Open Access, Open Data and Research Data Management in the UK

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A state of flux

- Nobody in the UK knows what the future holds
- We don’t know how our work will be funded, or by which mechanisms
- We have a government that is very fond of the idea of radical change
- But we do know a fair amount about priorities and direction of travel
The Minister

• Chris Skidmore
  Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation

• Department for Education
• Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
“It is therefore right that students, researchers, businesses and anyone with an interest should be able to access, without additional cost, the publicly-funded research findings of our great universities and research institutes.”

Chris Skidmore, January 2019
Responsibilities

The minister’s Department for Education responsibilities include:

- universities and higher education reform
- higher education student finance (including the Student Loans Company)
- widening participation in higher education
- education exports (including international students, international research)
- tackling extremism in higher education

The minister’s Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy responsibilities include:

- science and research
- innovation
- intellectual property
- space
- agri-tech
- technology
Why?

“In supporting the UK research endeavour, we are seeking to increase knowledge, enhance public life, expand our economy, and transform public services. For us to realise these benefits and more, research needs to be openly available.”

Chris Skidmore, January 2019
Open Access

“Your advice demonstrates that the UK is at the forefront of the global movement towards Open Access to research. Over half of the publications arising from publicly funded research can now be read online and without payment, one year after publication. It is a significant achievement to have reached the current rate of Open Access adoption and I look forward to UKRI pursuing routes which allow us to reach our 100% target in an affordable way.”

Chris Skidmore, January 2019
Open Access

EPSRC -> RCUK -> UKRI

Current RCUK policy:

“Researchers, as the generators of all of the research papers and responsible for much of their peer review, are expected to publish any peer-reviewed research papers which acknowledge Research Council funding in journals that are compliant with the RCUK policy on Open Access. All papers must include details of the funding that supported the research and, if applicable, a statement on how the underlying research materials – such as data, samples or models – can be accessed.”

RCUK Open Access Policy
UKRI policy

• (Journal gives open access)

• Or,

• The journal consents to deposit of the final Accepted Manuscript in any repository, without restriction on non-commercial re-use and within a defined period. No APC will be payable to the publisher.

• In this latter case, in STEM disciplines, RCUK will accept a delay of no more than six months between on-line publication and the final Accepted Manuscript becoming Open Access.
Research Evaluation Framework

- As of now, any journal or conference paper to be submitted to REF must be open access (exception for papers published early in the cycle).
KEY ISSUE

- Paying publishers to provide open access costs a lot.
Open Data

• July 2016: Concordat on Open Data published

  • We need to move to open research data

  • 10 Basic Principles

  • 0 SMART targets

• Example: Principle #3 - Open access to research data carries a significant cost, which should be respected by all parties.
Open Research Data Task Force

- Led by Adam Tickell (Sussex)
- Commissioned by Joe Johnson summer 2016
- Report published July 2018-Jan 2019
Open Research Data Task Force

- Report published July 2018-Jan 2019

- Summary:
  - we think this is essential
  - we can see that a lot of people need to get their acts together to support this
  - we are really in favour of them doing that.
What happens now

• This goes to the civil servants at DfE and BEIS.

• A team will be charged with responding and implementing.

• They will absolutely be doing this
  
  • just as soon as it reaches the top of their priority list
But

- the Tickell report is accompanied by some good case studies.
- there are people in the UK who really care.
Carol Goble: Manchester

- I’m also BEIS rep on the G7 Open Science WG (Rachel Bruce is the BEIS rep) and helping with the OECD access to data (and software) funded by the public purse policy revision (Agnes Estibals is the BEIS rep).

- I work in Research Infrastructures for Sciences (Life Sciences, Biodiversity, Industrial Biotech)

- FAIR and Open are taken very seriously here, and by e-infrastructure and digital library communities

- It’s not taken so seriously in CS or by CS researchers
What happens now?

- UKRI was listed as the lead organisation in the reports I mentioned.
- BEIS is likely to be the lead government department.
- Both are busy with other things…
- But UKRI is likely to be sympathetic to international efforts (because they deal with a lot of academics)
One possibility...

- UK government decides to give a wadge of money to someone to solve the problem for them.
The Open Data Institute works with companies and governments to build an open, trustworthy data ecosystem, where people can make better decisions using data and manage any harmful impacts.