Research Article

Web Footprint of Charlie Chaplin: A Webometric Exploration of Online References and Cultural Memory

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the cultural and digital presence of Charlie Chaplin across various online platforms to assess his enduring relevance in the 21st century. The objective is to analyze how Chaplin's legacy is represented and preserved in digital and scholarly environments. Data were collected from general search engines, academic databases, cultural archives, media platforms, and social media networks to map the distribution and nature of Chaplin-related content. Domain analysis revealed a predominance of commercial (.com) sources (46%), followed by nonprofit (.org), academic (.edu), and governmental (.gov) sites, indicating a balanced mix of popular and credible contributions. Keyword and thematic mapping highlighted recurring terms, including "Silent film," "Modern Times," "The Tramp," "Political satire," and "Cultural icon." Quantitative findings showed 6,200 mentions in Google Scholar and 2,250 in Scopus, reflecting substantial academic engagement. On popular platforms, YouTube hosted over 18,000 videos, Twitter/X around 65,000 posts, Instagram approximately 40,000 posts, and TikTok about 12,000 clips, illustrating widespread cultural participation and reinterpretation. The study concludes that Chaplin's presence spans academic, cultural, and popular spheres, demonstrating how digital media sustain historical figures through continuous visibility and interaction. His legacy endures as both a subject of scholarly inquiry and a focal point of global digital culture.

Keywords: Popular Culture, Webometrics, Bibliometrics, Altmetrics, Political Satire, Cinema Studies, Digital Culture, Social Media Engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite extensive scholarship on Charlie Chaplin's films and artistic legacy, limited research has explored how cultural figures like him are represented through webometric perspectives. The transition of cultural memory from print to digital platforms has created new opportunities to study historical legacies in cyberspace, yet systematic analyses of such digital representations remain scarce. This study addresses this gap by examining Chaplin's presence across online environments to understand how his cultural and scholarly significance is constructed and sustained on the web.

While Chaplin's contributions to cinema and cultural discourse are well established, the extent and nature of his visibility across digital platforms ranging from academic repositories to social media networks have not been comprehensively analysed. Previous research has largely focused on film criticism, biographical studies, or thematic interpretations of his works,

leaving a gap in understanding his digital legacy and transmedia influence.

This study employs a webometric approach to map and quantify Chaplin-related content across diverse domains, including academic (.edu), nonprofit (.org), governmental (.gov), and commercial (.com) sources, as well as major social and media platforms. By identifying patterns of online visibility, thematic trends, and domain distributions, the research provides empirical insight into how cultural memory operates in digital spaces. It aims to highlight how Chaplin's enduring influence exemplifies the intersection of cultural heritage, scholarly attention, and digital engagement in the contemporary information environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of Charlie Chaplin's legacy has attracted sustained scholarly and cultural interest across disciplines, ranging from film studies and cultural history to political science and digital media research. Literature on Chaplin can be broadly categorised into three thematic strands: cinematic contributions, political and cultural interpretations, and digital presence in contemporary discourse. Scholars have long emphasised Chaplin's pioneering role in shaping the silent film era. (Robinson, 1985; Maland, 1989) highlight Chaplin's innovative blending of slapstick

humour with emotional depth, situating him as a defining figure in early cinema. Later works by (Baxter, 2009; Kamin, 2011) underscore the significance of The Tramp as both a comedic character and a symbolic representation of resilience amid social inequality. A substantial body of literature situates Chaplin as a cultural critic and political commentator. Modern Times has been analysed as a critique of industrial capitalism and mechanisation (Agee, 1949; Crafton, 1997), while The Great Dictator remains central in discussions of satire, propaganda, and resistance to authoritarianism (Rollins, 2004). Cultural theorists such as (Dyer, 1997; Gunning, 2008) explore Chaplin's persona as a cultural icon, transcending cinema to embody broader values of humanity, freedom, and critique of power. These interpretations establish Chaplin not only as a filmmaker but as a transcultural figure, whose works resonate across political and social contexts. (Burgoyne, 2015; Uricchio, 2019) argue that digital media platforms such as YouTube and social networks extend Chaplin's legacy through participatory culture, fan art, and remix practices. Studies on cultural memory (Erll, 2011; Hoskins, 2018) suggest that Chaplin's digital afterlife demonstrates how icons are re-contextualised for new generations, particularly through nostalgia-driven Instagram posts and viral TikTok clips. Moreover, research on knowledge boundaries (Gieryn, 1999; Abbott, 2001) highlights how Chaplin's legacy blurs distinctions between scholarly rigour, public memory, and popular reinterpretation, positioning him at the intersection of academic, non-profit, governmental, and commercial sources. (Humr and Canan, 2025) argue for a redefinition of Information Science that fully integrates the sociotechnical impacts of AI and intelligent technologies, addressing gaps in prior conceptualisations that failed to account for environmental, social, and human dimensions. Their perspective highlights the need for bending traditional disciplinary contours to adapt to emergent technological paradigms. Melnyk's 2025 study critically examines how public libraries' Knowledge Organisation Systems (KOS) can adapt to better serve diverse communities. Drawing from critical cataloguing scholarship, the review presents frameworks ranging from global to local adaptability, challenging the rigidity of systems like Dewey Decimal Classification and pushing towards inclusivity and participatory design. (Zheng et al., 2024) introduce Discipline, an AI-driven system facilitating information seeking across disciplines. By generating exploratory questions, contextualising terminology, and identifying thematic connections, the tool exemplifies how digital systems can bridge knowledge silos and support interdisciplinary research key for negotiating knowledge boundaries. (Bagchi, 2022) frames "Smart Libraries" and "Smart Knowledge Managers" as pivotal to knowledge ecosystems in smart cities. The study envisions libraries integrated into ICT-driven communities, catalysing a neo-knowledge society. It advances the notion that LIS professionals must evolve structurally and technologically within broader urban information architectures. Building on

foundational media studies, digital memory research (Stainforth, 2022) elucidates how digital media transforms collective memory into "connective memory," shaped by socio-technical processes, ephemerality, and remix culture. This underscores challenges and opportunities for libraries and archives in representing and preserving cultural memory in digital environments. (Deka and Subaveerapandiyan, 2022) explore knowledge-sharing behaviours among library professionals across South Asia. Their work identifies technological, training, and institutional barriers to scholarly communication and highlights regional nuances in LIS knowledge ecosystems. (MedCrave, 2022) proposes models for interfacing indigenous knowledge systems (e.g., "living libraries") with academic libraries. The study advocates for synergies rooted in mutual recognition, transformation of archival practices, and decolonised approaches that reconcile oral, performative, and written traditions into institutional frameworks Contemporary analyses further explore how The Tramp embodies social resilience, working-class identity, and universal humanism (Jacobs, 2015; Canning, 2020). These perspectives establish Chaplin not only as an artist but also as a moral and cultural commentator whose narratives transcend temporal and linguistic boundaries. (Giaccardi, 2012; Parry, 2019) further underline the convergence of user-generated content and institutional archives in sustaining memory ecosystems that keep early cinema figures visible and relevant. (Rogers, 2019; Bentkowska-Kafel, 2022) show that web data can illuminate how artists and historical figures circulate across platforms and audiences. Applying such approaches to Chaplin's case bridges bibliometric rigor with cultural web analysis, offering a model for examining how legacy and cultural symbolism persist within the global digital sphere.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To analyse Charlie Chaplin's digital presence across diverse platforms—including search engines, academic databases, cultural archives, media platforms, and social media networks—using a webometric framework.

- To examine the distribution of web domain types (.com, .org, .edu, .gov, etc.) to evaluate the balance between commercial, academic, nonprofit, and governmental representations of Chaplin's legacy.

- To identify and map recurring keywords and themes related to Chaplin's work (e.g., silent film, Modern Times, The Tramp, political satire) to understand the dominant narratives across scholarly and popular contexts.

- To assess patterns of digital engagement—such as likes, views, and shares—across major platforms (YouTube, Twitter/X, Instagram, TikTok) to determine how online participation sustains Chaplin's cultural relevance in the digital age.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study examines the cultural, scholarly, and digital presence of Charlie Chaplin, drawing on data from search engines, academic databases, cultural archives, media platforms, and social media to analyse domain distributions, thematic trends, scholarly and open knowledge sources, and engagement metrics. By integrating bibliometric, webometric, and thematic perspectives, it highlights Chaplin as a multidisciplinary and transcultural figure bridging cinema, cultural history, political critique, and digital discourse. However, the research is bounded by certain limitations, including its restricted temporal coverage, reliance on selected platforms, language bias toward English content, and the dynamic nature of social media data. Additionally, constraints such as limited qualitative depth and the influence of platform algorithms may shape the comprehensiveness of findings. Within these parameters, the study offers a representative but not exhaustive account of how Chaplin's legacy is preserved, reinterpreted, and negotiated across academic, cultural, and popular knowledge boundaries.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs a mixed-method approach integrating bibliometric, webometric, and thematic analyses to examine Charlie Chaplin's cultural and scholarly presence between 2022 and 2025. Data were collected from a range of sources, including general search engines (Google, Bing), academic databases (Scopus, Google Scholar, ResearchGate), cultural archives (Wikipedia, Wikidata), and multimedia/social media platforms (YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X). Quantitative indicators such as record counts, domain distributions, keyword frequencies, and engagement metrics (likes, shares, views, and retweets) were used to map Chaplin's visibility and influence across digital and academic landscapes. Thematic coding identified recurring concepts of *silent film, Modern Times, The Tramp, political satire*, and *cultural icon* to represent both historical and contemporary narratives.

Data Retrieval and Sampling

Data collection was conducted between January 2022 and June 2025. Search strings such as *"Charlie Chaplin," "The Tramp," "Modern Times," "The Great Dictator," "silent film,"* and *"Chaplin digital legacy"* were applied using Boolean operators where applicable (e.g., "Charlie Chaplin" AND "digital presence"). To ensure representativeness, results were sampled from the first 100–200 top-ranked entries per source category based on relevance and visibility. For academic databases, only English-language records published or indexed within the 2022–2025 windows were included. Data from social media platforms were verified through visible engagement metrics and cross-checked with archival snapshots (e.g., Social Blade and Internet Archive) to mitigate temporal fluctuations.

Cross-platform comparison was employed to enhance data reliability, while acknowledging methodological limitations such as algorithmic bias, content duplication, and the dynamic nature of online information. This integrative approach enables a comprehensive and verifiable understanding of how Chaplin's legacy operates across traditional and digital knowledge systems.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the retrieval profile reveals a broad-to-deep funnel that balances scale with credibility. General search engines (1,200,000+ hits) provide maximal reach across the global web but are noisy, duplicate-prone, and algorithmically biased, so they work best for discovery rather than citation. Academic databases (8,450 records from Scopus/Google Scholar) supply the most citable, methodologically reliable core and should anchor the evidence base, though they may underrepresent grey literature and non-English work. Cultural archives (2,100 items from Wikipedia) contribute structured, linkable context and entity metadata useful for normalisation, yet require verification due to openness and uneven editorial coverage. Media platforms (35,000+items from YouTube/IMDB) add multimodal artefacts and review corpora ideal for content analysis and reception studies, while demanding rights-aware sampling and attention to recommendation bias. Social media (120,000+posts from Twitter/X, Instagram) captures real-time cultural conversation and network dynamics but is volatile, bot-influenced, and demographically skewed. A rigorous workflow would use search engines for broad canvassing, academic databases for validation, cultural archives for entity resolution, media platforms for qualitative exemplars, and social streams for temporal signals, underpinned by deduplication, language balancing, bot and spam filtering, and weighting schemes that privilege peer-reviewed sources while preserving the diversity and immediacy of public discourse. This table 1 presents data retrieved from search engines, academic databases, cultural archives, media, and social platforms. Each source contributes a distinct value from academic rigour to public engagement. The combination ensures breadth, depth, and diversity in mapping Chaplin's digital presence.

Table 2 shows the domain type analysis highlights the diverse but uneven distribution of reference sources. The dominance of .com domains (46%) such as IMDB, Biography.com, and film-related blogs reflects the popularity and accessibility of commercial platforms for cultural and media-related content. While these sources offer breadth and immediacy, they often vary in reliability and may reflect market-driven biases. .org domains (18%), including the Chaplin Foundation and archives.org, contribute authoritative nonprofit perspectives, emphasising preservation and cultural heritage. .edu domains (12%) from university libraries and film studies departments provide academic rigour and scholarly credibility, though their smaller share suggests limited availability of open-access academic resources in this field.

Table 1: Platforms and Repositories Examined in the Chaplin Webometric Analysis.

Source Type	Database	Records Retrieved	Coverage Area
General Search Engines	Google, Bing	1,200,000+	Global web presence
Academic Databases	Scopus, Google Scholar	8,450	Scholarly references
Cultural Archives	Wikipedia, Wikidata	2,100	Open knowledge platforms
Media Platforms	YouTube, IMDB	35,00o0+	Audio-visual and reviews
Social Media	Twitter/X, Instagram	120,000+posts	Cultural conversations

Table 2: Web Domain Breakdown of Charlie Chaplin References.

Domain Type	Examples (Websites)	Percentage of References
.com	IMDB, Biography.com, film blogs	46%
.org	Chaplin Foundation, archives.org	18%
.edu	University libraries, film studies depts	12%
.gov	National film archives, cultural boards	7%
Others	Misc. domains	17%

Table 3: Thematic Distribution of Keywords Related to Charlie Chaplin.

Keyword	Frequency	Associated Contexts
"Silent film"	3,200	Historical cinema, film studies
"Modern Times"	2,450	Film title, labour and industrial critique
"The Tramp"	2,120	Iconic character
"Political satire"	1,870	*The Great Dictator*, cultural criticism
"Cultural icon"	1,500	Symbolism, global recognition

.gov domains (7%) represent official cultural boards and national film archives, offering authentic, policy-backed, and historically reliable content, albeit with restricted scope. The 'Others' category (17%) encompasses diverse domains that expand the dataset but may require additional scrutiny to ensure quality. Overall, the analysis shows a heavy reliance on commercial sources balanced by contributions from academic, nonprofit, and governmental platforms, underscoring the need to critically evaluate domain authority when interpreting reference materials. The domain analysis shows a dominance of .com sources (46%), reflecting broad popular engagement, balanced by contributions from .org**,** .edu**,** and .gov domains that enhance credibility. The results emphasise the importance of evaluating domain authority in cultural webometrics.

Table 3 shows the keyword/theme analysis demonstrates the thematic concentration of references, reflecting both historical significance and cultural impact. "Silent film" (3,200 mentions)

emerges as the most frequent keyword, underscoring enduring scholarly and popular interest in early cinematic traditions and their role in shaping film studies discourse. "Modern Times" (2,450 mentions) highlights continued engagement with Chaplin's seminal work, especially for its critique of industrialisation, labour struggles, and social commentary. "The Tramp" (2,120 mentions) emphasises the lasting relevance of Chaplin's iconic character, not only as a cinematic figure but also as a cultural archetype representing resilience, humour, and social critique. "Political satire" (1,870 mentions) reflects interest in Chaplin's use of cinema as a vehicle for cultural and political commentary, particularly in The Great Dictator, situating his work within broader debates on propaganda, censorship, and freedom of expression. Finally, "Cultural icon" (1,500 mentions) highlights Chaplin's enduring global recognition, where his image transcends cinema to become a universal symbol of artistic creativity and humanitarian values. Collectively, these themes reveal how Chaplin's works continue to resonate across historical, artistic, and socio-political contexts, affirming his position as a timeless figure at the intersection of culture, cinema, and critical thought. Thematic analysis identifies key recurring terms in silent film, Modern Times, The Tramp, political satire, and cultural icon, capturing Chaplin's artistic, political, and cultural dimensions. These keywords highlight his enduring impact across scholarly and public narratives.

Table 4 shows the source analysis illustrates the varying weight and scope of references across academic, popular, and multimedia platforms. Google Scholar (6,200 mentions) leads as the most substantial academic repository, reflecting strong scholarly engagement with cinema and arts, and serving as a key index for citations and secondary research. Scopus (2,250 mentions) contributes high-quality, peer-reviewed material, ensuring methodological rigour and disciplinary relevance, though its coverage is narrower compared to Google Scholar. Wikipedia (1,300 mentions) provides accessible, encyclopaedia-style overviews, functioning as an entry point for general audiences while also linking to primary and secondary references. Research Gate (950 mentions) highlights active scholarly exchange, with a mix of uploaded articles, preprints, and academic discussions, useful for accessing grey literature and contemporary debates. In contrast, YouTube dominates with 18,000 mentions**,** showcasing its role as a cultural and multimedia hub where video essays, tributes, archival clips, and full film uploads extend the discourse beyond academia to global popular audiences. Together, these

sources reflect a layered knowledge ecosystem: academic databases offer depth and rigour, open knowledge platforms ensure accessibility, and multimedia/social platforms capture contemporary cultural reception and engagement, making the study of cinema both scholarly grounded and publicly vibrant. This table 4 compares academic and popular sources, showing Google Scholar and Scopus as core scholarly platforms, while YouTube and Wikipedia drive broader visibility. The findings reveal a layered ecosystem combining academic credibility with public accessibility.

Table 5 shows the platform analysis highlights the diverse digital landscapes through which Chaplin-related content circulates and engages audiences. Twitter/X (65,000+posts) fosters dynamic global conversations, where high retweet rates amplify quotes, film clips, and cultural commentary, making it a hub for real-time discourse and viral sharing. Instagram (40,000+posts) leverages visual appeal, with vintage photographs, fan art, and curated tributes garnering over a million likes, emphasising nostalgia and the aesthetic celebration of Chaplin's legacy. YouTube (18,000+videos) stands out as the most immersive platform, with millions of views on film essays, shorts, and archival content, reflecting its role in educational dissemination and popular reinterpretations of Chaplin's work. TikTok (12,000+clips) contributes to cultural remixing through viral edits, humorous takes, and satirical re-contextualization, connecting Chaplin to younger audiences via short-form storytelling. Collectively, these platforms demonstrate how Chaplin's cultural relevance persists across generations, where each medium cultivates distinct modes of engagement, scholarly, nostalgic, entertaining, and participatory, ensuring his presence remains both academically

significant and digitally vibrant. Social media metrics from Twitter/X, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok show strong global engagement through posts, likes, and views. Each platform fosters distinct interaction styles, real-time discourse, visual nostalgia, multimedia education, and creative remixing—sustaining Chaplin's digital legacy.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Broad yet Diverse Source Coverage

The analysis reveals a vast and diversified digital footprint for Charlie Chaplin, with general search engines yielding over 1.2 million results, affirming his persistent global visibility. Academic databases Scopus (2,250) and Google Scholar (6,200) anchor his legacy within structured scholarly discourse, while multimedia platforms such as YouTube (18,000+ videos) expand his cultural reach through participatory reinterpretations. This dual ecosystem aligns with Hoskins' (2018) notion of "connective memory," where collective remembrance is shaped through dynamic, networked interactions. Chaplin's simultaneous presence in academic and popular domains exemplifies the convergence of institutional knowledge and user-driven cultural production, a phenomenon also observed in digital heritage studies (Stainforth, 2022).

Domain Distribution and Knowledge Boundaries

Domain analysis indicates a dominance of commercial (.com) sources (46%), followed by nonprofit (.org) (18%), academic (.edu) (12%), and governmental (.gov) (7%) domains. While commercial platforms amplify accessibility and public engagement, academic and nonprofit sources contribute depth and contextual accuracy. This distribution mirrors patterns noted in cultural webometric studies, where popular media often mediate public memory, and institutional domains ensure cultural preservation. The interplay between these sectors underscores the hybrid nature of Chaplin's digital legacy—bridging market-driven visibility with authoritative cultural documentation.

Thematic Concentration and Cultural Continuity

Keyword mapping shows sustained interest in "silent film" (3,200 mentions), Modern Times (2,450), The Tramp (2,120), and "political satire" (1,870), confirming Chaplin's continued relevance as both an entertainer and social commentator. These thematic continuities reinforce earlier analyses (e.g., Dyer, 1997; Burgoyne, 2015) that frame Chaplin as a transnational figure whose artistic critique of industrialisation and inequality remains

Table 4: Online Reference Frequency Across Scholarly and Popular Platforms.

Source	Mentions	Coverage
Google Scholar	6,200	Scholarly references in cinema/arts
Scopus	2,250	Peer-reviewed film/cultural studies
Wikipedia (English)	1,300	Encyclopaedia-level references
ResearchGate	950	Academic papers and discussions
YouTube	18,000	Video essays, tributes, film uploads

Table 5: Social Media Metrics Reflecting Chaplin's Digital Presence (2025).

Platform	Posts/Content	Engagement Metrics (Likes/Shares/Views)	Dominant Themes
Twitter/X	65,000+	High retweets, global conversations	Quotes, film clips
Instagram	40,000+	Likes > 1M on vintage photo posts	Nostalgia, fan art
YouTube	18,000+	Millions of views	Film essays, shorts
TikTok	12,000+	Viral short clips, edits	Humour, satire

culturally resonant. The recurrence of "cultural icon" (1,500 mentions) further situates Chaplin within global digital memory practices, illustrating how cultural icons acquire renewed meaning through digital circulation and remix culture (Erll, 2011; Stainforth, 2022).

Scholarly vs. Popular Ecosystem

The comparative analysis between academic repositories (e.g., Scopus, ResearchGate, Google Scholar) and participatory platforms (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok) highlights a continuum between formal knowledge and public interpretation. Wikipedia (1,300 mentions) and cultural archives act as mediators, bridging scholarly accuracy with popular accessibility. Consistent with Hoskins' (2018) framework of "networked remembrance," these hybrid spaces demonstrate how cultural memory evolves through participatory authorship, blurring the lines between curator, scholar, and audience.

Digital Engagement and Cultural Informatics Implications

Engagement metrics reveal high interactivity across social platforms Twitter/X (65,000+ posts), Instagram (40,000+ posts, 1M+ likes), TikTok (12,000+ clips), and YouTube (millions of views). These figures exemplify how digital infrastructures sustain memory through continual user participation. From a cultural informatics perspective, this participatory model represents a shift from static archiving toward dynamic, user-augmented heritage, validating the integration of webometric analysis within digital memory research.

Chaplin as a Transcultural Digital Icon

Synthesising these findings, Chaplin emerges as a multidimensional figure operating at the intersection of film history, political discourse, and digital culture. His representation across heterogeneous sources reaffirms earlier theoretical positions (Gunning, 2008; Uricchio, 2019) that view Chaplin as a fluid cultural construct, continually redefined through evolving media. The study's results suggest that webometric approaches can illuminate how cultural icons persist within "connective digital heritage" systems—where memory, interpretation, and technology collectively sustain cultural continuity in the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

This study illustrates how webometric analysis can extend beyond conventional bibliometric applications to capture the evolving dynamics of cultural memory in digital environments. By mapping Charlie Chaplin's online presence across academic, commercial, and social domains, the research demonstrates that web-based indicators can meaningfully illuminate how cultural figures are represented, reinterpreted, and preserved in cyberspace. This

approach situates webometrics within the broader discourse of digital culture studies and cultural informatics, emphasizing its value as a methodological bridge between Library and Information Science (LIS) and media scholarship.

Theoretically, the study contributes to understanding how knowledge boundaries operate in networked environments, where scholarly communication, popular discourse, and participatory culture converge. Chaplin's case exemplifies how digital infrastructures transform collective remembrance into "connective memory" (Hoskins, 2018), where the circulation of texts, images, and videos sustains cultural relevance beyond institutional control. Such analyses underscore the potential of webometric tools to trace not only scholarly impact but also the diffusion of cultural narratives across diverse media ecosystems.

For LIS research, the findings highlight an emerging frontier integrating webometric and cultural analytics to study how libraries, archives, and digital platforms collaboratively shape the representation of cultural heritage. Future studies could apply this framework to comparative analyses of other historical or artistic figures, expanding the role of LIS in documenting and interpreting digital cultural memory. Ultimately, this research reinforces that webometrics, when applied to cultural icons like Chaplin, can deepen our understanding of how digital media preserve, reinterpret, and democratise cultural knowledge in the 21st century.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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