Dutch Taskforce on Responsible Management of Research Information and Data

Introduction

To address issues around the responsible use of research information and the role of commercial third party providers in particular, an expert taskforce was established early 2020 by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), The Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU) and The Dutch Research Council (NWO).. The taskforce will reflect on the responsible management of this (meta)data, including the terms and conditions under which this (meta)data can be (re)used and enriched, and avoiding undesired network or platform effects. In addition, it's the ambition of the Dutch research organisations to start working on an Open Knowledge Base that provides full access to these (meta)data consistent with our Open Science goals.

Increasing amounts of data are being collected on all aspects of the research lifecycle into a variety of systems and platforms. In the Netherlands these systems and platforms include the Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) all institutions have in place, NWO's grant management system and the national database NARCIS provided by DANS. There is an emerging market for third party providers offering services to satisfy the growing demand for research information and evaluation. Using large scale data collection, aggregation and analysis, these services provide new prospects for assisted decision making on, for example:

- funding opportunities,
- publishing venues,
- identifying upcoming research fields,
- alternative metrics.

As critical functions of the scholarly enterprise become increasingly dependent on such services, it is critical that the academy itself carefully considers risks involved in becoming too dependent on specific market players and their tightly integrated solutions.

The increasing interwovenness of information about research (research intelligence) and research itself raises a number of challenging issues both for users and for producers of this information. It is the collective responsibility of all actors to manage these issues in accordance with research ethics and public values.

Membership

- Chair: Karen Maex, Rector Magnificus University of Amsterdam
- Co-Chair: Wilco Hazeleger, Dean Geosciences, University Utrecht
- Sarah de Rijcke, Professor of Science, Technology and Innovation Studies / Scientific Director at Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS)
- Prof.dr. Nanne de Vries, Vice-Dean Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences at Maastricht University / Member of the Board, Maastricht University Medical Center
- Magchiel Bijsterbosch, SURF / SURFsara
- Ronald van Schijndel, Research Support, Amsterdam UMC/ NFU

- Hans de Jonge, Policy officer Open science and Quality, NWO
- Kurt de Belder, University Leiden / UKB
- Alastair Dunning, Head, Research Data Services & 4TU.Centre for Research Data at TU Delft Library
- Maurice Vanderfeesten, Innovation Manager Research Services at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
- Max Haring, Head of Education and Research Support, University of Amsterdam / HvA

Darco Jansen (VSNU, view profile) is secretary of this Taskforce. Robert van der Vooren is external advisor.

Terms of Reference

(English summary of Dutch version as agreed on by steering committee NFU, NWO and VSNU on 3rd February 2020)

Core Aims

- Establish a set of terms and conditions under which metadata of public research output can be (re)used and enriched by public and private organizations. Metadata (re)use and enrichment must be carried out in accordance with research ethics and public values and avoiding undesired network or platform effects.
- Determine the (legal) consequences of those terms and conditions for both knowledge institutions and market players
- Describe the concept of an Open Knowledge Base, in which an open infrastructure is developed in cooperation with private parties for the responsible management of research information and data
- Advise about the governance and funding for implementation of an Open Knowlegde Base, and of a national body supervising application of the terms and conditions for the responsible management of research information and data

General Approach

The Taskforce applies

- an agile approach in at least three sprints / iteration loops
- a first iteration that will feed into the negotiations between the Dutch research organisations and Elsevier with whom a framework agreement was reached end of December 2019
- an open and inclusive approach such that organisations, institutions and scientists are consulted
- an approach such that general outcomes are applied into upcoming agreements with publishers and other vendors
- a feasibility study for the Dutch Open Knowlegde Base and advice about its governance and finances

Governance

- The Taskforce reports to a steering committee of VSNU, NFU and NWO mandated to Tim van der Hagen, Hans Romijn and Stan Gielen, respectively.
- Chairs of the Taskforce are Karen Maex (UvA) and Wilco Hazeleger (UU)
- Other members are selected based on representative stakeholders and balances in the different expertise's needed
- Secretary of Taskforce is Darco Jansen reporting as well to the chairs to the Education & Research Steering Group (SOO) of VSNU.