{ impressions} = 10.0\%$
Views per unique visitor	$957 \text{ page views} / 602 \text{ unique visitors} = 1.59$
Comments per post	$29 \text{ comments} / 46 \text{ posts} = 0.63$
Posting cadence	$46 \text{ posts} / \text{approximately } 50.1 \text{ weeks between first and last exported post} = 0.92 \text{ posts/week}$