# Introducing Open Research Europe (ORE) – Q and A with Michael Markie

*This week sees the launch of [Open Research Europe](#) (ORE), an open publishing platform developed by the European Commission for research funded by its Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe funding schemes. These funding programmes cover a significant volume of research in the social sciences and humanities, making ORE a notable development for academic publishing in these fields. In this Q&A,* **Michael Markie**, *publishing director for F1000, the technology underpinning ORE, discusses the new platform and what it means of Open Science publishing in the social sciences.*

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**Q: *ORE (Open Research Europe) launched this week, you have written about Open Access publishing platforms for the LSE Impact Blog [previously](#), can you explain how ORE fits into the existing scholarly publishing landscape and what changes it will bring?***

**A:** ORE is an open access publication venue centred around open research practices: open data, open peer review and full transparency of the publication process. It fits into a publishing landscape where there is now real momentum towards full open access to research. Over the last few years, funding bodies have looked to push the envelope with regards to supporting innovation in scholarly communications to ensure the research they fund is open for all to access. As with other funder publishing platforms, ORE provides eligible researchers with an optional venue where they can publish their work and fulfil their open access obligations at no cost to them. ORE also complements the Commission's priorities towards open science by operationalising a publishing model that promotes integrity and transparency of the research process and reproducibility of research by linking publications with underpinning data. The launch of ORE will hopefully further emphasise that an open research publishing approach can help accelerate the sharing of new discoveries, enable methods to be reproduced and allow data and materials to be easily reused.

**Q: *As a platform aligned to open science principles, ORE provides opportunities to make public different kinds of research outputs and elements of the publication process, such as peer review reports and data that are not a requirement in traditional journals. This kind of openness is still the exception rather than the rule for most social science journals, why do you think social scientists have been comparatively slow to engage with these developments in open science and what might they gain by adopting them?***

**A:** I think rather than social scientists being comparatively slow to engage, it's more that open science was trailblazed by certain fields of the life sciences where there was a major imperative to make potentially life-changing research as open as possible. Social scientists have shown interest in engaging with open data and open peer review, but are often restricted to publishing in the highest impact journals where these options are rarely offered. Issues like the "replication crisis" in psychology – or similarly with some high-profile economics papers – have led many social scientists to want to accelerate the move to open science, and more and more publishers are responding to this and to funding policies for greater openness.

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Social scientists often work with large datasets and it is with quantitative research that open science is particularly beneficial. One of the great misconceptions of open data is that it can lead to researchers being "scooped". On the contrary, when data is deposited and cited according to [FAIR](#) principles, the original researchers are credited every time their data is used. By engaging with open data, open materials and preregistration policies, social scientists give their own work more visibility, receive more credit for their research and address any concerns about transparency in research.

Further, ORE will also engage the public with its published content and open science in general. Authors are encouraged to write plain language summaries to contextualise their work for all readers, and ORE will have a dedicated blog and social media channels for authors to help disseminate and explain their research in a more accessible way. We are certainly hoping ORE will be a platform that social scientists see as an attractive venue to support their work.

**Q:** *A key feature of the ORE and F1000 model is post publication peer review, in other words all publications on the platform will appear first as preprints. This form of publication has become increasingly common in the sciences and to an extent in the social sciences, because of the need for new research in response to COVID-19. What advantages do you see to post-publication peer review and how can publishing platforms, such as ORE, manage the potential risks of publishing research before it has been peer reviewed?*

**A:** There has certainly been an increase in the use of preprint servers since the pandemic, particularly in the biomedical and social sciences, and its almost default use for early dissemination of results has demonstrated that we can and should potentially share research more rapidly. Post publication peer review brings many benefits to researchers: rapid publication enables the sharing of new findings without delay. The transparent peer review process facilitates open and constructive discussion between authors and reviewers who are specifically asked to help the authors improve their research. Published work can also instantly start to cumulate citations and public attention whilst the peer review is underway, and all of the reviews and any other community input can be included in the authors revised and updated versions to reflect the improvements that have been made.

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Peer review is certainly the cornerstone of verifying research, so when publishing an article before peer review has happened it's important to be clear of the article status so readers are aware of that fact. I recently contributed to an important working group called '[preprints in the public eye](#)' to help bring together stakeholders from the scientific and media communities to agree on common principles around media reporting of research posted as preprints. The traditional assumption of any published piece of research is that it has been through the peer review process, so it's very important that all the readers of a preprint are fully aware if it has been reviewed or not.

To do this, ORE first publishes a preprint version of an article that is clearly labelled 'awaiting peer review'. The difference on ORE compared to a traditional preprint, is that this version has been through a comprehensive set of robust editorial checks and the underlying data (if any) has been deposited in a repository. These checks enable us to ensure that any research published on ORE has met international standards with regards to publication ethics and policies and ensures that the reviewers can focus on reviewing the content of an article. Once the preprint version is published the open peer review process begins. This is facilitated by ORE and is operated just like in a traditional journal. Once a review is received it is published alongside the article with the identity of the reviewer, their peer review report, and a status to reflect what they think the article needs to pass peer review. The reader can see this entire process and get to benefit from the further context provided from the peer review. Articles will only pass peer review (which triggers the article being sent to appropriate bibliographic databases) once the reviewers are satisfied that the article has been improved.

**Q:** *Ensuring bibliodiversity has become an important issue for academic publishing in Europe, what opportunities does ORE provide to present research for non-English speaking audiences?*

From launch, ORE will publish articles in English language only. However, as the platform develops, we will be considering the possibility of supporting other European languages to reflect the multilingualism of the authorship. Publishing in multiple languages on one platform from a technical and operational stance is difficult to achieve quickly, so we will need to explore multilingual publication in a sustainable way; for example we could first look at translating abstracts and plain language summaries into different languages to help improve the reach and use of the published content.

**Q:** *ORE is an author led platform that covers all research funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 and future Horizon Europe funding programmes. In a traditional journal much time is spent by managing editors in developing highly specialised communities of practice, through the selection of papers and reviewers. What role do you see ORE playing in the development of research communities and networks?*

**A:** ORE has different functionalities on the platform to foster and develop research communities and collaborative networks. ORE supports the six major academic subject areas of the OECD's Frascati manual: Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medical and Health Sciences, Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities and the Arts. Each of these subject areas will have a dedicated webpage where readers can choose an area of interest and then further filter to the specific subject content if they require. This will help to build communities around subject areas and help readers find any interdisciplinary research related to their preferences. ORE will also have dedicated gateway areas for the Horizon 2020 programmes, enabling readers to browse and search content that is an output of a specific work programme.

In the future, there will also be the opportunity for the platform to create 'collections' that may be themed around specific topic areas or have a focus on particular H2020 projects and initiatives. These collections will also have their own webpages and will provide a dedicated hub to group related content together and foster networking and collaboration. All the gateways, collections and even individual articles have a 'track' function, which allows the community to follow their favourite areas on the site as well as articles that interest them; here they can be alerted to when new peer reviews and comments are published. And finally, the open and transparent nature of ORE also leads to collaboration. Reviewers and their reviews being public means authors and reviewers collaborate more closely than in a traditional journal and have much more interaction with one and other. On other publishing platforms we have seen these closer relationships blossom and seen many new collaborations come out of working more openly together.

**Q: *In its current form ORE is open to researchers with or collaborating with researchers who are funded by the Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe funding programmes. Are there plans to widen access to the platform in future and if not, do funders such as the European Commission risk creating a prestige economy in open published based on research funding?***

**A:** Since announcing ORE there has been much interest about its possible future direction. There are plans being put into place to think about the longer-term sustainability of ORE, including on how to potentially involve other funders bodies. Increasingly, governments, research funding bodies and research performing institutions world-wide have been developing policies to improve open access to the scientific publications and data resulting from the research they fund. If ORE can be extended to help meet the open research ambitions of other stakeholders, then that is certainly something to be explored.

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ORE's intention is not to create a prestige economy; first and foremost, its intention is to serve the researchers actively involved in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe. However, another aim of the platform besides from supporting beneficiaries is to explore a publishing model that is economical and cost-efficient. ORE is completely transparent about its business model (where publication costs for authors are covered by the Commission) and clearly breaks down the price of each article published. Learnings from the ORE business model and the experience of the researchers publishing on the platform should help provide information to other funding bodies who may want to provide a similar service for their *researchers.*

**Q: *Open publishing platforms, such as Wellcome Open Research and Gates Open Research, are becoming an increasingly established part of the scholarly communications ecosystem. What developments do you think we are likely to see in the next 5-10 years as publishing platforms begin to be used by increasingly larger numbers of researchers across different areas of research?***

**A:** As well as publishing platforms that support an open research publishing model like ORE, we will continue to see the emergence of other publishing innovations centred around open research publishing practices. Not every innovation will be the same. There will be diversification in the types of technological solutions that surface, but the one thing they will all have in common is embedding open research practices at the core. More and more there will be a shared understanding that access to information is an enabler for innovation and for research commercialisation. At a time where we face some of the biggest global challenges in history, open research will become a more permanent fixture in funder, institutional and publisher policies. As discussed in the previous question, it might even be the case that multiple stakeholders join forces to help make the open research vision become a reality. These new open research solutions will then set the scene for a more connected scholarly communication ecosystem with more interoperability of information between systems, better syndication and discovery of content and full access to research articles and its underlying research data.

There will also be further exploration into new sustainable and equitable open access business models. There are no quibbles to the fact there is a cost to publishing, but what we will see in the next 5-10 years is what these costs are and how these costs will be covered. The ideal scenario of reaching an 'open-to-read and open-to-publish' playing field will see different flavours of business models develop, all of which will centre around the growing need for the open sharing of research that is easier, more efficient and fair for all authors. It is these new business models that will (hopefully) contribute towards more transparency and cost-effectiveness in publishing.

*This interview was conducted by Michael Taster, managing editor of the LSE Impact Blog.*

*Note: This review gives the views of the author, and not the position of the LSE Impact Blog, or of the London School of Economics.*

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