Monitoring Open Science developments in Europe
Experiences, struggles and consequences

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Pre-ambule: Example of a policy push ...

• In 2015 CWTS received an EU call on “Trends and drivers of Open Science” in Europe.

• Underlying assumptions of the call:
  – Open Science is a well-established practice across the scientific landscape, ...
  – ... that can be measured all along the full cycle of the knowledge creation process, and ...
  – ... based upon tools for that become more and more easily available.
  – Focus on the Trends and Drivers of Open Science
Some conclusions back then ...

- Classical bibliometrics mainly focuses on output and impact related dimensions of the knowledge creation process.
- Altmetrics or social media metrics might describe other elements of the knowledge creation process.
- But, not in all domains of scholarly activity has Open Science/Open Access landed already to the same extent ...
- ... nor are the social media metrics already ‘matured’ enough to be used to the full extent in a science policy context.
- **Conclusion**: CWTS refused to take on the project!
The European Open Science Monitor

• January 2018, the 2nd generation of the European OSM was started

• Collaborative effort of a Brussels–based think tank, two university teams, and the largest academic publisher as a sub-contractor supplying data to the consortium.

• “To determine the scope, nature and the impacts of Open Science in Europe and globally across the research cycle in order to provide an evidence-based view of evolution of Open Science and facilitate policy making.”

• Focus of the OSM was on Trends, Drivers, and Barriers with respect to the development of Open Science.
Intermezzo
CWTS history of working with and for Elsevier

• CWTS has a long history of working with Elsevier (from 1990s)
• For many years, CWTS supplied services to Elsevier, and conducted ‘blue sky’ research funded by Elsevier.
• For CWTS, Elsevier as sub-contractor in the OSM supplying a survey and data for the OSM, was no problem in itself.
  – although we clearly noticed the apparent tension here, given their OA policies
• Main question evolved around exclusivity or inclusivity
  – Excluding Elsevier would isolate the company as a whole even more.
  – Staff members of the company with better understanding of the OS/OA discussion would also become more isolated
July 2018: Launch of the first results of the OSM

- ....creating a huge controversy on the composition of the OSM.
- Main criticism was initially on the use of data from Elsevier, considered as an anti OA publisher.
- Receiving some 300 reactions on the methodologies used and the results produced, as well as a polemic in official media (*The Guardian*) and beyond (*a shit storm on Twitter*).
- Later, the criticism shifted from the composition of the team to the procurement procedure, as Elsevier was considered unacceptable as partner in such a consortium studying OS/OA.
Reacting to all these criticism and comments.

Explaining the methodologies used (for the Trends part, that is the uptake of OA publishing) in detail.

Use of proprietary data was/is unavoidable for the moment, as no alternative, high-quality (meta-)data were/are available.

What appeared to be a central issue was the assessment of the situation regarding data and methodologies to unfold OS/OA by CWTS staff ➔ a clear denial of bibliometric expertise by the environment of the OSM!
Changes late 2018: Elsevier as research intel supplier

• At the start of OSM, problems with Elsevier concentrated on their OA policies.

• Next to that, Elsevier has since long started focus on research intelligence products ("Information as the new oil")

• In the course of 2018, their ‘One-Stop-Shop’ policy became more apparent
  – Difficulties in linking WoS to Pure
  – Re-coding of Mendeley software, difficulties in linking other software

• The uncritical use of tools such as In-Cites (Clarivate) and SciVal (Elsevier), in connection to WoS and Scopus became more and more apparent.
Returning issue … the use of expertise/judgment in valuing research metrics whenever used in research assessment

- The assessment of the situation regarding data and methodologies to unfold Open Science by CWTS staff
- A clear denial of our bibliometric expertise by the environment of the OSM

- To me, this made apparent a potential much larger problem, namely the question …

*Is there a crisis in the field of bibliometrics?*
Is there a crisis in the field of academic bibliometrics?

• Increasingly, academic bibliometricians focus on publishing on yet another indicator in academic journals, ... thereby completely de-coupling from evaluative practices!

• Increasing competition on indicator production & prioritization of one’s own indicator(s) (incl. private parties as Clarivate and Elsevier)

• Metrics have gone into a ‘solo’, stand-alone dynamics,
  ... a complete de-coupling from using expertise/judgment in interpreting these metrics (Mueller, “The tyranny of metrics”)

• Distant/distinct attitude by academic bibliometricians, stating that “they only create the indicators”, this is not a sustainable attitude (analog to the fire arms debate in the US)
Conclusions and discussion

• Until now, integrity was not threatened, but the risk has become larger, given …
  – ES aggressive market policies, also in the research intelligence domain
  – Increasing number public-private interactions (not only in this domain!)

• The decay of judgment/expertise when it comes to the application and interpretation of research metrics.

• Academic bibliometrics community has to clean up their act. Next to the 4 issues addressed, questions that pop up are:
  – What role do we have to play in this changing landscape of OS/OA?
  – Should we take a more independent position?
  – Are all partners for collaboration equally acceptable?
Thank you for your attention!

For questions, ask me now or mail me…

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European Open Science Monitor