LIBER-ORE SURVEY REPORT.

Executive Summary & Context

- Survey launched on the 1st of September 2020
- Survey closed on the 19th of October 2020
- Sent to 450+ LIBER members
- Promoted via LIBER's official social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn) & LIBER's official newsletter
- 134 responses, 110 complete (Approx. response rate of 24.4%).

In 2021 the European Commission will officially launch 'Open Research Europe' (ORE), an open-access publishing platform for Horizon 2020 beneficiaries. ORE is intended to offer a sustainable instrument for rapid publication of a wide range of research outputs without editorial bias using pre-printing, open peer review, and open licences.

As a core member of the ORE project team, LIBER launched a survey in the fall of 2020 which aimed at providing insights related to the awareness, perceptions, and experiences when it comes to open practices and tools (from the perspective of research librarians in Europe). The survey was based on another similar survey launched earlier on by Eurodoc, another core member of the ORE project team. The aim of the Eurodoc survey was to investigate the same aspects as ours, but instead amongst early-career researchers as a target audience.

The LIBER survey on the topic ran from the 1st of September until the 16th of October 2020 and the survey was executed using the SurveyMonkey platform. It was sent to the 450 LIBER members (mostly comprising professionals working at national libraries, special libraries and university libraries within the EU) and was disseminated via LIBER's official social media channels and the official newsletter. The total number of valid responses was 110.

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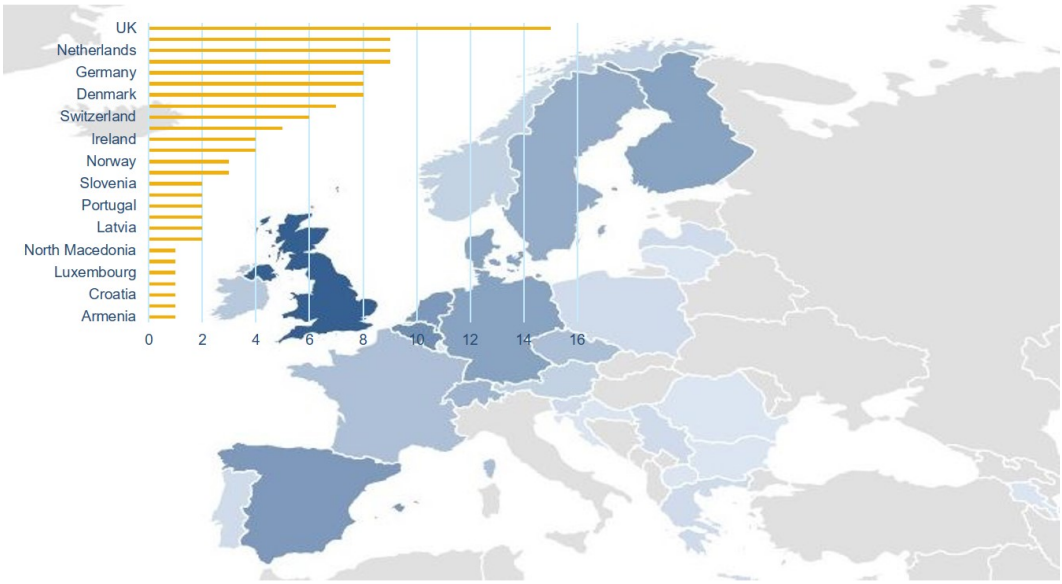
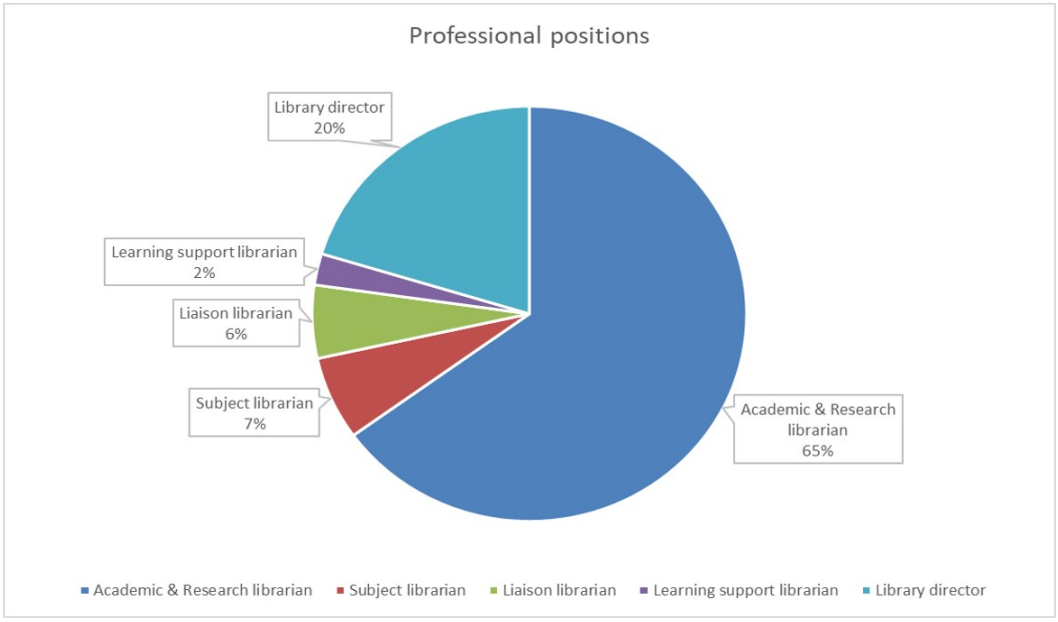
Demographic data

Participation of countries in Europe



A significant number of answers came from the United Kingdom (UK). This might be explained by the fact that the Coordinating organisation of the project is based in the UK. Most responses came from Central and Northern European countries in comparison to Eastern European countries which are under-represented. For the sake of relevance to the topic and project, answers that came from outside of Europe were not considered.

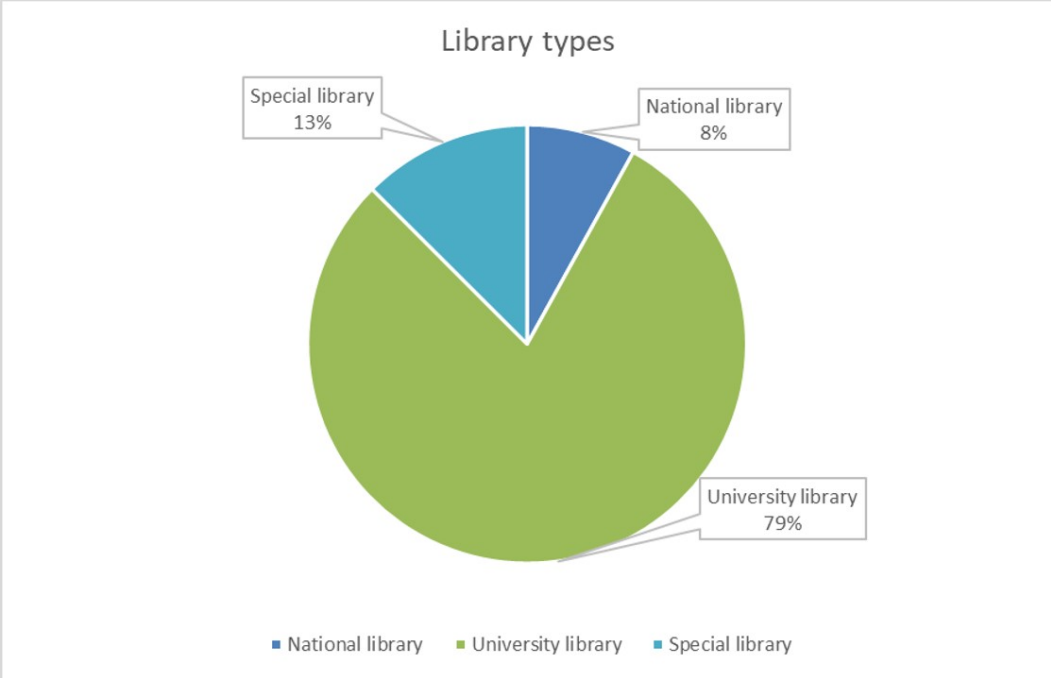
Professional positions of respondents



More than two-thirds of respondents are ‘Academic & Research Librarians’ (65%), while less than a quarter (20%) are ‘Library Directors’.

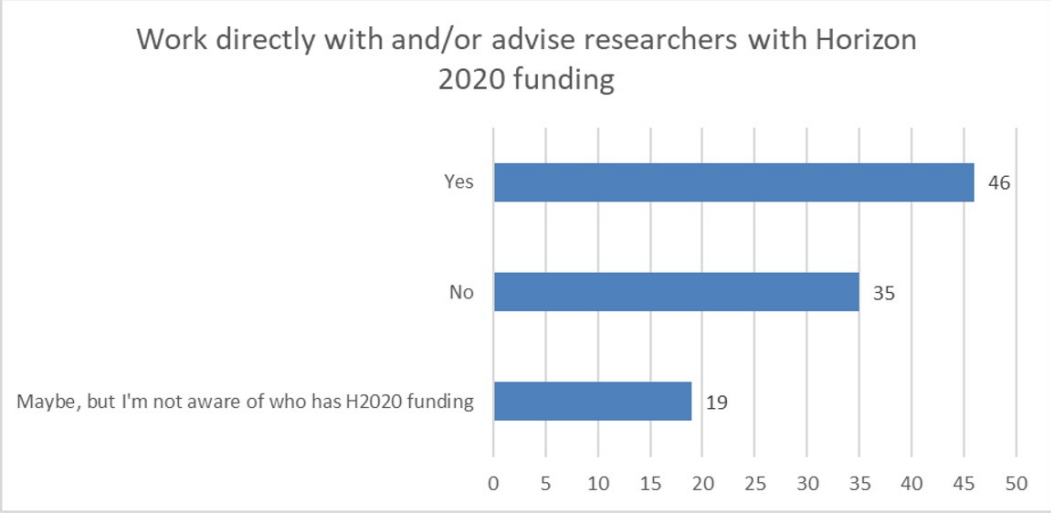
A few respondents (15%) hold a specialised position such as ‘Subject Librarians’ (7%), ‘Liaison Librarians’ (6%), or ‘Learning Support Librarians’ (2%).

Library types



A great majority of respondents (79%) work at 'university libraries', while less than a quarter work at 'national libraries' (8%), or 'special libraries' (13%). All respondents work at university libraries (or in departments dedicated to research).

Professional involvement with Horizon 2020 funding

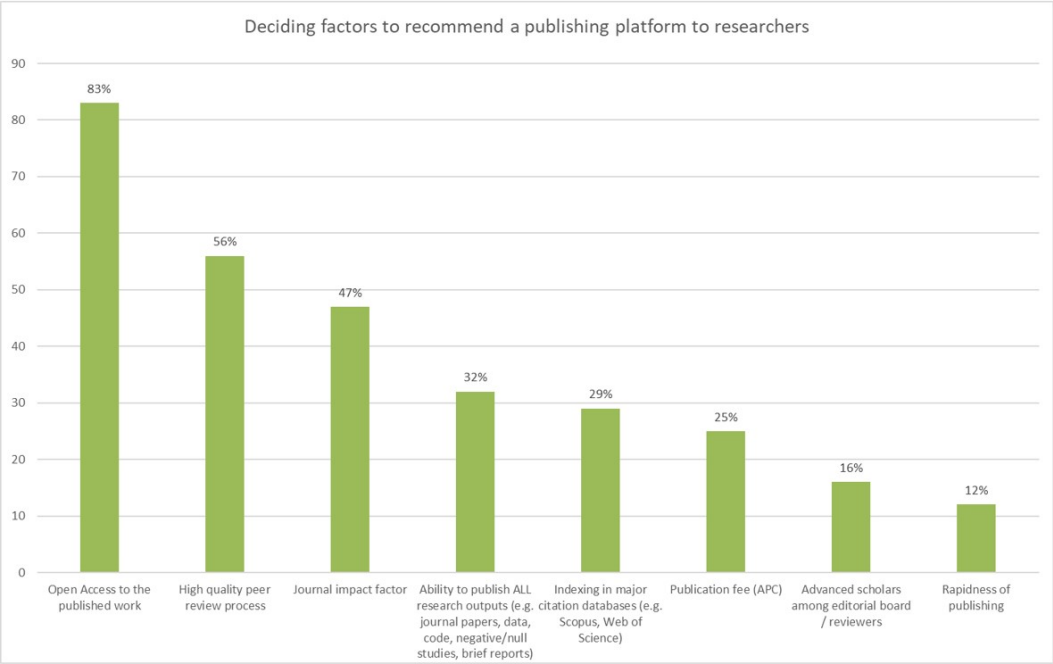


Less than half of respondents work directly with and/or advise researchers when it comes to Horizon 2020 funding. In comparison, more than a third (35%) don't, and less than a quarter (19%) are not aware of professional involvement with Horizon 2020 funding of who has 2020 funding.

Publishing platforms

Deciding factors when recommending a publishing platform to researchers

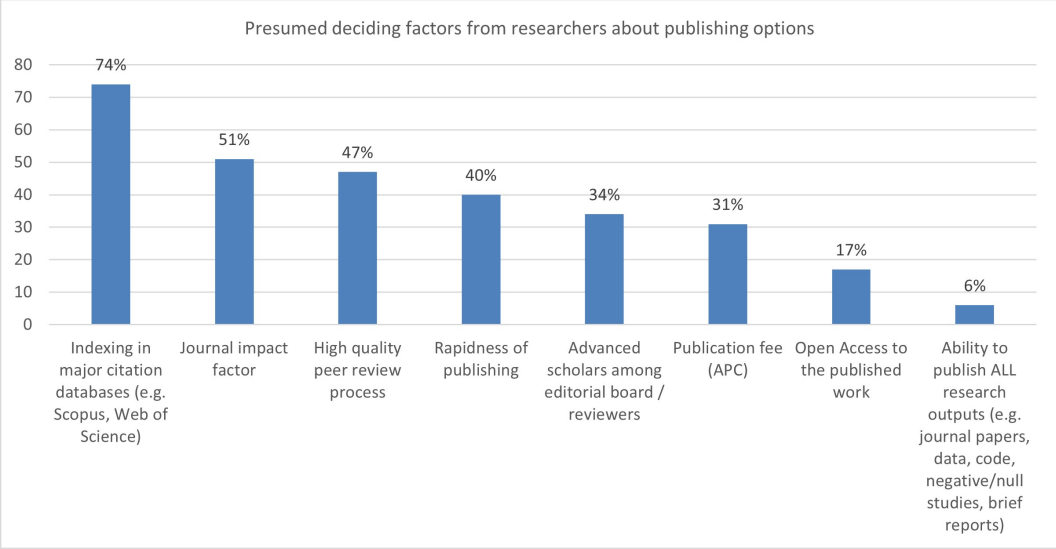
(Top three selection)



From the chart above, it can be seen that when it comes to recommending a publishing platform to researchers, the greatest factor considered by respondents is the possibility to provide '**Open Access to the published work**' (83%). The second factor which is considered relevant to respondents is the '**high-quality peer-review process**' (56%), followed closely by the '**journal impact factor**' (47%). In comparison, the 'rapidness of publishing' is not considered as a decisive factor (12%) by the respondents, nor is the 'publication fee' (25%).

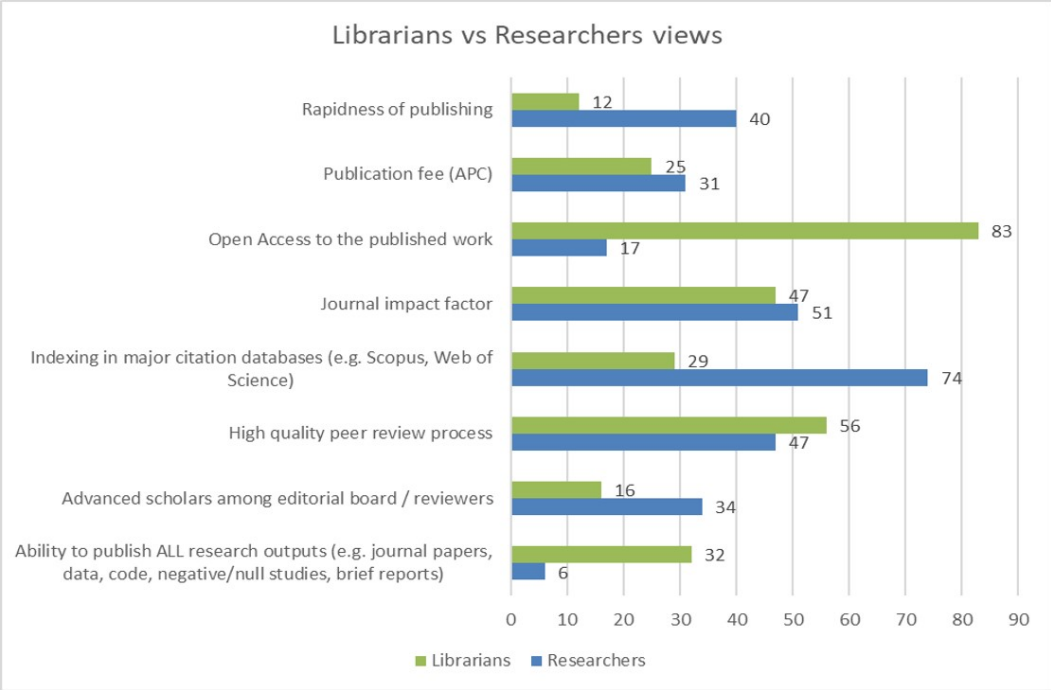
Respondents who were invited to complete their answers by additional comments mentioned other deciding factors such as a "*Formal criteria like DOAJ listing*" or the "*OA licensing, Identifiers (ISSN, DOI)*", the *"Fair' APC payment system, ie. waivers for unfunded authors, PGRs etc*." or the "*Sustainable and preferably community-driven business model*".

Deciding factors from researchers about publishing options



When asked which factors were most important to their researchers when deciding where to publish, respondents clearly emphasised the factor of 'Indexing in major citation databases' (74%). Second to that comes the 'journal impact factor' (51%) followed by the 'high quality of peer review' (47%). In comparison, the 'ability to publish all research outputs' (6%) was not seen as particularly relevant.

Comparison of perceptions between librarian respondents and presumed views of researchers

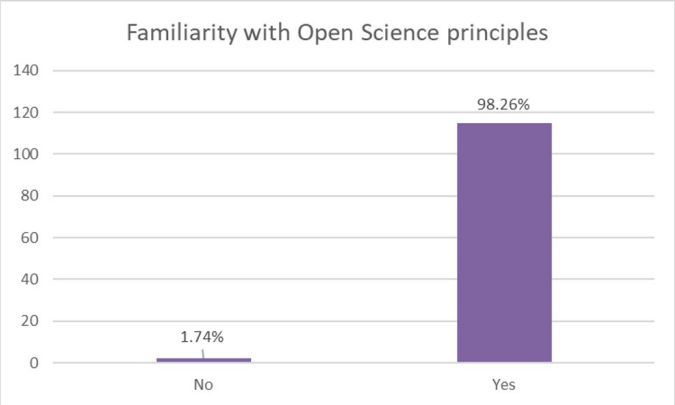


The above table emphasises the comparison between what respondents consider as the most important factor when it comes to recommending a publishing platform to their researchers, and what they believe their researchers consider to be the most important.

These results could indicate that if librarians consider 'Open Access to the published work' very important, they assume that their researchers probably underestimate this aspect. In comparison, if librarians consider that 'indexing in major citation databases' is not that important, they do assume that their researchers consider it as being important.

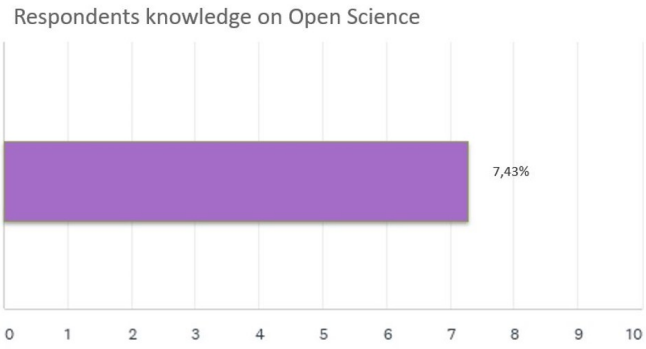
Open Science

Familiarity with Open Science principles



It is apparent from the above chart that respondents are very familiar with Open Science principles (98.26%).

Respondents' knowledge of Open Science

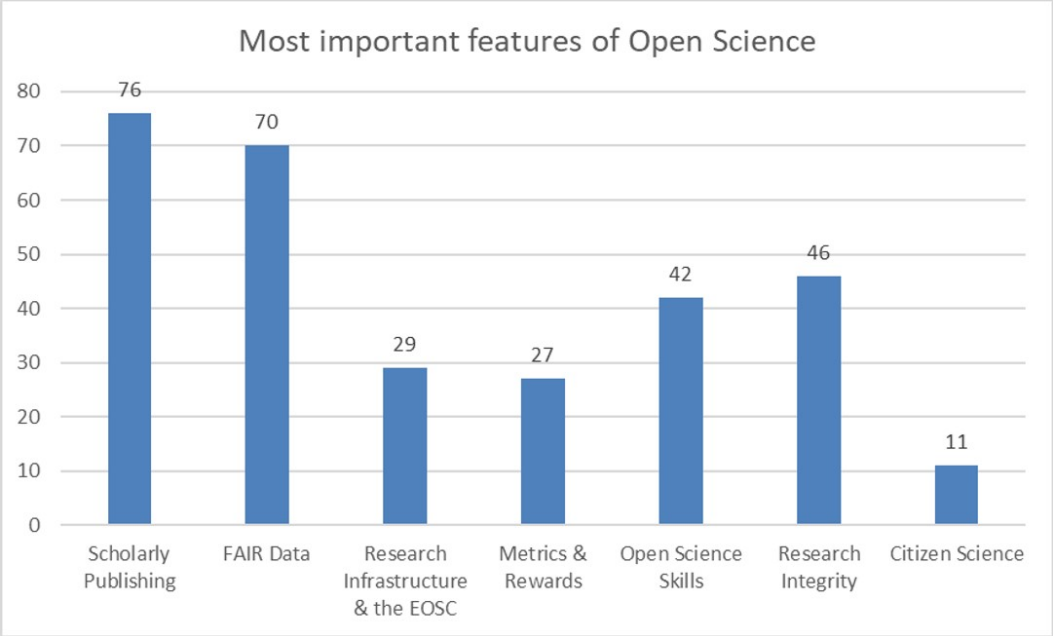


On a scale from 0 to 10, respondents demonstrated their familiarity with Open Science by rating their knowledge as 7,43% (as shown on this chart).

Degree of agreement on Open Science as a good thing

When asked if Open Science is generally a good thing, the absolute majority (100%) of respondents agreed.

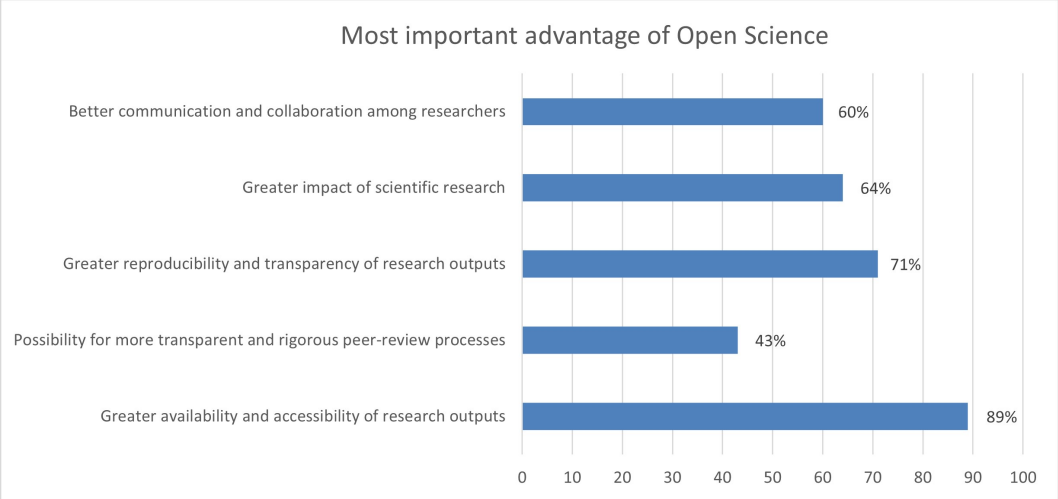
Features of Open Science considered as most important



From the chart above, it can be seen that the two features of Open Science considered as the most important are 'Scholarly Publishing' (76%) followed by 'FAIR Data' (70%). The third feature considered as the most important is 'Research Integrity' (46%). In comparison, 'Citizen Science' is the feature considered as the least important (11%).

Respondents were invited to complete their answers by adding further comments. Those who did so mentioned an additional point such as the '*Discoverability of OA content (projects like Unpaywall, CORE etc.)*'. One respondent emphasised the unsuitability of the current business models: "*Changing the current business models in academic publishing and drive out monopolies. Open Science done right and thoroughly may help in this matter.*" A third respondent clarified his choice about OS skills by adding "'*Assuming that OS skills mean knowledge/practical skills in areas like licensing, choosing repositories, assigning metadata, etc.*".

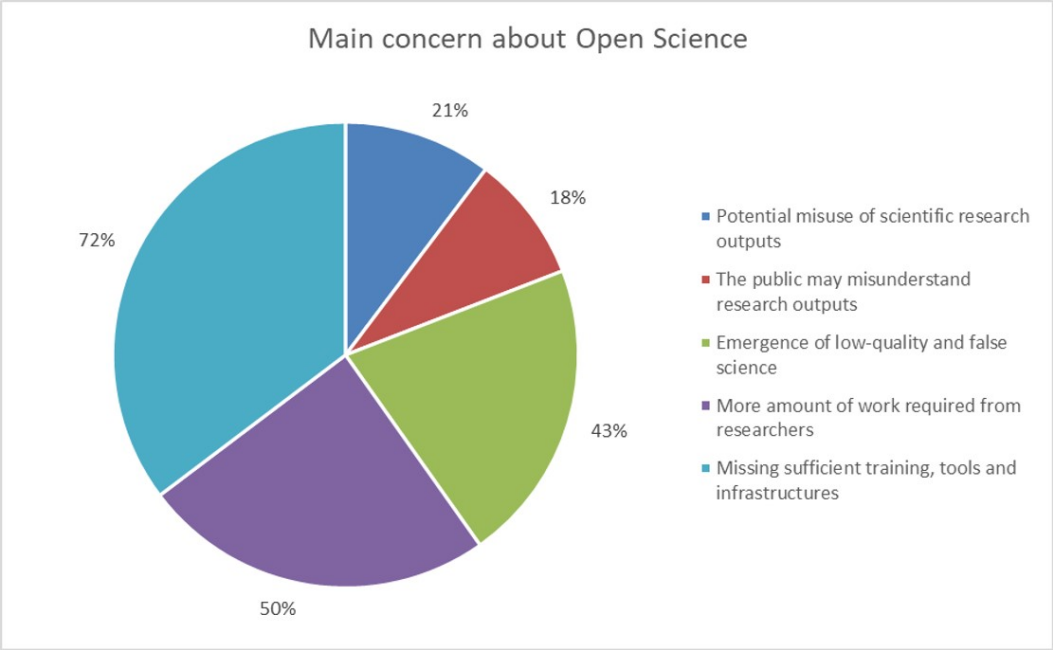
Most important advantage of Open Science



As shown in the chart above, the most important advantage of Open Science is the 'greater availability and accessibility of research outputs' (89%). 'Greater reproducibility and transparency of research outputs' is the second advantage considered as important (71%), followed by 'greater impact of scientific research' (64%). In comparison, the 'possibility for more transparent and rigorous peer-review processes' is the advantage considered as the least important (43%).

Some respondents completed their answers with additional comments also mentioned other advantages. One such answer relates to Citizen Science promotion: "*Better ability for citizen engagement with the scientific process. There is an anti-science trend that needs to be fought against. Open and accessible science is vital for this*". Another respondent emphasised again the influence of the business model: "*Help change the current system which leads to 'scoring points', which drives too much competition with all its bad effects on academics and science. However, Open Science will only help in this respect when it also gets involved in the business models of publishers*."

Main concern about Open Science



Interestingly, the main concern from the respondents about Open Science is about 'missing sufficient training, tools and infrastructures' (72%), followed by the concern of 'more amount of work required from researchers'. The possibility that 'the public may misunderstand research outputs' is the least of respondents' concerns (18%). The latter result can be explained by the fact that the focus of concern here is primarily on researchers and librarians.

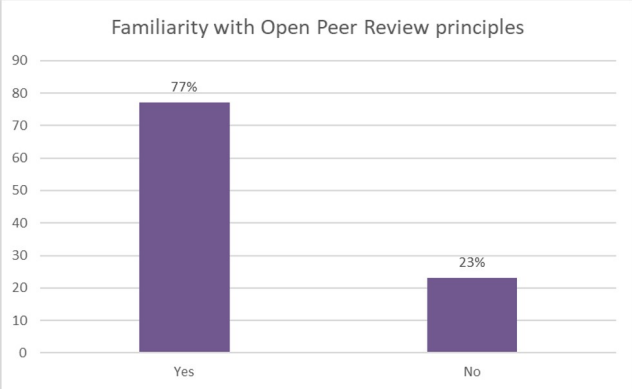
Some respondents completed their answers with additional comments also mentioned issues related to low-income countries: "*Continued disadvantages for research institutions in low-income countries despite unlimited access, when costs merely shift from getting access to getting published. Leads to risk that the voice of research from such countries is shut out because of lacking resources*."

Other respondents emphasised their concern on the potential lack of knowledge on OS*: "How to "make" all researchers adapt to the "new world of open science". (Incentives and rewards need to change, a new culture must evolve. It's hard to get everyone to understand and appreciate this new paradigm)*". A concern summarised here by two other respondents who mentioned the "*Lack of buy-in from researchers. Research culture not changing*." Or by one respondent who summarized that "*Researchers don't see the value*". This lack of knowledge was also reflected in a comment by another respondent who stated that Open Science is *"[...] too focused on separate elements (open access, open data, open peer-review) and is not integrating these elements into the bigger picture, which also involves finance, and the biases money can bring*".

Other respondents focused more on potential managerial issues such as the "*Lack of planning*" or "*[...] Costs and [..] time*" issues. Another concern underlined by a respondent relates to the commercial publishers: *"[...] commercial stakeholders again will manage to pervert the scholarly communication system without the research community being able or willing to stop this and setting the premises for a sustainable, community-driven ecosystem of scholarly communication*."

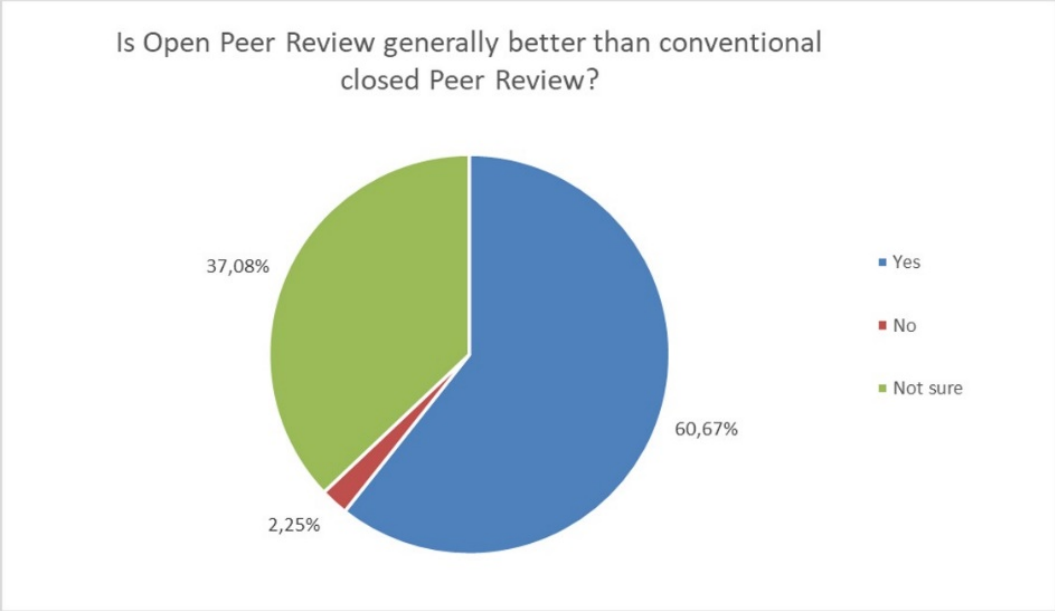
Open Peer Review

Familiarity with Open Peer Review principles



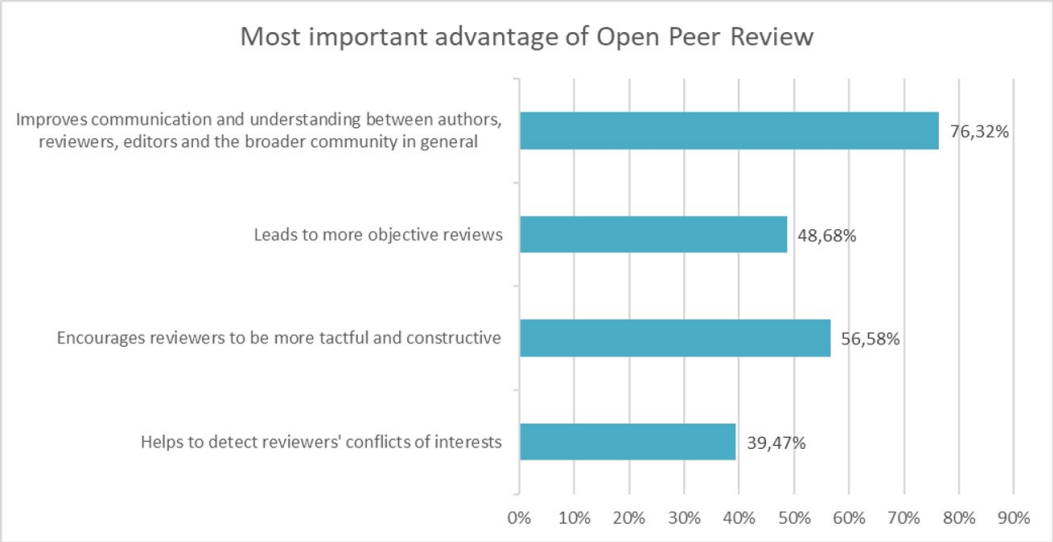
More than three-quarters of respondents (77%) indicated that they are familiar with Open Peer Review principles. In comparison, less than one quarter (23%) indicated that they are not familiar with these principles.

Appreciation of Open Peer Review vs Conventional closed Peer Review



Almost two-thirds (60,67%) of respondents have agreed with the statement that Open Peer Review is generally better than conventional closed Peer Review. Interestingly, slightly more than a third (37,08%) are not sure it is the case. This hesitation can be explained by the following charts below.

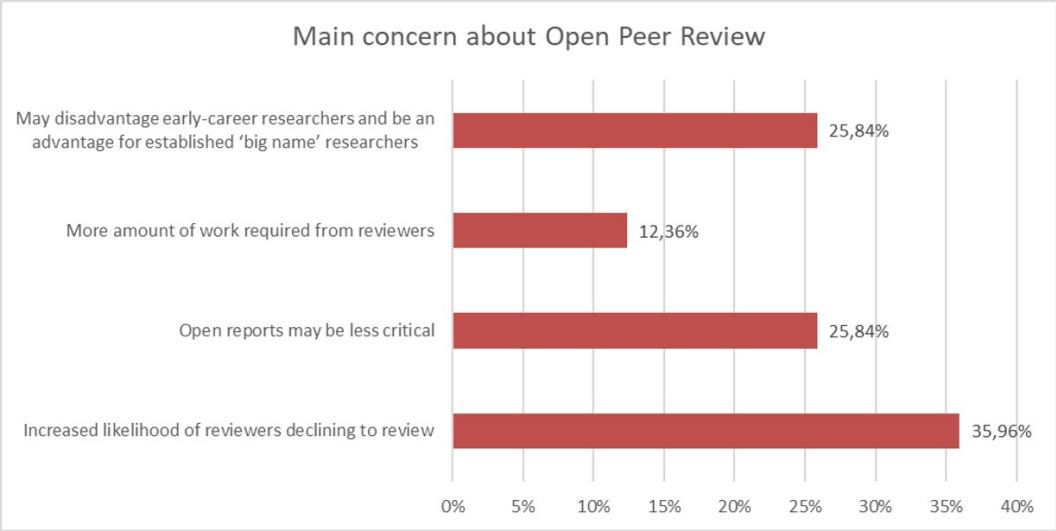
Most important advantage of Open Peer Review



As shown in the chart above, the most important advantage of Open Peer Review considered by respondents is that it 'improves communication and understanding between authors, reviewers, editors and the broader community in general' (76,32%). In comparison, the advantage which is considered as the least important is that it 'helps to detect reviewers' conflicts of interests' (39,47%).

Respondents who were invited to complete their answers by additional comments also mentioned other advantages. Some underlined how it could improve the quality of publications: "Encourages submission of more polished and complete papers from authors" or "Hopefully leads to better research/publications". Others focused on more ethical issues when it comes to reviewing: "*Possibly prevents biased (non-objective) reviews*" or "*Reviewer bullying behaviour needs to end irrespective of open science. More systematic reviewing, greater accountability. Paying reviewers for their efforts might be most accountable*". One respondent underlined the link with diversity by writing that it is "*Better for equality, diversity and inclusion*". Another respondent focused on the reviewers' benefits: "*Gives the possibility to receive recognition and visibility to peer-review activities*".

Main concern about Open Peer Review



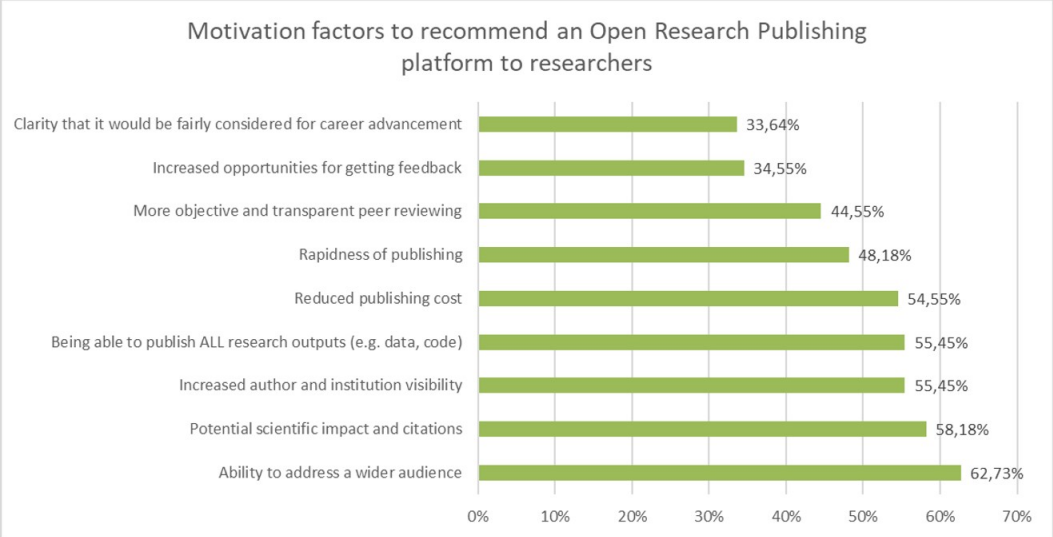
The main concern about Open Peer Review considered by the respondents is the 'increased likelihood of reviewers declining to review' (35,96%). In comparison, the potential 'more amount of work required from reviewers' (12,36%) is not considered a significant concern.

Respondents who were invited to complete their answers by additional comments also mentioned other concerns. Both comments below relate to reviewers' behaviours:

> *"Most researchers would be more objective and tactful in open-peer review, but there is always a percentage of people who will not care and be just as savage, which is then in public and may be more damaging to the authors then if it was closed review."*

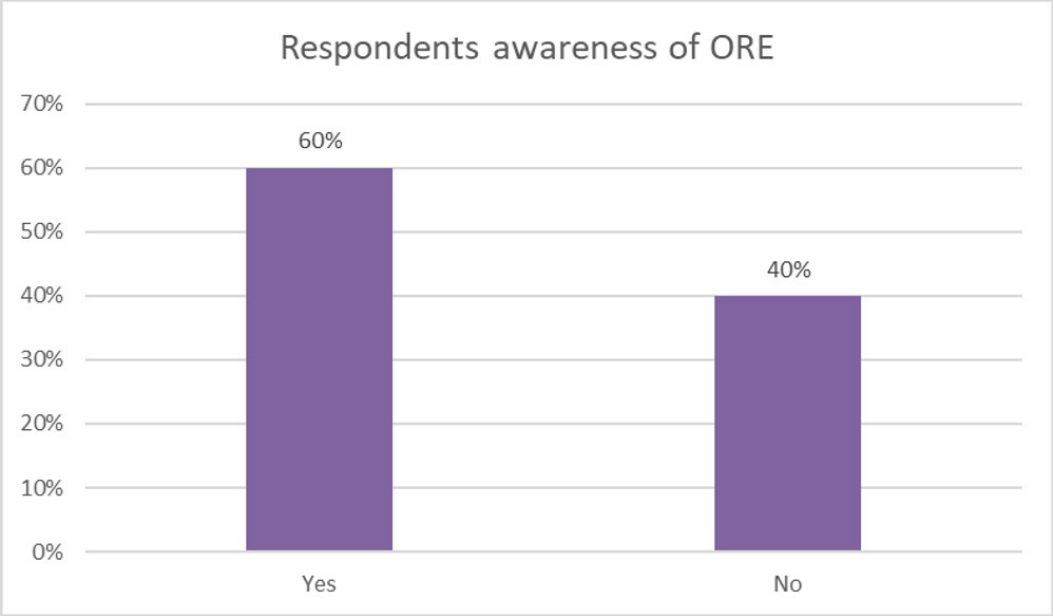
> *"Some reviewers provide unfair, disrespectful or harmful reviews. In a closed review system, Editor-in-Chief decides not to take such a review into account. In an open review system, everything is visible. This may harm the author. Similar effect as on Twitter."*

Motivation factors when it comes to recommending an Open Research Publishing platform to researchers



The strongest 'motivation factor to recommend an Open Research Publishing platform to researchers' considered by the respondents is 'the ability to address a wider audience' (62,73%). 'Potential scientific impact and citations' (58,18%) and 'increased author and institution visibility' (55,4%) are respectively the second and third motivation factors. In comparison, the 'clarity that it would be fairly considered for career advancement' is considered as the least strong motivating factor.

Respondents' awareness of the ORE project



Almost two-thirds of the respondents (60%) positively confirmed their awareness of the ORE project, while more than a third (40%) stated that they were not aware of the project.

Respondents were asked to provide complementary comments on 'What else would make an open publishing venue attractive'. Many respondents provided answers and we consider these all relevant, hence they are listed here below:

Ergonomics

- *A great user-experience and ergonomic built for this platform.*
- *Ease of use. Ease of access to the venue, the knowledge that it exists must be widespread.*
- *In my opinion, an open publishing venue would be more attractive if it has a user-friendly interface, prestigious reputation of the founding institutions, reviewers, editors and authors, time-saving & less amount of work for researchers, its contribution to the academic promotion and having a reward system.*
- *Interoperability Ease of use.*
- *Interoperability, easy intuitive interface and publishing functionalities.*
- *The platform should be found and available through the systems that are used by researchers within each discipline (visibility, availability). The platform should have a clearly described and well-functioning peer-review system (reliability).*

Sustainability

- *A sustainable, transparent, open-source-based, and community-driven business model.*
- *Extra support in the discovery and reuse of data and literature.*

Technical

- *Creation of topical clusters (disciplines but also cross-discipline), integration with Open Science infrastructures (e.g. not supplements but linking to deposited data and code).*
- *Indexing in key databases e.g. PubMed, Scopus.*
- *Multi-language tools.*
- *Superb indexing, built in systematic review software and mandatory timed systematic review processes To provide intellectual context.*
- *Use of PIDs throughout any workflow and processes required.*

Network & endorsement

- *Acknowledgement from prestigious organisations, and universities.*
- *Connexion between ORE and other European Commission tools: OpenAIRE, Cordis and the most important: the EU participant portal.*
- *Endorsement by key research funders EU, UKRI, Wellcome etc.*
- *Solid reputation and clear goals.*
- *Support from role models in science.*
- *That it is adopted, recognised and championed by top researchers, research organisations and publishing bodies.*

Interactivity

- *Feedback from researchers in many areas including Humanities.*
- *For researchers, it would be very useful to have quick and interactive information on who, how and how much other researchers consult their publications and data.*
- *Increasing opportunities for Accessibility and Feedback.*

Policies

- *Being owned by non-profit or publicly owned.*
- *Being preceded by the public access open research repository.*
- *Getting rid of citation metrics as the main assessment tool for funding.*
- *If it's just for grant holders it would be good if it could be open to more authors.*
- *If using it was a requirement by funders.*
- *It should establish a reputation similar to a Megajournal. But that would need more for the funder to organize this. And it might not fit the initial idea of the Commission.*
- *No authors fees for open access and quick publishing.*
- *One system for all of Europe!*
- *Ownership by the community, not a commercial venue.*
- *Skip the role of publishers.*
- *The argument that if research is paid for with public money, it should be available to the public. Also just the quality, but that would go for any publishing venue.*
- *The comprehensiveness of the venue, a high volume of the publications and high scientific quality of the publications.*

Conclusion

The results of this survey show that respondents are ready to involve stakeholders in the promotion and support of the Open Research Europe project, as long as their concerns will be taken into consideration. Their knowledge in Open Science and Open Peer Review is a strength that will be beneficial to researchers and policymakers.