

# MORPHSS, NTROs and research evaluation

Dr Jenni Adams (University of Sheffield)

Dr Miranda Barnes (University of Cambridge)

29th June 2026



# This talk will:



- **Explore the rationale for and initial findings** of the [MORPHSS](#) (Materialising Open Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences) project
- **Introduce the project's recently-published** [Catalogue of open research practices in the arts, humanities and social sciences](#)
- Discuss the ways in which the catalogue incorporates practices around the creation and sharing of **Non-Traditional Research Outputs**
- Outline some of the **implications of this work for research evaluation.**



# Rationale: The problem with 'Open Science'

# The problem with 'Open Science'

In brief:

- 'Open research' and 'open science' are **gaining momentum** in the production and evaluation of academic knowledge...
- But the dominant discourses and audit mechanisms of openness are **tailored towards STEM disciplines and quantitative research** (Steltenpohl et al, 2023)



# The problem with 'Open Science'



- **The UNESCO Recommendation on OS offers an inclusive model charting diverse aspects of openness**, and in theory, at least, applying to all disciplines...
- **But in practice**, emphasis is placed largely on the pillars of 'open scientific knowledge' and 'OS infrastructures'.
- **This has led to a twofold focus** in Global North policy, advocacy and discourses around open research, on:
  1. **Open access publication of outputs**, and
  2. **The pursuit of reproducibility & replicability as means of research reform**

(Albornoz et al. 2017; de Oliveira, 2021; Rafols et al., 2024).



# Why this matters



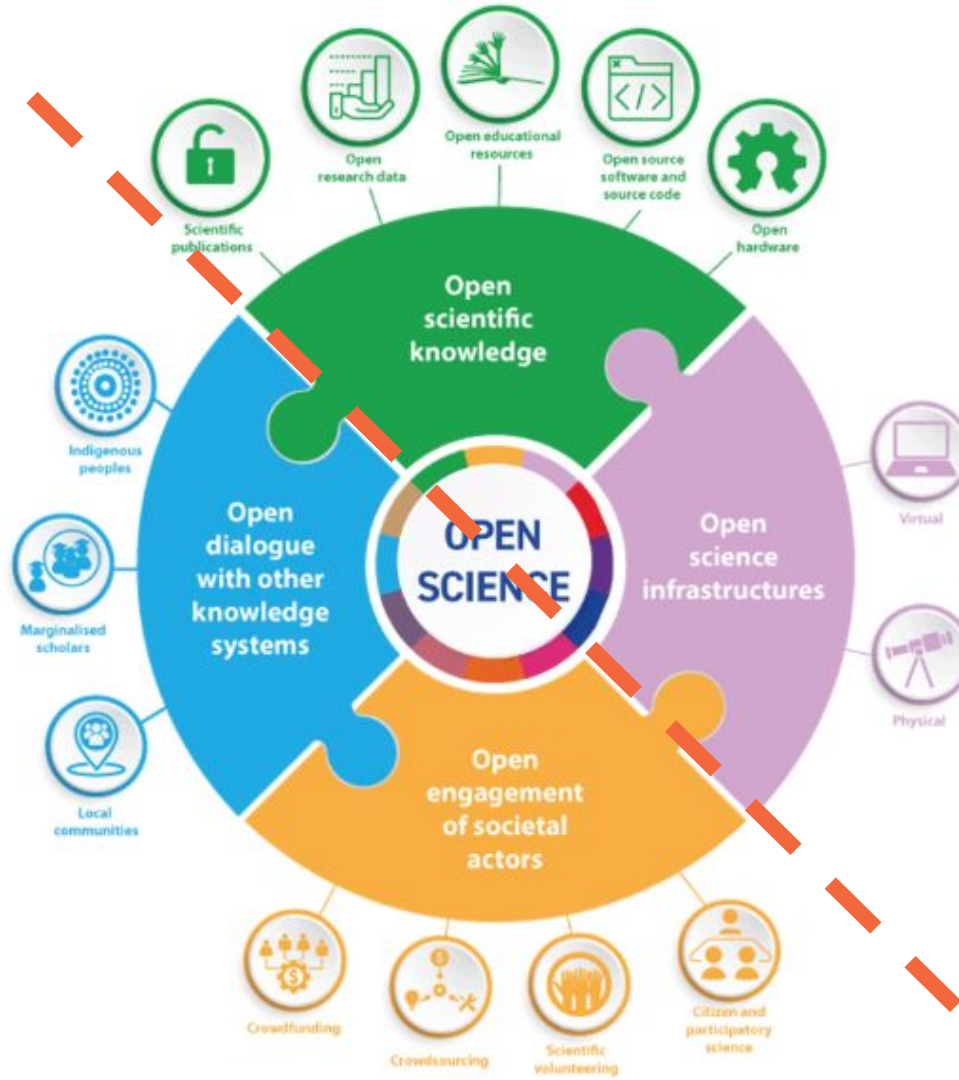
## 1. Open access publication of outputs

- **OA policies in the global North centre STEM-based assumptions about knowledge production** and exchange.
- Publications are assumed to be journal articles produced in environments with project funding.

## 2. The pursuit of reproducibility and replicability as means of research reform

- Has led to prioritisation of **practices that support and incentivise reproducibility/replicability**, e.g. pre-registration, open data, open code (in OS policy, open data especially).
- **These reflect STEM- and quant-focused understandings of research as aiming to create reproducible processes and replicable knowledge** (Steltenpohl et al. 2023).
- Research in AHSS often aims instead at in-depth understandings and highly situated research relationships.

*Often left out of the policy sphere, but more relevant to AHSS approaches?*



*Privileged in dominant (Global North) models & discourses of Open Science*

# Resulting inequalities

- **A narrow set of OS practices and expectations are universally applied to ALL research** (Bazzoli, 2022).
  - (e.g. TOP Guidelines, Center for Open Science badges)
- **Assumption of equivalence** - that AHSS disciplines have straightforward equivalents to the data, publications and other outputs created in STEM and can share these in similar ways.
- **Risk of marginalising and devaluing** research types and areas that don't fit these models, as well as a risk that AHSS researchers are alienated by language/expectations they don't find relevant.
- **May be linked to studies indicating low engagement with OS/OR in AHSS**

(Broadhead and Gonnet, 2025; Ferreira and Borges, 2022; Jeng and He, 2022; Robinson-Garcia et al., 2020; Severin et al., 2018).



No badges for things like inclusion of a positionality statement, co-designing research with communities, ...

# Resistance across AHSS communities



## Qualitative OS movement - e.g.

- **Challenging expectations around open data** - risk to participants, requires deidentification that also decontextualises and limits usefulness, time and labour-intensive.
- **Disputing relevance of pre-registration** - approaches like grounded theory often proceed in an iterative fashion that can't be fully specified in advance.

## Debates about the relevance of reproducibility & replication to AHSS

- **AHSS disciplines often emphasise the availability of multiple interpretations** rather than a single correct 'answer', therefore no expectation that subsequent researchers would or should reproduce the same findings (de Rijcke and Penders, 2018; Holbrook et al., 2019; Patton, 2025).
- **Qualitative research methods have their own existing practices** to pursue openness and research rigour, e.g. reflexivity.

**Calls for a distinct 'open humanities' discourse** (e.g. Arthur and Hearn, 2024; Knöchelmann, 2019)

# Introducing the MORPHSS project

# Materialising open research practices in the humanities and social sciences

Funded by AHRC, RED Fund, Wellcome Trust



 [@morphss.bsky.social](https://morphss.bsky.social)



**Sam  
Moore**

University of Cambridge



**Miranda  
Barnes**



**Stephen  
Pinfield**

University of Sheffield



**Jenni  
Adams**



**Janneke  
Adema**

Coventry University



**Rebekka  
Kiesewetter**



**Siddharth Soni**

University of  
Southampton

Expertise across digital humanities, information science, literature, postdigital cultures, practice research, publishing, research on research, informed by a [multidisciplinary advisory board](#).

**Seeking to develop a nuanced conception of openness that is appropriate for AHSS disciplines & explore ways to materialise & sustain open AHSS practices.**

# Work packages of MORPHSS



- 1) **Cataloguing open research practices in the arts, humanities and social sciences**
- 2) **Piloting long-form open research practices** in the humanities
- 3) **Facilitating open qualitative research data** in the social sciences
- 4) **Piloting collaborative open peer review practices** in the arts, humanities & social sciences
- 5) **Embedding open research practices** in AHSS
- 6) **Facilitating open licensing** for AHSS research
- 7) The **Open Research Network for the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**

# Documenting and cataloguing open research practice in AHSS

# WP1 research questions



- Where, how, and how successfully are existing discourses of ‘open research’ / ‘open science’ mapped onto research practices in the Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences?
  - How and from what perspectives is such a mapping resisted?
- What existing, emergent and experimental open research practices are taking place in the Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences?
  - What *forms* of openness exist here?
  - How are these specific to the research types and disciplines concerned? How can these add plurality and diversity to our broader concepts of ‘openness’ in research?

# Methodology:



Open AHSS practices were identified via a **literature review** consisting of systematic and exploratory search strategies, followed by **targeted research** around the potential practices identified.

## Two main outputs:

Catalogue of open research practices in AHSS

Report presenting findings

Plus recent article:

<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.178353.1>

## Live demo - MORPHSS catalogue

<https://catalogue.morphss.work/>

## Catalogue of Open Research Practices in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

This is a living, iterative, and collaborative showcase of open research practices within the arts, humanities, and social sciences disciplines. [Learn more](#)

### PRACTICES

Academic/Scholarly Podcasting

Annotation for Transparent Inquiry

Applying the CARE Principles to Data from  
Marginalised Communities

Authorship (Collective, Collaborative or  
Communal)

Co-production

+25  
Practices



## Catalogue of Open Research Practices in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

[Catalogue](#) > [Practices](#) > Applying the CARE Principles to Data from Marginalised Communities

### Applying the CARE Principles to Data from Marginalised Communities

Last Updated 14 January 2026 [Show Versions](#)

Participatory Openness

Epistemic Openness

Evidentiary Openness

#### DESCRIPTION

*Disciplines include: archaeology, anthropology, geography, linguistics*

The [CARE principles](#) are a set of values developed by the International Indigenous Data Sovereignty Interest Group, under the aegis of the Research Data Alliance and in consultation with a wider group of Indigenous Peoples, organisations and stakeholders (Carroll et al., 2020). The principles can be viewed as part of movements towards Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Indigenous People's rights to assert control over their data. They also seek to balance the technical and functional approach to data management and sharing of the [FAIR principles](#) (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) with a consideration of data's 'people and purpose dimensions' (Taitingfong et al., 2024, 82). As an acronym, CARE consists of the following components: Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, Ethics. Each of these has subcomponents; the subcomponents of Responsibility, for example, are 'For expanding capability and capacity', 'For positive relationships', and 'For Indigenous languages and worldviews' (Carroll, 2020, Fig. 2).



Provenance labels for indigenous cultural materials  
(<https://localcontexts.org/labels/traditional-knowledge-labels/>)

29

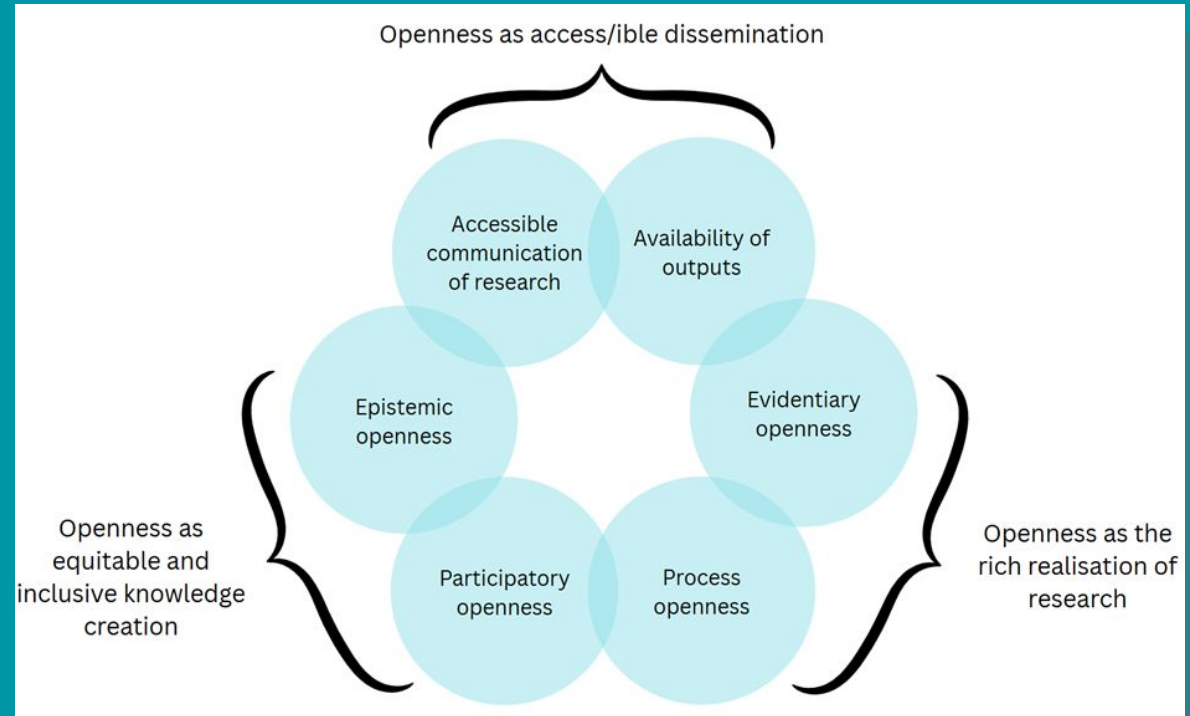
other open research practices in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

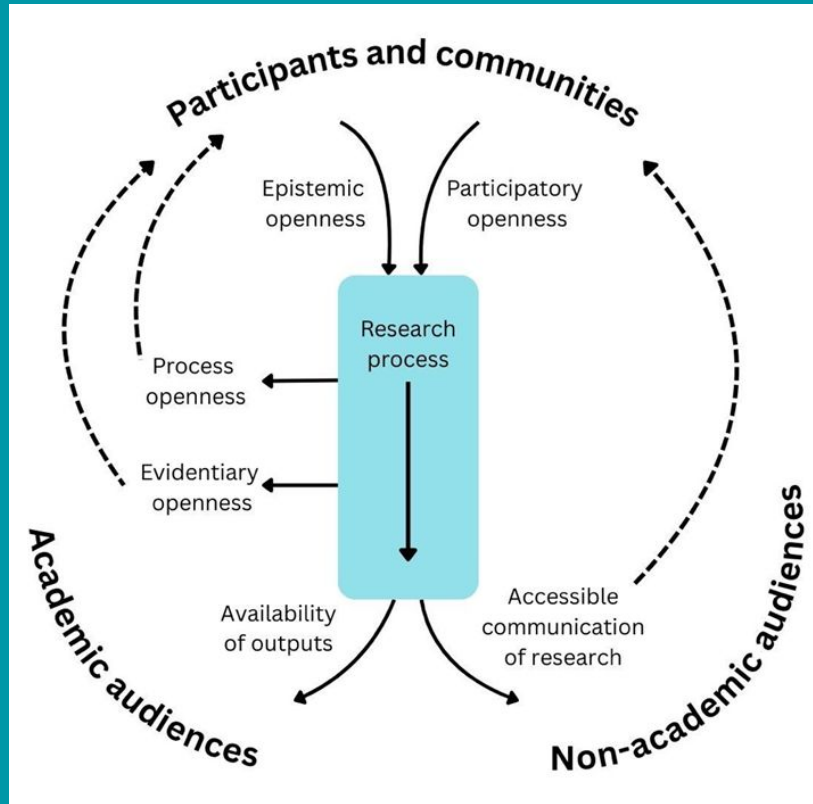
EXAMPLES

# A Typology of Openness

Six forms of openness in three overarching categories:

- Openness as access/ible dissemination
- Openness as the rich realisation of research
- Openness as equitable and inclusive knowledge creation





***MORPHSS typology: Forms of openness and their audiences, participants and publics***

# Documenting practices around the creation and sharing of Non-Traditional Research Outputs

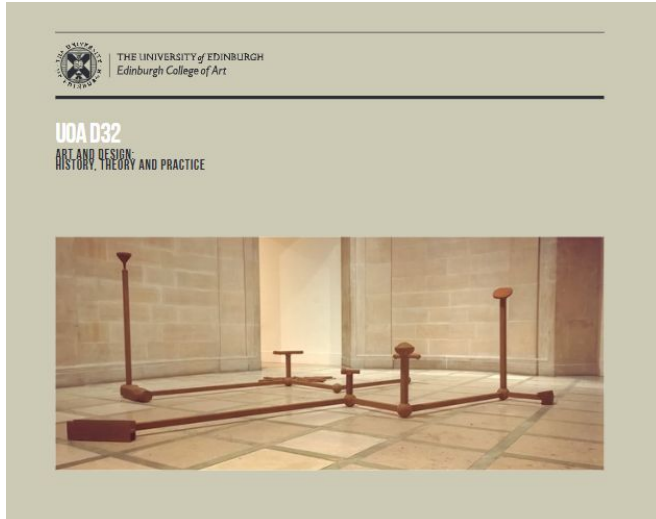
# This section:

- Examples taken from the project's recently-published [Catalogue of open research practices in the arts, humanities and social sciences](#)
- A look at existing platforms and approaches to sharing of **Non-Traditional Research Outputs**
- Considering **implications for openness**: openness is 'not a binary' and requires levels and layers, especially when sharing creative practice works



Photo by [Laura Alessia](#) from Pexels

## Example - Sharing creative practice methods and outputs - Ewan Robertson, Cloud Dialogue



Ewan Robertson (2024) Cloud Dialogue. Creative research portfolio. University of Edinburgh.

<https://doi.org/10.2218/ED.9781836450573>

- Documents the development and dissemination of a sculpture (7.5 x 11.5 x 2.6m ) that “investigates the potentials of iron as a sculptural material”.
- Details investigation of materials and processes of “research through making” and “research through exhibiting”, evidenced through photographic images.



FIG. 10-18  
Ewan Robertson, Cloud Dialogue,  
shown as part of 'Material Time',  
2014, a mixed group shown at  
Sage, University of Edinburgh.  
Photo: Ewan Robertson.



*“each pour represented an incremental gain in knowledge that foregrounded the agency of the material and its dynamic relationship with studio processes and artistic intentions”*

## Example - academic podcasting - Mark Wilsher, The Research Studio



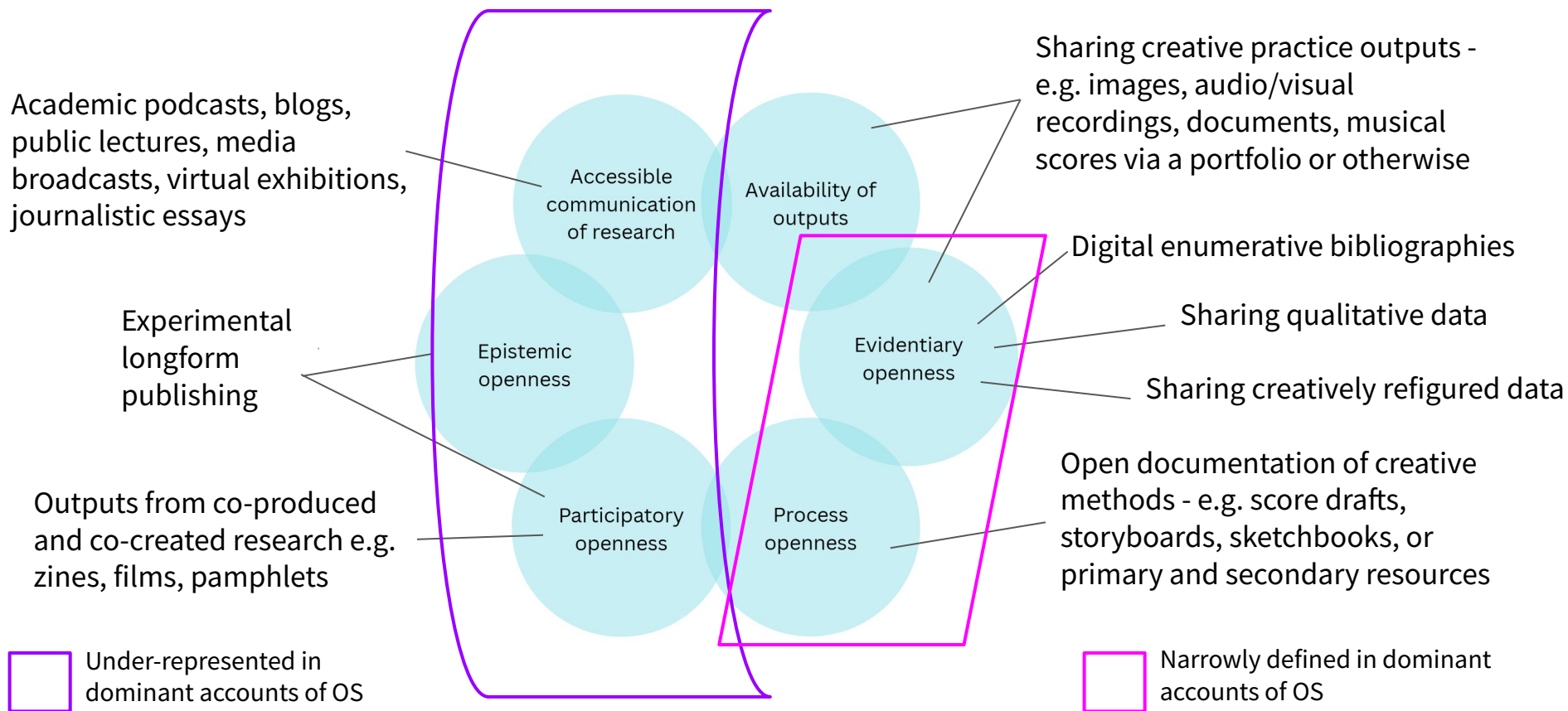
“We talk to current doctoral students involved in practice-based, practice-led, or practice-informed research in the arts.”

Mark Wilshire (host) (2024-continuing), The Research Studio. Podcast.

<https://mwilsher.podbean.com/>

- Discussion of practice-led and practice-based research in arts curation, soundscape ecology, theatre pedagogy, curation, design practice and more.
  - Interviewees are doctoral students -> podcast surfaces research that may in many instances be unpublished
- Methodological discussions are anchored accessibly in each researcher's personal and professional story.
  - Focus on the experiential dimension of what it's like to conduct practice-led and practice-based research increases the potential for engagement among non-specialists.

# Diverse output types and the MORPHSS typology



# Existing platforms & approaches for sharing NTROs and creative practice outputs



- Institutional repositories - as research outputs & research 'data'
- [Virtual exhibitions](#)
- [ENACT Project](#): 'Build a core national practice research repository, to capture the process, practice, and end product 'data' created by practice researchers.
  - & predecessor work of [PR Voices](#) & [SPARKLE](#) projects (noted in MORPHSS Catalogue [here](#) and here).
- [ResearchEquals](#): A recently-launched platform allowing researchers to publish & curate research & share process
- [Octopus.ac](#) (developing 'Pearls' functionality: to help support AHSS researchers & those whose work is not experimentally or hypothesis-driven)
- Experimental Publishing platforms: for [longform](#) and short form text publications outside the traditional format



Photo by [Claudio Schwarz](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# NTROs and implications for openness:

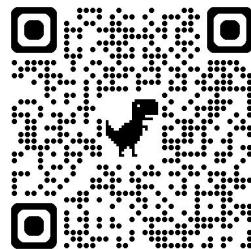


- Despite OA becoming part of research policy, tensions remain around making creative outputs open (Bulley & Şahin, 2021)
- ‘tension[s] between practice as creative endeavour (the making of art) and practice as inquiry (building knowledge and insight).’ (Jacobs, et al, 2024)
- ‘Intervention, sharing and reporting need to be embedded flexibly, rather than through rigid or formulaic means.’ (Jacobs, et al, 2024) - i.e., what parts of the process to share, what matters to the research and what doesn’t needs to be fluid.
- Issues of IP and copyright: sharing can be detrimental/unethical
- Abuse of open access (machines and people) & concerns around AI training (nonconsensual theft) - (Henry Gonnet, [MORPHSS Catalogue Launch Event](#) - See also Broadhead & Gonnet, 2025)



Photo by [Alfo Medeiros](#) from Pexels

# Outcomes: MORPHSS report



Recommendations for funders, institutions, open research monitoring initiatives, publishers, learned societies & researchers.

“We emphasise the importance of **flexibility**, **acknowledging diversity of practice**, creating **inclusive guidance and advocacy materials** and **engaging with AHSS communities** in the review and revision of requirements...”

**See also new article:** Adams J, Barnes M, Moore S and Pinfield S. Cataloguing and theorising open research practices in the arts, humanities and social sciences: Problematising and diversifying ‘Open Science’. *F1000Research* 2026, **15**:515 (<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.178353.1>)



# Findings and their implications for research evaluation

# Summary of findings



1. **There's a diversity of open AHSS practices**, going far beyond the canonical suite of OS practices (pre-registration; open data, code and materials).
2. **Where counterparts to 'familiar' OS practices to exist, they often work differently** and are rarely universally applicable - e.g. open peer review, pre-registration of qualitative research
3. **There's also a diversity of forms of openness** - beyond evidencing transparency / supporting reproducibility / sharing outputs.
4. **The appropriateness of a given practice = contextually embedded and dependent on ethical and relational factors**; the selection of open practices must be situated, not standardised; it must be aligned with the study's epistemic framing & take account of the distribution of benefits of openness.
5. There are implications for policy, monitoring etc of all of the above.



MORPHSS  
report

# Recommendations for open research monitoring initiatives



- **Review existing and proposed open research monitoring initiatives** in the light of this and other recent work [...], conducting an audit of the prioritised indicators to assess inclusivity / flexibility in the light of disciplinary, epistemological, and methodological differences.

Where monitoring strategies are not sufficiently inclusive of such difference, pause and reassess, ensuring alignment with the UNESCO-affiliated [OSMI principles](#) which emphasise the need for indicators to be co-created with research communities, inclusive of diverse knowledge systems and epistemologies, and adaptable to specific research contexts.

- **Engage with AHSS researchers and AHSS open research advocates** across a range of methodological and epistemological approaches when exploring how to assess research openness in ways that are inclusive of disciplinary, epistemological, and methodological differences.

# What does this mean?

OS monitoring frameworks need to be **flexible and inclusive of a broader range of open practice**. This may require *greater emphasis on qualitative measures in assessments of research openness*, as many of the open practices MORPHSS highlights **resist quantification**.

*Interpretation needs to be appropriately contextualised* with reference to variation in practice across disciplines and research types. Where practices that are not always appropriate across all methods are included in a monitoring framework, **this must be explicitly acknowledged**.

Ultimately, a *pluralisation of monitoring initiatives or frameworks* may be necessary to ensure disciplines and research types are assessed appropriately. (See the ‘toolbox’ and ‘indicator framework’ approach advanced by the European Commission (Wouters et al., 2019)).

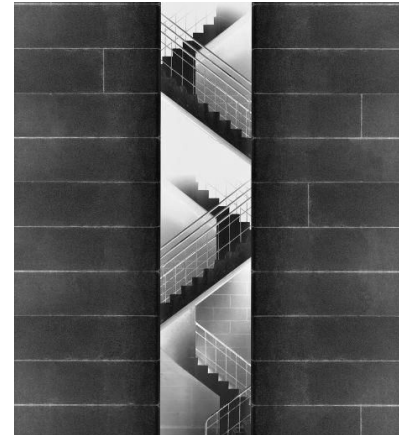


## Recommendations for institutions include:

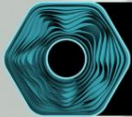
- **Review institutional incentive and recognition structures around OR** to ensure a broad range of open practices, including those more common in AHSS subjects, are recognised and incentivised (for example, as part of promotion and hiring decisions). Where this is not currently the case, review and revise existing mechanisms, seeking input from AHSS researchers.

**Overall:** evaluation at an institutional and pan-institutional level needs to ensure it accommodates open practice across **a range of disciplines and research types - including practices relating to NTROs** such as performances and other creative practice outputs, podcasts, and the numerous ways (**including and beyond data sharing**) by which evidence is shared in AHSS.

**Evaluation exercises that incorporate assessment of ‘openness’ must take account of the context-appropriateness** (i.e. lack of applicability to all projects) of many of these practices.



# Find out more



## MORPHSS

Materialising Open Research Practices in the Humanities and Social Sciences

### About MORPHSS

Funded by the Research England Development (RED) Fund, the Wellcome Trust and the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the project **Materialising Open Research Practices in the Humanities and Social Sciences (MORPHSS)** will showcase what 'openness' could mean for HSS research and how it can benefit its researchers and institutions.

This interdisciplinary project led by Dr [Samuel Moore](#) (Scholarly Communication Specialist, [Cambridge University Library](#)) is a collaboration with University of Cambridge Library, Cambridge Digital Humanities, Coventry University, the University of Sheffield and the University of Southampton.



Our website: <https://morphss.hcommons.org/>

Follow us on BlueSky:

<https://bsky.app/profile/morphss.bsky.social>

MORPHSS Report:

<https://doi.org/10.17613/jn1y1-mj246>

MORPHSS Catalogue:

<https://catalogue.morphss.work/>

MORPHSS Repository:

[works.hcommons.org/collections/morphss/](https://works.hcommons.org/collections/morphss/)



# Questions and discussion

# References



- Albornoz, D., A. Posada, A. Okune, R. Hillyer, and L. Chan.** 2017. 'Co-Constructing an Open and Collaborative Manifesto to Reclaim the Open Science Narrative'. In *Expanding Perspectives on Open Science: Communities, Cultures, and Diversity in Concepts and Practices*, edited by L. Chan and F. Loizides. IOS Press
- Arthur, Paul Longley, and Lydia Hearn.** 2024. *Open Scholarship in the Humanities*. 1st ed. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350232303>
- Bazzoli, Andrea.** 2022. 'Open Science and Epistemic Pluralism: A Tale of Many Perils and Some Opportunities'. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* 15 (4): 525–28. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2022.67>
- Broadhead, Samantha, and Henry Gonnet.** 2025. 'Creative Dilemmas: Balancing Open Access and Integrity'. *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal* 12 (3): 31–49. <https://doi.org/10.31273/eirj.v12i3.1817>
- De Oliveira, Thaiane Moreira, Francisco Paulo Jamil Marques, Augusto Veloso Leão, et al. 2021. 'Towards an Inclusive Agenda of Open Science for Communication Research: A Latin American Approach'. *Journal of Communication*, August 30, jqab025. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqab025>
- Bulley, James, and Ozden Sahin.** 2021. Practice Research - Report 1: What Is Practice Research? And Report 2: How Can Practice Research Be Shared? Report. Practice Research Advisory Group UK (PRAG-UK). <https://doi.org/10.23636/1347>.
- De Rijcke, Sarah, and Bart Penders.** 2018. 'Resist Calls for Replicability in the Humanities'. *Nature* 560 (7716): 29–29. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-018-05845-z>
- Ferreira, Beatriz Barrocas, and Maria Manuel Borges.** 2022. 'The Epistemic Cultures of the Digital Humanities and Their Relation to Open Science: Contributions to the Open Humanities Discourse'. Paper presented at BOBCATSSS 2022. *BOBCATSSS 2022*, May 23. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6481241>
- Holbrook, J. Britt, Bart Penders, and Sarah de Rijcke.** 2019. 'The Humanities Do Not Need a Replication Drive'. *CWTS Blog*. <https://www.cwts.nl/blog?article=n-r2v2a4&title=the-humanities-do-not-need-a-replication-drive>
- Jacobs, Neil, Andrew Tolmie, Vasileios Sideropoulos, et al.** 2024. 'Working Paper No 6: Exploring Research Transparency, Positionality and Reproducibility'. Chyd4\_v1. Preprint, OSF Preprints, April 11. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/chyd4>.
- Jeng, Wei, and Daqing He.** 2022. 'Surveying Research Data-Sharing Practices in US Social Sciences: A Knowledge Infrastructure-Inspired Conceptual Framework'. *Online Information Review* 46 (7): 1275–92. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-03-2020-0079>
- Knöchelmann, Marcel.** 2019. 'Open Science in the Humanities, or: Open Humanities?' *Publications* 7 (4): 65. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications7040065>
- Leonelli, Sabina.** 2023. *Philosophy of Open Science*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009416368>
- Patton, Chloe.** 2025. 'Replicability and the Humanities: The Problem with Universal Measures of Research Quality'. *Research Evaluation* 34 (December): rvaf052. <https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvaf052>
- Rafols, Ismael, Ingeborg Meijer, and Jordi Molas-Gallart.** 2024. 'Monitoring Open Science as Transformative Change: Towards a Systemic Framework'. *F1000Research* 13 (April): 320. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.148290.1>
- Robinson-Garcia, Nicolas, Rodrigo Costas, and Thed N. Van Leeuwen.** 2020. 'Open Access Uptake by Universities Worldwide'. *PeerJ* 8 (July): e9410. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.9410>
- Severin, Anna, Matthias Egger, Martin Paul Eve, and Daniel Hürlimann.** 2018. 'Discipline-Specific Open Access Publishing Practices and Barriers to Change: An Evidence-Based Review'. *F1000Research* 7 (December): 1925. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.17328.1>
- Steltenpohl, Crystal N., Hilary Lustick, Melanie S. Meyer, et al.** 2023. 'Rethinking Transparency and Rigor from a Qualitative Open Science Perspective'. *Journal of Trial and Error* 4 (1): 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.36850/mr7>
- Wouters, P., I. Råfols, A. Oancea, L. Kamerlin, B. Holbrook, and M. Jacob.** 2019. *Indicator Frameworks for Fostering Open Knowledge Practices in Science and Scholarship*. European Commission. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b69944d4-01f3-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1>