

UNESCO Regional Consultation on Open Science for Western Europe and North America

- **Date:** July 23, 2020
- **Website:** <https://en.unesco.org/science-sustainable-future/open-science/regional-consultations/western-european-north-america>
- **Format:** Each panelist will be asked an initial question and will have 2 minutes to respond. The floor will then be opened for additional questions and comments.
- **Question to Glenn Hampson**, Executive Director, Science Communication Institute (SCI), Program Director Open Scholarship Initiative (OSI): From your broad experience in science communication and bringing together various stakeholders around open science, what would be the three key messages for the UNESCO's Global Recommendation on Open Science?

Statement:

Well, first, thank you to UNESCO's open science team for organizing this event and for the invitation to speak. It's an honor to be here, even if it's still very early in the morning out here in Seattle...

OSI was launched about five and a half years ago with UNESCO's help to listen to and report on the many different perspectives in this space. To the extent that it's possible to summarize all this work in three brief points (for the listening audience, the OSI website contains much more detail on these points if you're interested), OSI recommends that UNESCO:

1. EMBRACE the diversity in this space. There are so many different and important voices that represent different definitions, motives, goals, fields, disciplines, regions, and more. It takes a village to truly understand it all and create change. We can learn a lot from each other.
2. IMPROVE our understanding of open science. There is a lot that we still don't know. We need to keep an open mind in this quest.
3. BUILD on our common goals and interests. We're all trying to create a better world through open research. Let's unite to work together on the things we need to meet this challenge, like open infrastructure, better evaluation measures, and so on. Importantly, we also need to demonstrate the value of open by taking the next step and changing the world with it---working together to cure cancer and reverse climate change. To do this, we need data standards, low barriers to entry, massive participation and buy-in, new collaboration tools, new ways to add value to datasets, and more. This is the "next step" in open where as a community we haven't really focused yet. Stop focusing on the "internal debates," start focusing on science. Align incentives so that open becomes something scientists want to do, not something they're told to do.

So---embrace our diversity, improve our understanding of open, and build on our common goals and interest. If we can do this, we will be on the right road to creating a future for global open science that is

stronger and ultimately more successful (for both science and society) than any one of us can create alone.

1. EMBRACE the diversity in this space. There so many important voices in this conversation, representing different motives, goals, fields, regions, definitions and concerns, and such a vast wealth of activity and innovation. We absolutely need to be working on this challenge together and not take the easy path of accepting one-size-fits-all answers and solutions.
2. IMPROVE our understanding of open science. There is a lot we still don't know, like the scope and impact of predatory publishing, and what kinds of open work best for which audiences. We need to keep an open mind in this quest and avoid falling back on dogma, like "BOAI says." The more we truly understand about open, the more targeted and effective our open reforms can be.
3. BUILD on our common goals and interests---fundamentally, that there is a better world we're all trying to build that has open research as a foundation. To that end, work together on challenges like improving open research infrastructure, reducing the influence of impact factors, and changing the culture of communication in academia (through outreach and education, better proof of concept, better tools, and more reuse---especially with medical research; this latter challenge is highly complex—see recent NAS report).

How do we embrace the diversity of passion, creativity and energy in this space while at the same time respecting the diversity of opinions, and diversity of concerns and perspectives?

So, with this information in hand, how do we weigh all this and come up with global policy. After all, many of us are coming at this issue from different angles---different definitions, motives, goals. And others have backgrounds that reflect the unique challenges of their region, or their career stage in academia, or their research field. So, "reality" looks different to each of us. Which means that global solutions are difficult to develop because solutions that work for a well-funded mid-career medical researcher in France may not work at all for an underfunded early career history researcher in Canada.

OSI's recommendation is to look for our common ground. In the final measure, we aren't going to all agree to support an extremely specific Plan X that requires conditions A,B,and C for all research everywhere, or else. But we will agree, and we do agree, that there is a better world we're all trying to build that has open research as a foundation.

The first step in this journey is to stop treating the diversity of opinion in this space as a symptom of something that is wrong---as battle lines between people who either agree or disagree with the "right" road to the future. Instead, we should see this diversity as evidence that a great many people care about scholarly communication and are working hard to make it better. If we can start there instead of from the position that we are right and others are wrong---if we can approach this task from the perspective of wanting to learn from each other and do what's best for science---then the sky is truly the limit, and together, building on our common ground with facts and an open mind, we will surely achieve great things. That's the future I hope UNESCO sees---a future that is much more rewarding than any one of us can build on our own.