ALL Institute Blog Post

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1. Research Stream e.g. *Social Structures*

1. Picture to use alongside the post if possible.

1. Tags to be included with the post e.g. *Open Science, Agape Open Science,*

1. Social media handles to be included on our social media when highlighting the post:

(900 - 1000 words)

Some Ideas for writing -

1. Open Science and the need for Agape
2. Open Science for improving individuals lives
3. NORFest and Open Science in the Irish context
4. Maybe to wrap it up with Agape at NORFest and what NORFest was? This is not written yet.

Embracing the open science movement

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary research, the concept of open science, also known as open scholarship or open research, serves as a multifaceted umbrella encompassing a range of principles such as open data, open access, open source, open peer review, open educational resources, citizen science, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines it as "unhindered access to scientific articles, access to data from public research, and collaborative research enabled by [...] tools and incentives." The overarching goal is clear: to make research and science universally accessible.

The promise of open science lies in its potential to democratise knowledge, breaking down barriers related to funding, language, and geography. The vision is compelling – free access to published scientific papers, the ability to leverage datasets generated by others, fostering collaborations, and fueling innovations for all. However, despite the laudable aspirations, realising this vision has proven to be a formidable challenge.

While dedicated individuals, both within and outside academia, are actively engaged in making this happen, systemic change is a slow and complex process. Only a handful of institutions currently incentivise open science practices, and governmental support is only beginning to materialise in certain parts of the world. However, the question is no longer "if" but "when" this transformation will occur.

Crucially, anyone including you can contribute to the open science movement at any time, becoming an integral part of this transformative process. Countless opportunities and resources are available, ranging from guidance offered by local university librarians to virtual communities connecting individuals globally. Finally, it enhances the reproducibility of scientific findings, ensuring the reliability and validity of research outcomes.

For early career researchers, embracing open science principles can be a catalyst for career growth. Openness in sharing data, methodologies, and findings not only contributes to the advancement of science but also enhances visibility within the scientific community. Open science encourages interdisciplinary works, breaking down barriers between disciplines and fostering holistic approaches to scientific inquiries. Open science fosters collaboration, allowing emerging researchers to connect with peers, mentors, and experts worldwide, thereby broadening their networks and exposure to diverse perspectives.One such community is Agape. A community rooted in the spirit of open science, primarily focusing on PhD students and early career researchers while remaining inclusive and welcoming to anyone interested in contributing to and learning about open science principles. . The genesis of Agape can be traced back to early 2022 when a group of open science-curious students met during the Horizon 2020-financed Opening Doors course. What began as a collaboration on an assignment evolved into something more significant – an initiative to create a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) introducing open science concepts to their peers.

Operating under the ethos of "by PhDs for PhDs," the contributors with diverse background chose topics aligned with their research or expertise, resulting in a diverse and inclusive course. The collaborative effort, though time-consuming, yielded a wealth of perspectives. Published in February 2023, the course and its associated templates marked a milestone in Agape's journey.

Buoyed by the positive experience, the collaborators decided to continue their partnership, establishing a community focused on safe and inclusive open science practices. Agape's mission is to provide a space where everyone can learn, exchange opinions, and share experiences in the realm of open science.

Agape acknowledges that navigating the expansive landscape of open science can be overwhelming and intimidating. For beginners, the vast array of open science resources might feel overwhelming. While these resources offer limitless opportunities, the lack of curation can be daunting. Often, these materials aren't specifically designed or organised for graduate students or newcomers to the research field. This absence of guidance can make the path into open science feel like navigating unexplored territory.

Moreover, academic mentors, while proficient in their specialised domains, might themselves be novices in open science practices. Consequently, this poses a challenge, particularly for doctoral candidates who may not have received the necessary guidance. The Agape community, therefore, emerges as a support system, offering a peer-driven approach where individuals can embark on the open science journey accompanied by those who recently experienced similar struggles or apprehensions.

In essence, Agape stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, inclusivity, and education in advancing the open science movement. As the community continues to grow, its commitment to fostering a culture of shared learning and support underscores the transformative potential of open science for all.

Meanwhile, the momentum behind open science extends to the European Union, where member countries are fervently engaged in reshaping legislation, establishing robust infrastructures, crafting educational and training materials, and deliberating on strategies to promote open research. Among these countries, Ireland stands out with its proactive approach, exemplified by the creation of the National Open Research Forum (NORF), financially supported by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, through the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

NORF, a key player in Ireland's open science landscape, has played a pivotal role in the nation's transition to an open research environment. In 2019, NORF developed Ireland's National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment, followed by the unveiling of the National Action Plan for Open Research in 2022. A significant milestone, these initiatives reflect Ireland's commitment to fostering openness and collaboration in its research ecosystem.

Since 2022, NORF has actively administered the Open Research Fund, a strategic initiative designed to support the practical implementation of the National Action Plan. This fund serves as a catalyst for realising the goals outlined in the action plan, providing tangible support to projects that align with Ireland's vision for an open research landscape.

The National Action Plan itself acts as a comprehensive roadmap, outlining the strategic goals and coordinated actions that collectively strengthen Ireland's research system to fully embrace open research practices. It signifies a national commitment to fostering transparency, accessibility, and collaboration in the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

In essence, Ireland's endeavours through NORF and its comprehensive action plan exemplify the transformative potential of open science at a national level. As the country actively embraces the principles of openness, it sets an inspiring example for the broader European Union and the global research community. Ireland's journey showcases the intricate interplay between policy, infrastructure, and strategic initiatives in shaping a vibrant open research ecosystem.