



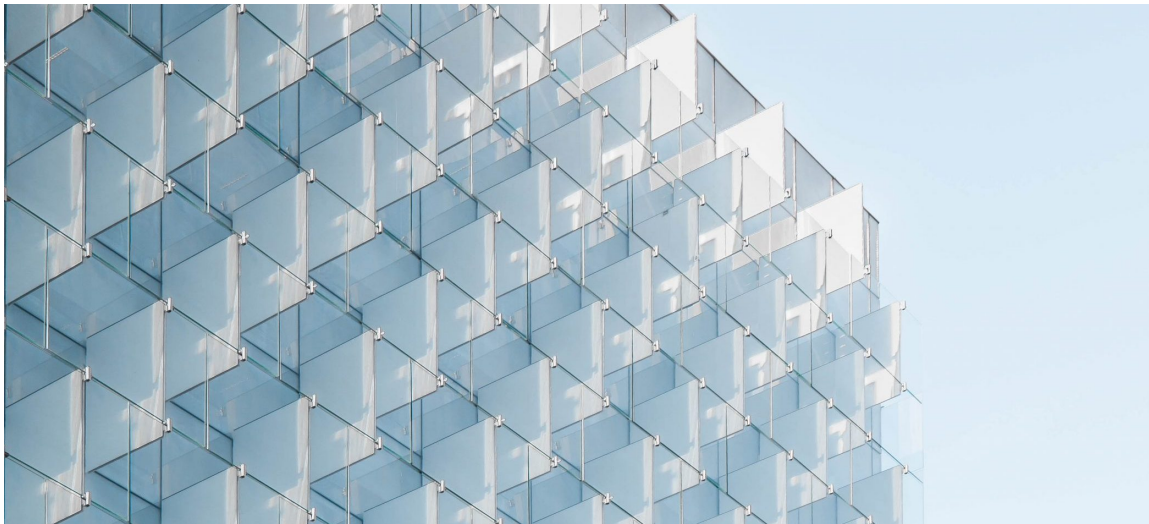
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OPEN SCHOLARSHIP POLICY OBSERVATORY



## The Sorbonne Declaration on Research Data Rights

by Caroline Winter | 20 March 2020 | English, Observations, Observations and Responses | 0 comments



*Lisez-le en français*

*This observation was written by Caroline Winter.*

At a glance:

Title	The Sorbonne Declaration on Research Data Rights
Creator	n/a
Publication date	January 27, 2020
Keywords	<a href="#">data management</a> , <a href="#">international policy</a> , <a href="#">open data</a>

The [Sorbonne Declaration on Research Data Rights](#) is a statement from members of the international research community committing to practicing and promoting open data sharing. It calls on governments and research funding organizations across the world to develop the legal frameworks and institutional reward structures necessary for the responsible sharing of research data.

The Declaration was signed at the [International Research Data Rights Summit](#), held on January 27, 2020, at the Sorbonne University in Paris (LERU 2020). The original signatories include nine groups representing

more than 160 research institutions:

- [Association of American Universities \(AAU\)](#)
- [African Research Universities Alliance \(ARUA\)](#)
- [Coordination of French Research-Intensive Universities \(CURIF\)](#)
- [German U15](#)
- [League of European Research Universities \(LERU\)](#)
- [RU11 Japan](#)
- [The Russell Group \(UK\)](#)
- [The Group of Eight \(Go8\) \(Australia\)](#)
- [U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities](#)

#### The Sorbonne Declaration and the INKE Partnership

The Sorbonne Declaration's call for infrastructural and institutional change to promote the open sharing of data relates to other policies and standards related to open data and open scholarship of interest to the INKE Partnership, such as the [FAIR principles](#) and the [Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management](#) (see "[Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management](#)").

The [Canadian Research and Writing Collaboratory \(CRWC\)](#) champions many of the same principles identified in the Declaration and puts them into practice in a Canadian context by providing the projects it hosts with the infrastructure necessary for making research data open and interoperable (CWRC n.d.). The [Linked Infrastructure for Networked Cultural Scholarship \(LINCS\) project](#), led by CWRC Project Director Susan Brown (U Guelph), will develop a national infrastructure for cultural linked open data, drawing from CWRC projects and other research datasets.

#### The Sorbonne Declaration in the Media

The signing of the Sorbonne Declaration was widely reported in the research community media, including media releases by signatories including the [German U15](#), [LERU](#), the [Russell Group](#), and the [Go8](#), as well as their members, including the [Universität Bonn](#) and [University College London](#), and other stakeholders such as [Go FAIR](#).

In two pieces for the *Times Higher Education*, [Paul Ayris](#) and [John Ross](#) cite the COVID-19 epidemic as an important context for the Sorbonne Declaration, one that highlights the advantages of open data as well as the need for greater support and infrastructure to enable data sharing (2020; 2020b).

The importance of data sharing to the international COVID-19 response has made open data and open access a topic of interest in the general media as well. Writing for CBC news, for example, [Kelly Crowe](#) notes that [a statement by the Wellcome Trust](#) calling for data and publications relating to the outbreak to be made open access immediately—and signed by about 100 publishers and research organizations—is notable as an exception to usual research and publication practices (2020). Crowe quotes INKE Partnership member Vincent Larivière as pointing out that the Wellcome Trust's statement is an implicit admission of the barriers placed by these usual research and publication practices to responses to other deadly diseases and to research more generally (2020).

#### The Sorbonne Declaration and Open Scholarship

Ayris argues that the greatest challenge to the kinds of changes called for in the Declaration may be cultural, since the academic community must shift its mindset toward openness and managing data according to FAIR principles (2020). Not doing so, he argues, will have financial consequences and hamper our ability to face global challenges, including health challenges such as COVID-19, but these changes requires significant investment in research infrastructure (2020).

Indeed, the Sorbonne Declaration echoes other open scholarship policies in calling for integrating data

management into standard research workflows and calls for the development of infrastructure and funding to enable it. Quoting researchers from Go8 institutions, Ross notes that, as a statement developed by influential research organizations around the world, the Declaration has the potential to lead to significant change in countries with “fragmented” open data policies, as well as those with more developed ones (2020a). He cites Canada’s [Digital Research Infrastructure Strategy](#) as an example of a well-developed policy and suggests that the Declaration is an important policy to keep in mind as the details of Canada’s DRI funding are decided. Canada’s recently released [Roadmap for Open Science](#) also emphasizes the need for data to be “open by design and by default,” and to follow FAIR principles (Government of Canada 2020).

As discussed in “[The Review, Promotion, and Tenure Project at the ScholCommLab](#),” institutional policies that do not recognize or reward open scholarship are widely recognized as a barrier to cultural change. In acknowledgement of this, and as a way of encouraging a necessary cultural shift, the Declaration also includes a commitment to working towards changing these policies.

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