One Article at a Time? Scholarly Communication and Collective Stewardship

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Scholarly communication as an individual choice

Changing the publication system often framed as a problem of incentives created by institutions

…but part of the problem is not just the incentives, but the individualization of publishing choices they create

…the publishing system with all its discontents is reproduced one article at a time, presenting itself as an ‘external’ constraint

The CWTS policy aims to connect individual career considerations with collective institutional goals and move toward greater independence from large commercial publishers

Co-creating the CWTS scholarly communication policy

- **Co-creation led by Research Director + Data Steward** with mandate from the board and input by Scientific Director & library colleagues
- **Used weekly internal meetings**, (almost) full participation by CWTS researchers → quite time-intensive but creates buy-in
- In line with **a strong co-creation focus in CWTS** - cf. our sustainable travel policy developed on deep democracy approaches
- Lots of **participatory elements using Wooclap** and **polls** to make decisions (e.g., do you want to continue using R&P deals? How to handle APCs? etc.)
- **Co-creation input used for a draft** - to be s**ent out for comments, one round of revisions**, and then **approval by board (in January 2026)**

Co-creation process	
Format	Date
Institute board discussion	2025-02-13
Draft sent for comment - all CWTS	2025-03-06
Presentation of initial draft @ CWTS internal meeting	2025-03-17
Co-creation workshop #1 - Outputs (y-axis)	2025-04-08
Co-creation workshop #2 - Considerations (x-axis)	2025-05-13
Co-creation workshop #3 - UBL questions	2025-05-27
Co-creation workshop #4 - UBL questions	2025-06-05
Version 0.4 create - WK/ASH working version	2025-09-08
Updated draft & circulate for feedback (3 weeks)	2025-12-09
Internal meeting to discuss feedback	2026-01-13
Final draft to board	2026-01-31

Part 1: The co-creation process

Conceptual assumptions behind “outputs”?

Preliminary endpoint of a process that we agree is a useful landmark

- Risks
  - Downplays processual nature of research, e.g. research is sometimes declared “finished” when output is produced
  - Perhaps leads people to no care about the ‘aftermath’ of research
  - Countable output often treated as a proxy for a valuable contribution
  - …
- Pros
  - Widely understood and intuitive concept (--> compatible with other practices)
  - Useful for structuring a document with recommendations and requirements
  - …

Suggestions for how to re-conceptualize outputs? Things to take into account?

1 What output types are most relevant for your work that are not already named here?

Part 2: Co-creation around value considerations (audience & function; openness & community; costing)

CWTS open science policy

Last updated: June 4, 2020

Introduction

Open science currently is one of the most prominent topics on the Dutch and European science policy agenda. This document presents the open science policy of CWTS. This policy applies to the activities of CWTS. It does not apply to the activities of CWTS BV. We note that some activities of CWTS may also be subject to other open science policies, such as policies from Leiden University or from research funders.

General principles

Open science is a broad topic, making it difficult to develop an open science policy that covers all aspects of open science. The CWTS open science policy therefore starts from a number of general principles. For certain aspects of open science, we translate these general principles into more specific policies. For other aspects, we refrain from making this translation. In these cases, the general principles can be seen as guidelines that indicate in general terms how issues related to open science should be handled.

The CWTS open science policy is based on the following five general principles:

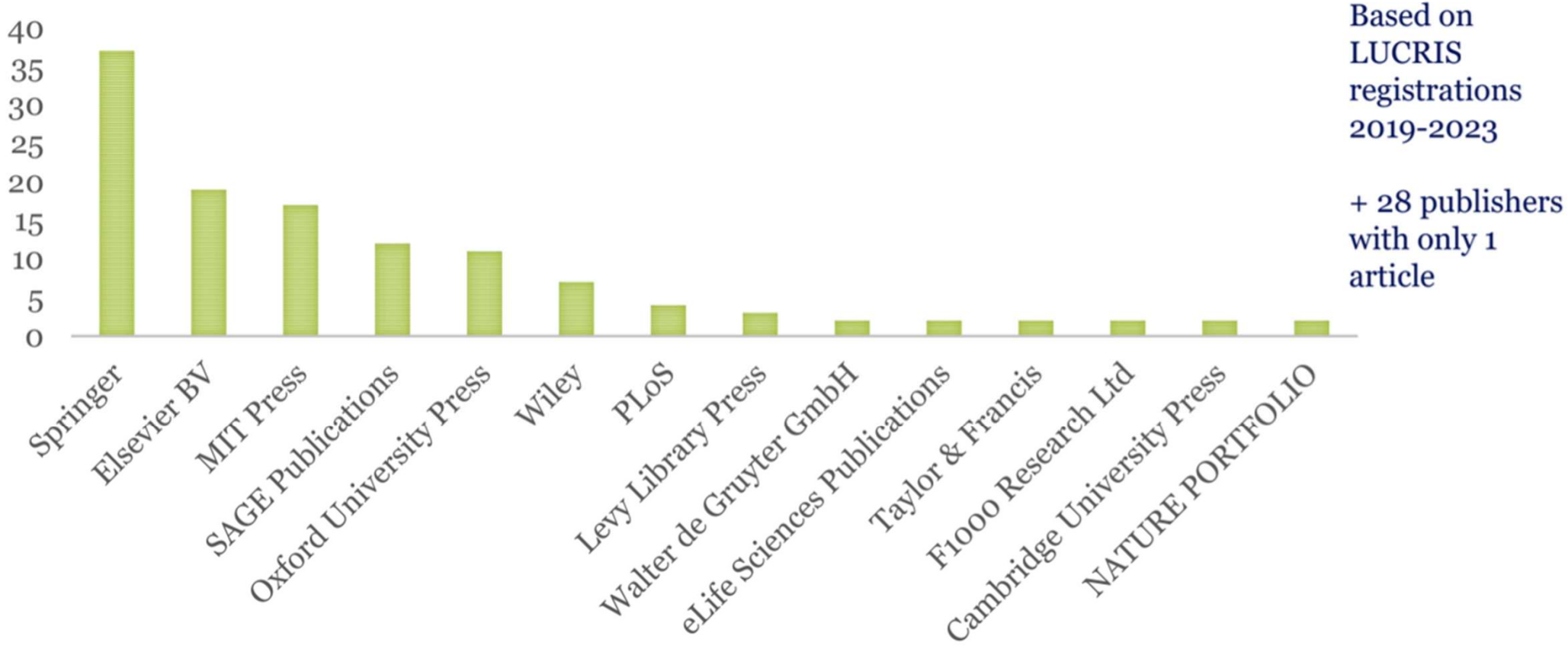
1. *As open as possible, as closed as necessary*. Openness aligns well with the mission and the ambitions of CWTS, and in general we therefore aim for as much openness as possible. However, openness is not always possible or desirable, for instance because
legal or ethical norms. We therefore commit ourselves to act in accordance
known motto 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary'.
2. *Openness is not always easy*. Being open may require changing established w
and making additional efforts. Opening things that used to be closed may also
discomfort. Being open is not always easy, but we do not shy away from doing
3. *Openness takes time*. Moving toward more openness requires significant chan
of working. These changes cannot be realized overnight. We therefore allow
time to become more open.
4. *Openness is a joint responsibility*. Being open is a joint responsibility shared b
individual researchers (both junior and senior), to supervisors, project and gro
CWTS management. In particular, CWTS management has a responsibility to
staff members in adopting open ways of working, and CWTS manag
acknowledge the value of openness in its approach to recognition and rewarc
PhD candidates and junior researchers, supervisors have an important re
provide support in adopting open science practices.
5. *Openness should not become a straitjacket*. Openness is a core value of C
sometimes trade-offs need to be made between openness and other values. I
CWTS management may therefore provide room for exceptions to the CWT
policy.

QUESTION 5:

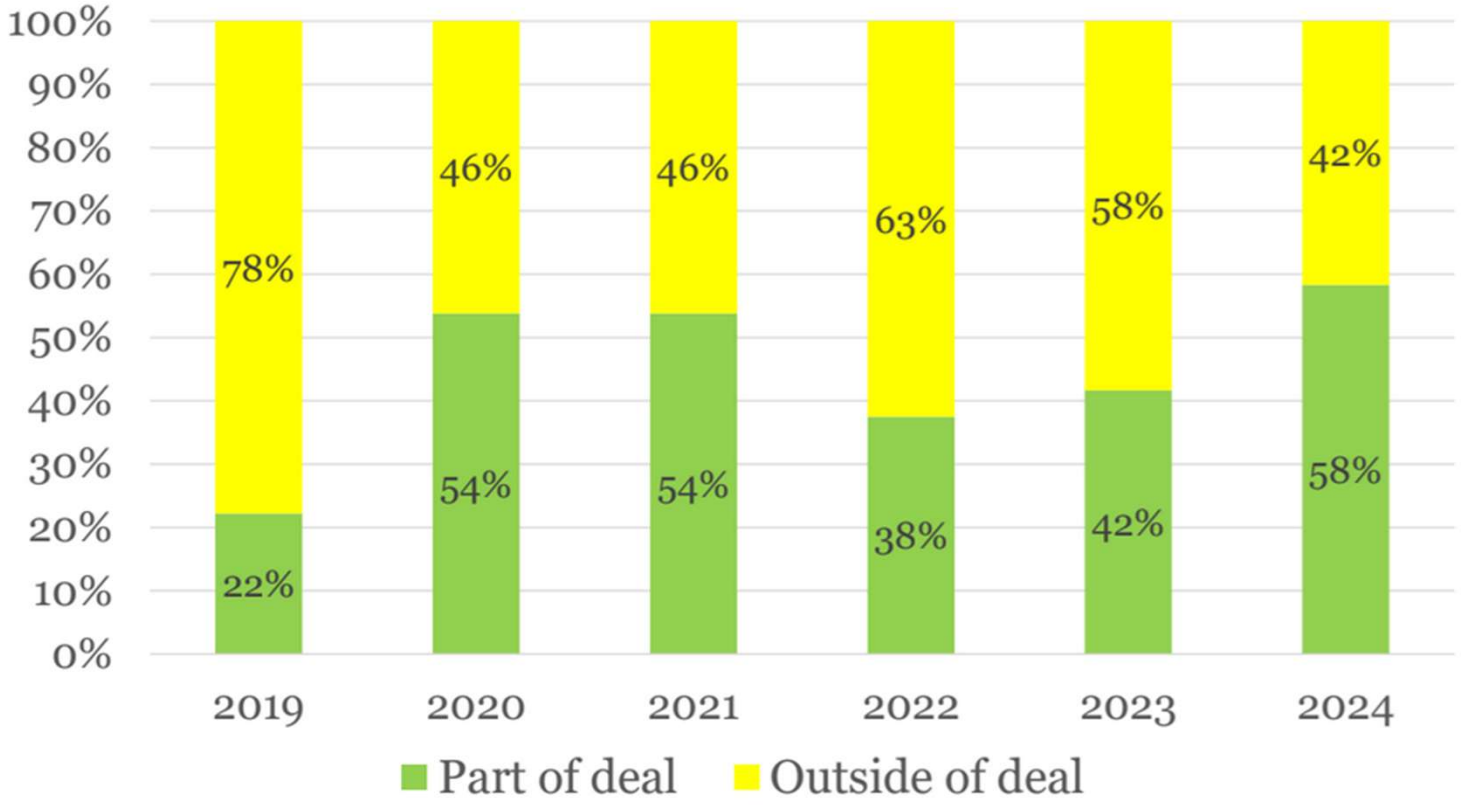
Should CWTS continue to provide an APC budget from its own coffers (±€7500/year)?

- To publish in an OA journal, an article processing charge (APC) may need to be paid. APC payments from project funding require permission from the CWTS project leader. CWTS does not impose a maximum on these APC payments. APC payments from the basic funding of CWTS require permission from a CWTS group leader of from CWTS management. CWTS contributes at most € 1200 from its basic funding to pay the APC of an article. If an article is co-authored with other institutions, each institution is expected to pay its fair share of the APC. In general, this means that CWTS pays in proportion to the number of authors from CWTS. For instance, if an article has five authors of which three are from CWTS, CWTS pays 60% of the APC. CWTS does not use its basic funding to pay APCs for OA publishing in hybrid journals.

Review CWTS publishing practices (Heleen & Fleur)



CWTS publications covered by R&P deal

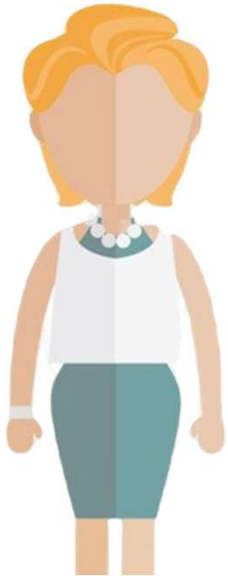


Based on LUCRIS registrations 2019-2024 enriched with UKB-data (corresponding author)

Fictional scenarios to create collective perspective on publishing choices

- Gretchen works at Leiden University (the Netherlands). She has written an article that she would like to submit for publication in ***Journal G***. This journal employs a **gold open access** publishing model. Moreover, it has a solid reputation in Gretchen's field, in particular because it advocates for advancing the reproducibility of research. It is published by a university press and lists a reasonable **APC of €2100**.
- Gretchen does not have a budget to pay this APC and consults the University Library. The Library does **not have a central budget** for open access fees either. It therefore suggests Gretchen to enquire into available funding from her research institute or faculty.
- If no other funding source is found, Gretchen could consider different journal titles, specifically those for which the University has a **'Read-and-publish' agreement**. The Library's information specialist suggests *Journal Y*, by Elsevier, or *Journal Z*, by SpringerNature. Both journals have an **APC close to €3500, but they are included in the agreement** and therefore Gretchen can publish without extra cost.

- Which values does Gretchen consider, in what ranking?
- Which values does the Library (University) consider? To what extent does their consideration align with Gretchen's?
- Should any other values be addressed that are now overlooked?



- What would you advise Gretchen to do? Is this advice dependent on career status?

(Some) core features of the policy

Vision & goals of the policy

Vision: Prioritize community-governed publishing & maximize openness of outputs

- Guided by CWTS mission to improve how science is practiced and governed
- Extracted the kernel of the vision from the CWTS Knowledge Agenda, but then further refined it through co-creation also in context of LU Publication Framework

Primary goal: To increasingly publish our work through **open, community-governed channels that contribute to a scholarly communication system in which researchers, universities, and other academic or public actors – rather than commercial or revenue-driven entities – govern** how knowledge is shared

- Promotes collective stewardship of the knowledge production process

Secondary goal: To **allocate financial resources to publication channels for which the costs are proportionate to the benefits we as a community receive from them**, and to increasingly shift this allocation towards publication channels that meet our standards for openness and community governance

- We want to use our own limited financial resources we have available at CWTS to support this goal and encourage others at Leiden University to do so as well

Maximizing openness → three pathways

1. Publish research articles on preprint servers

Offers the *advantage of rapid circulation and are governed by academic stakeholders*

- Examples: arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, MetaArXiv, PsyArXiv, SocArXiv, or Knowledge Commons.
- To be avoided: Commercial preprint servers that lack community governance (e.g., SSRN, Research Square)

2. Publish open access in journals (diamond/gold/hybrid OA)

Satisfies the requirement of open accessibility of research and may offer a good way to reach certain audiences, but may also have important downsides

- E.g., many journals are owned by commercial or revenue-driven publishers, and publishing in these journals reduces the ability of academic communities to govern the scholarly communication system

Before submitting, assess the extent to which the journal's OA publishing and business model is compatible with our emphasis on community-driven forms of governance, carefully weighing the benefits and disadvantages and taking into account costs

3. Publish research articles behind a paywall in journals, while also depositing the article in an OA repository (green OA)

Green OA options: preprint servers, generalist repositories, or the Scholarly Publications repository of Leiden University

Core recommendations of the policy

	Recommendation
1	Make publishing choices that maximize the uptake of your work by the specific audience(s) you wish to reach or influence
2	Publish your research on preprint servers and/or in journals/with book publishers that facilitate immediate open accessibility and foreground community-driven forms of governance.
3	Share non-research article outputs in venues that facilitate immediate free and open accessibility
4	Retain the copyright for your works, and select a license that guarantees the openness of your works.
5	When publishing research in a journal or with a book publisher that charges publishing fees (APC/BPC/CPC) to make the research openly accessible, consider three main options for covering the fees (listed in order of preference).

Outlook

Community-governed publishing is context-specific - institutes and disciplinary communities can co-create their own approach

Traction for “publication culture” initiatives in NL and elsewhere – cf. UNL’s Vision on Publication Culture.

The term “publication culture” as an intervention – culture outlines a phenomenon and highlights its malleability