



# 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.



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## 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

# September 2018: Brussels workshop on the OSM

- 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**

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