SPARC Europe

annual report

[making open the default]

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Introduction

Exceptional developments are underway with the Open movement as it continues to evolve, both broadly and within the European and global academic communities.

In 2019, we saw unprecedented efforts like Plan S, which intends to make publicly and privately funded research publications immediately available Open Access, gain momentum. We are indeed seeing the community come together in new, more concerted ways. Another striking example is the Global Sustainability Coalition for Open Science Services (SCOSS), which we are leading, and which became a proven concept in 2019 raising over 1.5 million Euros.

Last year, changes in EU legislation—from the newly-adopted Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market to the Open Data Directive to Horizon Europe—also took effect. Throughout it all, SPARC Europe has remained deeply immersed on behalf of our members, working diligently to influence this legislation and to ensure you are fully abreast of these developments and their implications; that you also have the insights and information to adapt, engage and help influence Open policy and practice within your institution, your country even.

We have also continued to take on research projects that deepen our understanding of the Open stakeholder communities. For instance, we spearheaded an effort to dig deeply into Open policy practices of European funders. We believe the insights gained will lead to more funders developing more robust requirements for researchers who receive public funding to make their research more fully Open.

Thank you, to all of our members, who help support this work and for the work you are doing to advance Open and make it the default!

Vanessa Proudman,
Director, SPARC Europe

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Driving European Open Science Policy

Helping Shape Key New EU Legislation and Provide Community Guidance on Its Implementation

Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market

The Copyright issue is one that SPARC Europe has been involved with since 2018 when together with a coalition of fellow stakeholders we began an effort to influence the writing of the new legislation—to ensure the interests of Open Access and the academic community were being considered by lawmakers.

It was in March that the Directive was adopted by the European Parliament. In response, SPARC Europe produced an article explaining how the Directive will impact the research community and change the environment around Open Access and Open Science.

In the article, we detailed the particular aspects of the Directive that we interpret as positive for the European research community: for instance, the copyright exceptions related to text and data mining; digital preservation of in-copyright works including the use of digital preservation networks within a member state and across borders; and the way in which Article 10b, dealing with works in the public domain, helps achieve the public interest mission of cultural heritage and research institutions in Europe. SPARC Europe focused on—and succeeded in—our policymaking efforts to exclude scientific publications from the so-called link tax. We furthermore got repositories excluded from being included in the article related to platform liability.

Read our analysis in full.

Last May, most members of the same coalition that has collaborated to help shape the Directive—COAR, EIFL, EUA, IFLA, EBLIDA, LIBER, Science Europe and SPARC Europe— met to discuss how to prepare for the implementation phase as all Member States are obliged to transpose the new legislation into law within two years of its passing. As a coalition, we are

committed to continuing to help implement this in the interests of the research and library community, but your support will also be essential.

Our goal: to enable the most positive and aligned transposition of the new copyright directive in European countries in the interest of research and the cultural heritage sector.

As a step in this direction, we helped co-organise a workshop at the annual LIBER Conference; the topic: how library leaders across Europe can follow and engage in the topics of copyright, licensing or database rights to be able to positively influence developments in legislation that might impinge on key information activities in our research institutions in the future; not in detail but on a strategic level.

Together with EBLIDA, IFLA and LIBER, we then produced a set of guidelines for libraries and library associations, researchers and others involved in national discussions about the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market. The guidelines are intended to offer essential background to inform discourse around new rules as well as necessary choices that lie ahead for you when helping implement this legislation in your country: the guidelines also included goals that Member States should adopt to secure the interests of libraries on copyright.

Twelve of the Articles in the Directive are addressed looking at text and data mining, education, preservation, contracts and technological protection measures, out-of-commerce works, works of visual arts in the public domain, the press publishers rights and platform liability.

Read more about the guidelines.

The Open Data Directive

In July, the Directive on Open Data and the Re-use of Public Sector Information, also called the "Open Data Directive", went into effect. The Directive is the result of an effort to provide a common legal framework for public sector information in the EU; a framework that reflects the evolution of digital technologies and encompasses materials held by public sector bodies in the Member States. Research institutions, libraries and archives are within the Directive's scope. SPARC Europe, together with DCC, EBLIDA, IFLA and LIBER worked diligently, and successfully to promote Open Science throughout the trilogue negotiations of the proposed Directive. As a result, our main proposals were included in the provisional trilogue-agreed text that was endorsed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives earlier in the year. For example, in part thanks to our influencing efforts, Open has become the default for data following the application of FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) and making data "as open as possible, and as closed as necessary" feature in the Directive's text.

To aid in the implementation of this new legislation, of which member states have until 16 July 2021 to transpose, we produced a summary coupled with implementation guidance.
It is now important that in each country, there are people willing to help represent the interests of Open Access to research data by helping influence policy-makers to implement this Directive effectively. This document should be of use in this effort.

This policymaking for Open Science was a collaborative effort between the Digital Curation Centre (DCC), EBLIDA, IFLA, LIBER, and SPARC Europe, with SPARC Europe as coordinator.

Download the Guide.

Horizon Europe and Open Science

In April the European Parliamentlargely endorsed the next European research and innovation framework programme. This agreement sends a strong signal about the importance of science and innovation for the future of Europe and shows Europe's potential to lead in the promotion of Open Science and Open Access policies.

SPARC Europe, together with the EUA, LIBER, and IFLA worked to ensure aspects that support mandating OA and FAIR research data were included for example, thereby supporting the principle of "fostering open science and ensuring visibility to the public and open access to scientific publications and research data, including appropriate exceptions" which were confirmed in the final result.

To help our members and the community better understand the implications of the new Horizon Europe funding programme and how it supports Open Science, we published an article. We are now following how this is being implemented in the EC grant agreement.

Read the article in full.

Plan S

A coalition of national and international funders—cOAlition S–with its Plan S of 10 principles is working to make publicly and privately funded research publications immediately available Open Access. It launched in September 2018 seeking input from the Open stakeholder community. SPARC Europe has been an active contributor, providing feedback at a range of intervals on the principles and implementation guidance, also by liaising with key members of cOAlition S on your behalf.

In February of 2019, we too provided feedback to cOAlition S as part of its public consultation. We specifically addressed a range of needs and requests for inclusion: from reform in research evaluation to ensuring financial support for a range of OA publishing models and venues and thereby supporting a vibrant scholarly communication ecosystem in diverse research communities to platform parity (giving equal weight to repositories to other compliant OA platforms and OA journals); from ensuring the sustainability of essential Open Science infrastructure to further firming up licensing and rights and analysing the pragmatism of some requirements. Many of our asks were adopted in the second version of Plan S and its guidelines.

In May, cOAlition S published a revised version of the implementation guide which we analysed producing a review that specifically examined 20 key changes that had been made to the guide since the initial draft was released to make it more easily digestible for the library community.

Our Board has had several discussions on how best to support the implementation of Plan S in the interest of our community since that time with activities planned for 2020.

Bi-annual Update to our Overview on Open Science Policies in Europe

In Autumn, we published the latest release of one of our most accessed resources—a bi-annually updated report on Open Science policies in Europe, a joint collaboration with the Digital Curation Centre (DCC). This latest iteration incorporated several new elements including changes in related European legislation, more information on funder policies, and also included a table 1) listing and linking national Open Science research data policies; 2) related national laws; and 3) we have also added another table listing national policies under development. These updates were part of an ongoing effort to ensure that the report evolves with our readers; that it remains a meaningful resource for Open Science policymakers.

Collectively, all of its versions have been downloaded more than 5,000 times.

Download the report.

Urging Mutual Engagement Between the European Open Science Cloud and Libraries

While in 2019 momentum continued to grow behind the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), and libraries engaged in a range of related European Commission projects, strong formal engagement in EOSC's governance among European libraries was lacking. Libraries are key stakeholders in making EOSC a success as they have been advocating for Open Science and taking action by generating, curating and managing Open Science content and services for many years. To ensure the future sustainability of the management and flow of content into EOSC that originates in Europe's higher education institutions, it is essential that we identify ways for libraries to get more involved with the EOSC. As a result, SPARC Europe instigated several meetings with senior officials at the European Commission responsible for EOSC to explore how this might change. As a result, a position paper on how libraries might support EOSC and vice versa was drafted in December 2019 and will be shared in 2020.

Deepening and Growing our Knowledge of the Open Funder Community

Report: Insights into European Funder Open Policies and Practices

In late 2019, we released a report that had been in-the-works for the better part of the year. This study was done in consultation with Science Europe, The European Foundation Centre (EFC) and ALLEA, the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities. The publication contained the results of the first-ever survey of its kind on European research funders including national funding agencies, pan-European funders, national and regional academies, foundations and philanthropic organisations and research charities and explored their policies and practices as related to Open. Because of the influential role funders play in how and where research is published, SPARC Europe wanted to find out what these key international funding bodies are doing to incentivise openness to the work they help fund.

In many cases, it is thanks to funder policies that we are seeing an increase in the Open Access to our research outputs; universities and publishers alike are increasingly reliant on funder policy choices which is why supporting funders in Open Science policy development is so crucial.

Our survey led to a great number of insights. For instance, approximately two-thirds of respondents had an OA policy in place, though only about one third had research data policies. We also found that despite policies in place, that practice did not always match when it came to investing in OA or OS initiatives (infrastructure, standards or services) or considering OS in the research evaluation process. Based on these lessons learnt, SPARC Europe then proposed eight areas for further development to help funders strengthen their policies. We hope that this report, by raising awareness of current gaps and trends, helps influence funders to adopt more open practices. We will be liaising with funder networks to see how we can take some of this forward in 2020 and to see how this dovetails with our work in the EC FAIRSFAIR Project.

Download the Report.

Further Highlights of an Analysis of European Funder Policies and their Compliance with FAIR for the FAIRSFAIR Project

2019 also saw SPARC Europe contributing to an international Open Science policy analysis that was produced as part of the [FAIRSFAIR](#) EC research project, an initiative that aims to supply practical solutions for the use of the FAIR data principles throughout the research data life cycle. Our focus: a review of funder policies to determine their compliance with FAIR principles, focusing on requirements for data/metadata sharing, long-term stewardship, accessibility and re-use with the view to identify helpful recommendations for FAIR policy development and further policy alignment amongst funders in Europe. This work appears in the FAIRSFAIR deliverable D3.1 FAIR policy landscape analysis to be published in 2020.

Read the report.

Open Education Survey: Seeking Insights Into OE Practices Within European Academic Libraries

SPARC Europe – in consultation with the European Open Education Librarian Network – launched a survey targeting academic libraries across Europe. We were looking to garner insights into their Open Education practices.

Our ultimate goal is to use what we learned to strengthen Open Education (OE) and Open Education Resources (OER) in higher education institutions and their libraries across Europe. We define OE as resources, tools and practices that are free of legal, financial and technical barriers, and that can be fully used, shared and adapted in the digital environment.

Academic libraries are natural partners in an endeavour intended to expand OE and OER considering the prominent role they have played in advancing Open, developing Open Access, Scholarship and Open Science policies and practices.

The results of the survey are scheduled for release in early 2020 and will feed into SPARC Europe's OE strategy.

Advocating for Open Science

BRIEF

Research Integrity through Open Science and FAIR Data

March 2019

SPARC Europe

Brief: Research Integrity Through Open Science and Fair Data

In 2019 we released a Brief that offers insights to senior managers and policymakers looking to better understand how changes in research practices around Open Science and FAIR data principles can be leveraged to help meet higher expectations in the area of research integrity.

Ground covered by the Brief included a recap of key research integrity principles, the policy measures being taken to apply them, and the issues these aim to address; the role of Open Science and FAIR principles, and research support strategies that research performing organisations can take action on. The Brief also includes an outline of how the emerging European Open Science Cloud will help facilitate change in these areas.

Download the Brief.

Brief: Using Open and FAIR Data to Increase Research Efficiency

In a Brief released mid-year, we explored how making data open and FAIR can lead to economic efficiencies. We present the findings of various models used to forecast potential savings; these are intended to assist research decision-makers, such as funders and senior management when making evidence-based decisions regarding data management. The paper also includes examples of useful indicators for measuring efficiency gains; these include time spent searching for data, cost of storage, license costs and research retraction, among others.

Download the Brief.

Helping Secure our Open Infrastructure

SCOSS

The Global Sustainability Coalition for Open Science Services (**SCOSS**) was formed in early 2017 with the purpose of providing a new co-ordinated cost-sharing framework for enabling the broader OA and OS community to support the non-commercial services on which it depends. As a founding member of SCOSS, SPARC Europe has been deeply involved with the global funding initiative that saw an emerging groundswell of support within the global academic community during 2019. By year's end, more than 200 institutions from throughout the world had pledged greater than 1.5 million Euros to the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and SHERPA/RoMEO, the two services endorsed by SCOSS for the first funding cycle.

While this initial fundraising effort was underway, the groundwork to identify and vet services for the second funding cycle was also taking place. At the start of the year, the Board was reviewing the Expressions of Interest that had been submitted in 2018, which numbered over 35 from across the world. By the spring, the 6 shortlisted finalists had been identified and invited to submit to the full application process. After evaluating the full applications, the Board made its final selections:

- The **Directory of Open Access Books** (DOAB), a digital directory of peer reviewed Open Access books and Open Access book publishers; and Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN), a growing repository of freely accessible academic books;

- **PKP**, a university initiative that creates open source software and services, including Open Journal Systems (OJS), which is used to publish more than 9,000 OA journals worldwide; and

- **OpenCitations**, a scholarly infrastructure service that provides open bibliographic and citation data;

The initial announcement and call for funding for these services was made in December 2019. SCOSS is again appealing to academic institutions and their libraries, research institutes, funding organisations, national and regional governments, international organisations, learned societies and service providers—everyone who is invested in Open Access and Open Science—to consider helping support one or more of these services through a three-year commitment.

In 2019 SPARC Europe continued to be heavily involved in a sustained effort to promote SCOSS. SPARC Europe presented the initiative at multiple conferences and meetings; consistently made announcements pertaining to key fundraising milestones and the addition of new members; maintained the SCOSS web page, initiated a project to develop a new SCOSS website (under development); wrote and distributed dedicated SCOSS newsletters; grew the list of SCOSS newsletter subscribers; produced materials to promote a second funding call and managed a co-ordinated effort to announce the second funding call.

We also helped produce a Progress Report that offered an assessment of the SCOSS Pilot Project, which at that time, had raised more than €1 million for the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and SHERPA/RoMEO. The report, the result of an assessment that involved the SCOSS Board as well as representatives from DOAJ and SHERPA/RoMEO, offers a thorough examination of what worked—and what could have worked better—and includes details of how lessons learned will be incorporated moving forward.

Download the Progress Report.

Following a presentation we gave at the OASPA Conference 2019, SPARC Europe was invited to pen an article that was subsequently published in ScholarLed Online. In the piece, we named 10 key prerequisites to funding Open infrastructure so that it is sustainable in the long term.

Read the article.

SPARC Europe Gets Behind IOI, a New Effort to Help Secure Open Infrastructure

Invest in Open Infrastructure (IOI), a new global initiative that aims to help secure the diverse constellation of services that collectively comprise Open infrastructure, launched in 2019. SPARC Europe, among many others, pledged our support and is calling on others in the community to do the same. We are one of the core initiators of IOI from the start. This initiative is ambitious in its intent to create a framework that will serve to strategically fund an extensive amount of open infrastructure across the globe, also creating a more interconnected network of services that works more closely together.

IOI serves two essential functions: the first being to establish a framework for surveying the global landscape of Open scholarly infrastructure, making assessments based on functionality, usage, health and financial needs. Funding recommendation will be made based on this assessment. The second function involves coordinating and direct funding—derived from institutions, agencies and foundations—to services using the framework as a guide. During 2019, we worked on defining the vision and mission and helped launch it at ELPUB in Marseille. We also called on our members to consider signing a Statement of Support for IOI. Funds are now in place to hire someone to drive this forward in 2020. SPARC Europe looks forward to providing intelligence on the scholarly communication infrastructure in Europe to IOI in 2020.

Thank you for supporting our work. To follow our progress throughout the year, **visit us online** or follow us on Twitter (@SPARC_EU).

Key Stats | 2019

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