



4th Annual Forum for Open Research

20th-23rd October | 2025

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Welcome

On behalf of the Organising Committee for the 4th Annual Forum for Open Research, we are delighted to welcome you to this year's event.

The 2025 Annual Forum will offer a series of carefully tailored presentations and panels addressing key themes and topics related to the advancement of Open Science policies and practices in research institutions and research communities throughout the Arab world. We are honoured to have American University Sharjah as our Host Partner for this event.

This year's conference theme is Becoming Open: Building Capacities and Communities in the Arab world, and we invite librarians, researchers, policy makers, higher-education institutions to join us and work together towards a more open Arab world

This Book of Abstracts will help you decide which panels to attend. We hope you enjoy a richly informative and thought-provoking event!



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Dr Salwan Abdulateef, President of Open Science Community Iraq (OSCI)
Dr Thafer Thabit Mohammed, University of Anbar

Advancing Open Science in Post-Conflict Iraq: From Marginalisation to Community-Led Transformation

Open Science was virtually unknown in the Iraqi academic landscape before 2022. Most researchers had limited or no awareness of Open Access, FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) principles, and the value of transparency and collaboration in research. The establishment of the Iraqi Open Science Community (OSCI), supported and encouraged by the Forum for Open Research in MENA (FORM), marked a turning point in this narrative. Through sustained collaboration with FORM, OSCI has helped spark a new movement for openness in Iraqi academia. A wide range of workshops, interactive seminars, and bilingual training sessions have been delivered to introduce Iraqi researchers to Open Science concepts and tools. These activities have reached hundreds of scholars from diverse Iraqi universities, significantly increasing awareness and capacity for implementing Open Science practices. This presentation will highlight the early challenges and recent progress in promoting Open Science in Iraq. Key barriers include weak digital infrastructure, limited national policies supporting openness, and restricted access to scholarly publications and datasets. Despite this, OSCI has successfully built local research communities, engaged early-career researchers and women scientists, and fostered partnerships with global platforms like Zenodo and The Turing Way. This talk will also explore how the grassroots efforts of OSCI, combined with regional leadership from FORM, have laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and collaborative scientific ecosystem in Iraq. We will conclude with actionable policy recommendations aimed at ministries and university leaders, such as integrating Open Science into research assessment frameworks, establishing national repositories, and creating sustainable funding mechanisms. By sharing Iraq's journey, we aim to demonstrate how Open Science can serve as a catalyst for rebuilding and innovation in post-conflict regions, offering a replicable model for other countries in the MENA region and beyond.



Alwaleed Alkhaja, Head of Open Access and Copyright, Qatar National Library

A Decade of Open Access Funding in Qatar: From Challenges to Opportunities

In Open Access Week 2015, Qatar National Library announced the launch of an Open Access fund aimed to enhance support for Open Access publishing in Qatar. This fund, which is the only national consortium-supported fund in the region, aligns with QNL's goal of providing long-term Open Access to all research outputs from Qatar. Since the launch of the Open Access Fund in 2016 (now rebranded as the Open Access Program), QNL has received an impressive 10,000 funding requests, highlighting the necessity for additional funding resources. The program has successfully supported 5,869 articles, authored by 2,249 different authors across 44 institutions in Qatar. QNL has leveraged both reading and publishing agreements, along with partnerships with fully Open Access publishers, to provide essential support for researchers in the country. However, the program has faced several challenges. This presentation will provide a brief overview of the development of the Open access program over the past 10 years. The most significant challenge has been securing sustainable funding. While QNL has supported almost 6,000 articles, it has also had to reject more than 4,000 requests primarily due to limitations of funding for requests and publishing costs that fall outside of the consortium's coverage. Nearly 10 years after the launch, there remains an ongoing opportunity for improved institutional support for Open Access among Qatari institutions. Additionally, there is a common expectation that QNL will handle all associated fees. In 2025, QNL conducted a survey to assess the program's effectiveness and explore areas for improvement. This presentation will show the survey findings and discuss potential improvements to the program, including changes to funding criteria and communication processes. The presentation will discuss QNL's next steps regarding the long-term sustainability of the Open Access fund, with plans to encourage institutions to develop more policies for Open Access funding and supporting the QNL consortium in financing Open Access initiatives.



Dr Ibrahim Alamoush, Assistant Professor, Sharjah Education Academy

Enhancing Teachers' Research Engagement: A Capacity-Building and Community-Oriented Initiative in Arabic

This applied study draws on a research-based initiative aimed at empowering Arabic language teachers to contribute to knowledge production using qualitative research tools, particularly action research, self-reflection, and ethnography, with a focus on:

1. Enhancing teachers' capacity to publish in Open Access academic platforms
2. Promoting Arabic as a language of scholarly communication
3. Establishing an open learning community for sharing practice-based insights
4. Adapting Open Research models to reflect the realities of schools in the Arab world

Amid accelerating transformations in knowledge-sharing and Open Science, there is an urgent need to position teachers not merely as practitioners but as educational researchers actively engaged in generating knowledge and shaping collaborative academic communities.

A key component of the project is its focus on enabling teachers to act as knowledge producers by documenting and sharing their classroom experiences in Arabic via open data platforms. This fosters an interactive professional learning environment grounded in knowledge exchange and evidence-based practice. The project also supports the formation of school-based research communities and advocates for evidence-informed educational policy.

The paper highlights key qualitative outcomes of the initiative, including samples of classroom research, examples of teacher collaboration in co-led research projects, and the methods used to train teachers in the ethics of open scientific publishing. It also offers an analytical reading of the impact of the initiative on teachers' awareness of their role as contributors to knowledge production and explores challenges related to the availability of Arabic-language publishing channels.

Ultimately, this contribution aims to offer a practical model for embedding the principles of Open Science in school settings, building bridges between educators and academic institutions, and supporting the creation of a sustainable learning community that redefines the relationship between teaching, research, and development in the Arab world.



Dr Fatima H. Bailey, Zayed University

Local Roots, Global Reach: A Roadmap for Building Open Science Capacities in the Arab World

While Open Access is a well-known and often contentious facet of the global Open Research landscape, its successful implementation requires more than just top-down mandates. For the Arab world, the advancement of Open Science is vital for sociocultural, intellectual, and economic development, demanding a strategic shift towards localising discussions, tools, and solutions to facilitate effective capacity building. This presentation argues that placing accessibility at the heart of the region's scientific and research ecosystems necessitates a bottom-up approach grounded in community and skill-sharing. Reflecting on and building on the message from last year's Annual Forum which emphasised multi-level collaboration, this year's session focuses on tangible strategies for building Open Science communities and developing localised capacities. We will explore a framework centred on four key pillars: targeted training and skills development in Open Research methodologies; the creation of relevant infrastructure and tools tailored to regional needs; advocacy for supportive institutional and governmental policies; and the facilitation of robust community networks that connect researchers, librarians, and policymakers. In alignment with the UAE's designation of 2025 as the "Year of Community," this presentation will demonstrate how empowering individual researchers creates a ripple effect, enabling them to champion change within their institutions and, collectively, elevate the entire region's research ecosystem. By moving beyond the global North's publisher-centric models and focusing on a sustainable, community-driven approach, we can build a more equitable, innovative, and accessible future for research in the Arab world. This session provides a practical roadmap for stakeholders looking to contribute to this critical transformation.



Dr Kareman Baknam Sedki Abdel Aziaz, Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University

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Malak Benkirane, Doctorante, UCLouvain, Belgium

Open Data in Sensitive Research Contexts: Ethical Dilemmas and Structural Barriers in Fieldwork on Iran's Foreign Policy in the Sahel region

This presentation is part of a doctoral research project in International Relations that focuses on Iran's foreign policy toward the Sahel and Maghreb regions. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork including semi-structured interviews, discourse analysis, and documentary observation, it explores the tensions between the principles of Open Science, particularly Open Data, and the ethical and practical constraints of conducting research in geopolitically sensitive environments.

In contexts marked by political instability, armed conflict, or heavy surveillance, access to data is often restricted and the protection of sources becomes critical, making full transparency both impractical and ethically problematic. In such cases, global frameworks such as the FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) principles come into conflict with the demands of confidentiality, ethics, and the safeguarding of personal data. This contribution seeks to enrich the collective reflection on the boundaries and conditions for open data in the social sciences, drawing on a concrete case study and the situated perspective of a researcher from the Middle East and North Africa. It advocates for flexible, context-sensitive, and ethically grounded protocols that better accommodate the realities of research in the Global South.



Dr Cem Birol, Research Data Senior Specialist, Koç University, Turkey
Tuba Akbaytürk, Koç University, Turkey

Recent Open Science Endeavours at Koç University

Koç University, Turkey's leading research institution and one that receives the highest funding from the European Union, has recently implemented transformative initiatives to promote Open Science and research data management, aligning with global best practices. At the institutional level, a new policy supports researchers by covering article processing charges (APCs) for top-tier publications, enabling greater Open Access visibility and incentivising the dissemination of high-impact research. Complementing this financial support, Koç University Library launched KUHub.Research, a dedicated DSpace-based platform that facilitates Open Access not only to published articles but also to comprehensive metadata on research datasets and ongoing projects. This infrastructure ensures that scholarly outputs are findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR), aligning with international standards. A central component of the university's Open Science ecosystem is its Research Data Management (RDM) Group, housed within the library. This team plays a pivotal role in raising awareness, providing training, and offering hands-on support to research teams, guiding scholars through ethical data sharing, legal compliance, and long-term stewardship. Notably, the group has leveraged AI-based tools to drastically reduce the burden of preparing data management plans, from what once took a week to a single business day, freeing researchers to focus on innovation. By combining policy-level incentives, robust technical infrastructure, and a dedicated support team, Koç University demonstrates how emerging research institutions can meaningfully embrace Open Science. This presentation will share the lessons learned, the practical tools developed, and the ongoing challenges in fostering a sustainable and scalable culture of data openness and collaboration.



Pragya Chaube, Assistant Professor, UPES: Open Science South Asia Network

Advancing Open Science Communities in South Asian Through Regional Collaboration and Diplomacy

Open Science thrives not only on infrastructure and policy, but on inclusive communities that champion transparency, accessibility, and collaboration. In South Asia, the Open Science South Asia Network (OSSAN) has emerged as a key initiative to catalyse such a movement. Launched in 2022, OSSAN was founded to promote regional dialogue on Open Science (OS) principles and to build a collaborative community of practitioners, policymakers, and early-career researchers across the region.

This paper shares OSSAN's experience in fostering community-led engagement through multi-country capacity-building workshops, a regional conference on Open Science, and an ideathon that addressed structural challenges in adopting Open Science. A key outcome has been the development of context-sensitive training materials on UNESCO's Recommendations on Open Science based on a region-wide survey of Open Science practices among early-career researchers. The workshop material has now been adapted into a massive online open course (MOOC) hosted by UNESCO Jakarta's e-learning platform. OSSAN also facilitates knowledge exchange across borders, enabling South Asian researchers to engage in global conversations on data governance, Open Access, and responsible research practices.

The OSSAN experience illustrates the role of regional networks in advancing scientific diplomacy. Through partnerships with institutions across South Asia and engagement with global actors such as UNESCO and CODATA, OSSAN supports both bilateral and multilateral collaborations. Its community-led approach fosters inclusivity, centers local priorities, and creates pathways for engagement between South Asian stakeholders and international Open Science frameworks.

In sharing these experiences, we highlight key lessons for building resilient, community-driven networks and offer reflections on how similar efforts, such as FORM, can foster cross-regional partnerships. We argue that regional networks rooted in shared context and values are essential to achieving a truly inclusive global Open Science ecosystem.



Nada Chaya, Program Lead, Arab Council for the Social Sciences

Social Science Research Data Management in the Arab Region

As part of the global movement towards Open Science, the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) and its partners – Odum Institute for Research in Social Sciences at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and the Middle East Center at the University of Oxford – have been working through the Arab Public Data Initiative to promote norms and practices of managing and sharing social science research data among social scientists, information specialists, and research institutions in the Arab region. More specifically, the ACSS work on research data management (RDM) aims to (1) build capacity in managing research data in the Arab region, and (2) preserve and facilitate access to social science research data on/in the Arab region. It does so by providing data management and sharing infrastructure through the Open Access repository, the ACSS Dataverse.

Since 2018, about 200 social science datasets have been curated and deposited in the ACSS Dataverse that is available to both individual researchers and research institutions. In addition, a series of Arabic training workshops have been conducted across the Arab region presenting the benefits of research data management (RDM) and introducing RDM principles, best practices, and tools. In addition to capacity building, the workshops are helping create RDM networks in the social science community in the region.

Through its contribution to raising awareness, developing skills, promoting multilingualism in RDM, and creating a network in the Arab region, Arab Public Data Initiative opens up opportunities for cross-regional collaborations on social science research data management. This helps it expand its work and make RDM part of the research ecosystem. This roundtable invites the sharing of similar experiences in the Arab region and discussing ways of overcoming challenges and scaling up this work in the area.



Andrea Chiarelli, Associate Director, Research Consulting, United Kingdom

Embracing Open Research: Lessons Learned Across Europe and the United Kingdom

As Open Science transitions from an aspirational goal to an essential component of research excellence, institutions are choosing diverse implementation pathways. This presentation examines the strategic choices made by universities in different national contexts across Europe and the UK, highlighting how they have adapted Open Science principles to address their unique institutional priorities, cultural environments, and resource constraints. Each example will highlight unique approaches to common challenges, demonstrating that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to embedding Open Science practices.

The presentation will cover a range of delivery mechanisms, including national initiatives, structured Open Science offices, publication repositories, targeted training, Open Access funds, and grassroots networks. Attendees will learn how different institutions are empowering both researchers and students to uphold the principles of openness and will leave with practical, adaptable ideas that can be tailored to their organisations.

The session will conclude with a reflection of how the mechanisms explored can help institutions uphold the principles shared in the UNESCO Recommendation of Open Science (quality and integrity, collective benefit, equity and fairness, and diversity and inclusiveness). This will equip attendees with practical criteria to evaluate which Open Science initiatives will deliver the greatest impact within their specific institutional environment and strategic priorities.

By highlighting a range of approaches across different policy contexts, this presentation aims to inspire confidence that meaningful Open Science support is achievable for all institutions, contributing to a more transparent, collaborative, and innovative global research ecosystem.



Farshid Danesh, Associate Professor, Islamic World Science & Technology Monitoring and Citation Institute, Iran

Advancing Open Science in the Middle East: Iran's Role in Strengthening Scientific Diplomacy

The global Open Science movement transforms how research is conducted, shared, and applied. Building Open Science capacity requires locally adapted strategies and collaborative initiatives in the Middle East, where research environments face diverse socio-political and infrastructural challenges. This presentation addresses the region's need for context-sensitive Open Science frameworks, focusing on Iran's emerging leadership in promoting regional scientific diplomacy.

This study examines Open Science policies, infrastructures, and activities across Middle Eastern countries, highlighting several common challenges, including limited Open Access platforms, weak national mandates, language barriers, and underdeveloped open data infrastructures. Nonetheless, opportunities for regional cooperation are on the rise. Iran has contributed positively by promoting national and regional research repositories, advancing Open Access publishing, engaging in UNESCO's Open Science Recommendation initiatives, and encouraging cross-border research collaborations.

This study outlines an approach for enhancing Open Science capacity in the Middle East by implementing multilingual training programs, establishing regional knowledge-sharing hubs, and developing integrated open data frameworks that align with global standards and regional research priorities. It emphasises Iran's potential as a one of regional knowledge leader countries capitalising on its existing infrastructure and expertise to assist neighbouring countries through capacity-building workshops, joint policy dialogues, and collaborative Open Science initiatives.

Additionally, the paper introduces mechanisms for fostering knowledge exchange and cooperation among universities, research libraries, funding bodies, and policymakers via regional Open Science networks. By providing actionable, locally relevant strategies and highlighting Iran's positive role in promoting Open Science diplomacy, this contribution aims to build more inclusive, transparent, and collaborative research ecosystems across the Middle East.



Mohamed Owais Elahi, Undergraduate Researcher, Science & Technology at University of Doha, Qatar

Teaching Predatory Journal Appraisal Using Persuasive System Design and Gamification

Predatory publishing exploits researchers and their work, often ensnaring them in unethical practices without their awareness. Despite its widespread impact, many academics remain unfamiliar with the warning signs that indicate deceptive journals and publishers. To bridge this knowledge gap, we have developed a gamified, pixelated escape room simulator that leverages resources such as Think.Check.Submit and Cabell's Journalytics.

This presentation will showcase the immersive game, highlighting how gamification transforms academic awareness into an engaging learning experience. Players will navigate interactive challenges and storytelling-based puzzles, including finding missing items, solving lock-pin mini-games, and deciphering interactable dummy email maps. By immersing participants in real-world publishing scenarios, the game equips them with the skills needed to recognise red flags and avoid unethical publishing traps.

Developed using the user-friendly and low-cost RPG Maker MV software, this project demonstrates how such tools can facilitate meaningful educational experiences. The presentation will also delve into the development process, including the creative methods employed to design the mini games, the technical aspects of building the interactive environment, and the iterative refinement that shaped the final product. After the final product has been published, this Open Educational Resource (OER) will be available for all users as means of leveraging information.

Beyond the exposure to the game itself, attendees will gain insights into managing undergraduate research projects, setting realistic expectations, and understanding the practical applications of gamification in academic initiatives. By showcasing how students can actively contribute to impactful projects, this session provides a blueprint for future educational endeavours that harness game-based learning to enhance research integrity and academic awareness.



Lamis Yahia Mohamed Elkhair, Co-director and Training Lead, African Reproducibility Network, Sudan
Emmanuel Boakye, African Reproducibility Network, Sudan

AREN's Local Network Leads Training program: Building Open Science Champions Across Africa

The African Reproducibility Network (AREN) is a community-led initiative dedicated to advancing Open Science across Africa through training, collaboration, and contextualized advocacy. In response to the urgent need for localised capacity building, AREN launched its Local Network Leads (LNL) Training Program, a structured, multi-level initiative designed to equip emerging Open Science leaders with the skills, resources, and support to champion open practices in their local institutions and communities.

This presentation will outline the structure and impact of the LNL Training Program, which is delivered in three progressive levels: foundational knowledge in Open Science and reproducibility (Level 1), hands-on application and tool adoption (Level 2), and training-of-trainers and leadership development (Level 3). The program has so far trained 28 African scholars across 15 African countries, including those in conflict-affected and underserved regions, and has led to the establishment of localised workshops, policy dialogues, and open educational resources in multiple languages.

Key outcomes include the development of community-led Open Science training modules, increased engagement with global infrastructures (such as OSF, Sciety, and PREReview), and the emergence of new institutional champions for reproducible research. This presentation will also reflect on the challenges of implementing Open Science training in low-resource environments and the strategies AREN has used to overcome them, including partnerships, mentorship, and regional peer support.

The talk aims to offer a practical case study of scalable, inclusive, and sustainable capacity building in Open Science. It will provide insights into how localised efforts can contribute to regional cohesion and global progress toward open and equitable research ecosystems, especially in the Arab world and broader Global South.



Menna Emam, Central Archive Supervisor & Co-founder Open Science Community Egypt, Samcrete Egypt & Open Science Community, Egypt
Batool Almarzouq, Open Science Community Saudi Arabia
Doaa Mohamed Abdelkader, Open Science Community Egypt
Salwan Abdulateef, Open Science Community, Iraq

Beyond Borders: Building Collaborative Networks for Open Science Communities in MENA

The emerging Open Science movement has enormous potential to enhance researcher awareness, implement Open Science practices, encourage innovation, and foster societal impact across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. However, realising this potential requires strong communities and strategic cross-border collaboration. This roundtable will explore the challenges and opportunities in creating and growing collaborative networks among Open Science advocates, researchers, institutions, policymakers in the MENA region, and global partners. We will address practical strategies to enhance engagement, share resources, and overcome barriers to collective action in order to strengthen the Open Science ecosystem in the region.

Key discussion points:

- What are the most prominent Open Science initiatives and communities that exist in the MENA region, and how can they be connected and scaled up?
- What are the specific challenges (e.g., policy, infrastructure, cultural, linguistic) that hinder cross-border collaboration and building Open Science communities in the MENA region?
- Which models of successful collaborative networks, both within the MENA region and beyond, can serve as sources of inspiration or development?
- How can digital platforms and tools be effectively employed to enhance communication, share resources, and support collaborative projects among distributed Open Science communities?
- What roles can international organisations, funding bodies, and established Open Science communities play in supporting and integrating existing initiatives in the MENA region?
- What practical steps can participants take after the conference to help build and strengthen these collaborative networks?



Fiona Glasgow, Scholarly Communications Librarian, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Building Research Impact Literacy Through Open Educational Resources: The AUS Research Impact Challenge

The Research Impact module series at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) is an open educational resource (OER) developed to help researchers strengthen their scholarly visibility and understand how to increase the impact of their work. Covering topics such as scholarly profiles, online networking, artificial intelligence (AI) tools, metrics, and Open Access publishing, the modules offer practical, accessible guidance for researchers at various career stages.

To increase engagement, AUS delivers the series each year through the Research Impact Challenge. This is an interactive event that encourages faculty, staff, and students to explore the modules over a 2-week period. While the Challenge format boosts participation, the module content remains openly available throughout the year under a CC-BY license, allowing other institutions to reuse and adapt it to their own contexts. This presentation will share AUS's experience designing and delivering the module series and the Challenge. It will highlight lessons learned in promoting Open Access practices, the responsible use of research metrics, and scholarly communication strategies. It will also discuss implementation challenges such as platform limitations and academic calendar constraints, and offer reflections on how this approach could support similar capacity-building efforts at other institutions in the region.



Samir Hachani, Professor at University of Algiers, Algeria

Open Access in the Arab World: A Wealth in Programs and a Dearth in Cooperation

Open Access is a revolution in the way knowledge is shared. Originating and starting at the end of the 20th century and having seen a frank takeoff at the beginning of the 21st century, it has “freed” a substantial chunk of research in the paper-based world. The Western world, where Open Access originated, has led the way with programs, initiatives, financing, etc., and the movement is part of the scholarly communication landscape, having been imbedded at the national level and in the academic system.

The Arab World has not seen much developments in view of the situation. The presence of the different countries in key green and gold open access sites such as ROAR-DOAR or DOAJ-AJOL cannot be described as satisfactory, especially with a quantitative view and with regards to the economical situation of some countries. What is more appalling is the complete absence of cooperation and mutuality between countries which have more than language, culture, and geography as a common denominator. Hachani (2025) tackled the subject for North Africa and concluded there was a complete lack of cooperation. This presentation will try to examine the statistics pertaining to the Arab World, the most relevant experiences and, more importantly, the prospects for cooperation-mutualisation, in order to have a unified policy showcasing what is produced at the local, regional, and Arab levels. Events such as the annual Arab Federation for Libraries and Information(AFLI) conference could serve as a rallying point to make Open Access in the Arab world a tool that can effectively encourage cooperation between its community of researchers.

Jamel Henchiri, Professor, RED-ISGG Laboratory, Tunisia

Feedback from the Journal of Academic Finance: Fifteen years of Sustainable Publication Practice

Our proposal aims to promote the visibility of Arab scientific work by adopting Open Science practices. We will focus on the dissemination of scientific products and research data, international collaboration, and raising awareness, based on a practical case study of publication.

This paper presents an analytical overview and feedback from over 15 years (2010–2024) of the practice of publishing a Tunisian scientific journal, particularly the actions undertaken and to be undertaken in order to identify levers for improving the impact of published scientific work and how to activate them.



Dr Zeina Hojeij, Associate Professor, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates

Building Cohesive Open Science Communities in the United Arab Emirates

The UAE's diverse higher education ecosystem presents unique opportunities and challenges for building cohesive Open Science communities. Despite significant investments in research infrastructure and a national commitment to innovation, institutional silos continue to impede the collaborative potential necessary for Open Science to flourish. This presentation examines practical strategies for developing sustainable cross-institutional Open Science communities within the UAE context. The presentation will analyse the structural, cultural, and policy barriers that currently fragment Open Science efforts across UAE institutions, including competing institutional priorities, varied technological infrastructures, and misaligned incentive systems. Using case studies from successful cross-institutional initiatives at Zayed University's College of Interdisciplinary Studies, I will demonstrate how strategic leadership approaches can overcome these barriers and create productive collaborative networks. Particular attention will be given to multilingual and multicultural considerations essential for inclusive community building in the UAE's internationally diverse academic environment. The presentation will outline a comprehensive framework for establishing cross-institutional Open Science communities, including governance models, digital infrastructure requirements, engagement strategies for researchers at different career stages, and metrics for evaluating community health and productivity. Beyond theoretical frameworks, this presentation offers practical, actionable recommendations for institutional leaders, faculty members, and policymakers seeking to strengthen Open Science collaboration. These include specific approaches to developing formal institutional agreements that facilitate rather than hinder collaboration, strategies for aligning Open Science communities with national research priorities, and methods for sustaining these communities through funding cycles and leadership changes.



Dr Kira Hopkins, Scholarly Publishing Outreach Officer, Copim Open Book Futures
Lucy Barnes, Open Book Publishers

Advancing Open Access Books Through Community-Driven Collaboration

Over the last 6 years, the Copim community has been building open, community-led models and infrastructures to support Open Access book publishing, focusing particularly on smaller and medium-sized universities, scholar-led presses, and smaller commercial publishers. This presentation will give an overview of our history as an international partnership between Open Access book publishers, libraries, universities, and infrastructure providers, and provide insights into our community-based approach. Following the principle of 'scaling small' (Adema and Moore, 2021), we seek to develop capacity for Open Access book publishing by developing collaborative relationships between different actors in academic publishing, including publishers, librarians, academics, and infrastructure providers, in order to lower the barriers that inhibit the publication of Open Access books.

Our infrastructures — including the Open Book Collective (OBC) supports a collective funding model to fund Open Access books without relying on author fees, and Thoth Open Metadata, which offers free and low-cost services to help publishers disseminate and archive their Open Access books effectively — have been developed as a collaboration between these stakeholders. They are non-profit and led by the communities they serve. The OBC in particular has carefully developed a model that enables anyone involved, whether as a publisher or a library funder, to have a meaningful say in its governance. In this presentation we will explore why community-led approaches, rooted in their local contexts and connected to a broader international landscape by collaborative, mutually supportive, and sustaining relationships, can power growth in Open Access book publishing that does not rely on extractive financial relationships with a small number of global players.

Until now, our efforts have primarily concentrated on Europe and North America. However, in recent years, we have established strong collaborations with organisations in Latin America and Africa. Through this presentation, we aim to create new opportunities for building meaningful partnerships in the Arab region.



Amina Itani, Librarian, Australia

A Call to Action: Reimagining Open Education and Research Pathways for Displaced Students and Scholars in the MENA Region

In the context of unprecedented regional conflict and displacement, millions of students and researchers from war-affected zones across the Middle East face severe disruptions to their education. Despite a growing global movement toward Open Science and Open Education, displaced scholars remain underrepresented in international discourse and often lack access to even the most basic educational infrastructures. This paper issues a call to action to the Open Research community to build intentional, inclusive systems that address not only access, but context, language, digital equity, and trauma. Drawing on practical insights from ongoing education access programs in the Middle East, the paper outlines models that combine open educational resources (OER), foundational bridging programs, and low-tech delivery platforms. The author highlights examples of refugee-led knowledge production and explores how Open Science can empower not just learners, but future faculty and researchers who have been forcibly displaced. By shifting the narrative from aid to agency, the paper proposes a multi-level engagement strategy between universities, publishers, non-governmental organisations, and governments that centres the needs and voices of displaced scholars.



Dr Muhamad Jumaa, Faculty at Jumeira University, United Arab Emirates

Open Finance: Building Collaborative Ecosystems for Economic Development in the Arab World

This presentation delves into the significant role that “Open Finance” could play in transforming the Arab world. It highlights how providing open access to financial data, tools, and platforms can drive economic growth and foster collaboration within communities. The central argument is that adopting open financial practices is essential for advancing transparency, spurring innovation, and ensuring inclusivity across the region's financial systems.

Key discussion topics include:

Open Data for Financial Inclusion: Exploring how open access to financial data can boost financial literacy, expand credit access, and empower underrepresented communities.

Real-world examples of successful Open Data initiatives from other regions will be shared, along with insights on how they might be adapted for the Arab world.

Collaborative Fintech Innovation: Examining how open application programming interfaces (APIs) and Open Source platforms encourage innovation and collaboration among startups, financial institutions, and academics. The discussion will spotlight the potential of Open Finance in creating customised financial solutions tailored to the Arab market.

Sustainable Investment and Impact Finance: Considering how open financial data and standardised reporting can improve transparency and accountability in sustainable investments. The potential for developing open platforms to track ESG (environmental, social, and governance) performance in the Arab region will also be explored.

Building Open Financial Communities: Highlighting the need to establish networks and platforms that enable financial professionals, researchers, and policymakers to collaborate, exchange knowledge, and innovate. Strategies for fostering vibrant, open financial communities will also be discussed.



Sherif Kamal, Chief Operations Officer, Tawasul, Egypt

Localising Open Science Practices in Clinical Research: A Capacity-Building Framework for the Arab Region

In response to the urgent need for regional relevance in Open Science, this presentation introduces a structured, culturally contextualised capacity-building framework aimed at empowering clinical researchers, pharmacists, and data professionals across the Arab world. The framework focuses on localising Open Science practices, including data management, publishing standards, and ethical considerations, to align with regional infrastructures, languages, and healthcare systems.

Drawing from hands-on training programs and collaborative research networks established in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, this session will detail:

- The design and delivery of locally adapted training curricula in FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) data management, Open Source research tools, and responsible use of artificial intelligence in clinical research
- Strategies for overcoming barriers to open data sharing, including regulatory gaps, digital access issues, and lack of institutional policy
- Development of bilingual toolkits, region-specific case studies, and a peer mentorship model to foster sustainable capacity building
- Implementation of knowledge-sharing platforms to promote regional collaboration and dissemination of best practices

By centring on localisation, this initiative ensures that Open Science is not just adopted but meaningfully integrated into regional health research workflows. The session will conclude with actionable recommendations to strengthen institutional readiness and policy support for Open Research ecosystems in the Arab world.



Dr Mustafa Kayyali, Maaref University of Applied Sciences, Syria

From ORCID and ROR to DOIs and Open Citations: Building Impact on a Budget

Many MENA universities can build credible impact tracking without expensive tools. This session shows how to connect ORCID (people), ROR (institutions), and DOIs (articles, data, preprints) with open citations to create low-cost, reproducible dashboards. We demonstrate Open Access-type classification (Gold, Green, Hybrid, Diamond, Bronze), rights-retention and repository signals, and map spend (APCs, Subscribe-to-Open, Diamond) to create real reach.

Objectives:

- Configure an identifier-first pipeline linking ORCID, ROR, and DOIs to open citation sources.
- Auto-classify outputs by Open Access type and monitor embargo/license compliance and repository deposits.
- Build a minimal, leadership-ready dashboard using Open Data and free tools.
- Overlay costs (APCs, transformative agreements, S2O, Diamond) with reach/impact to guide spending.
- Produce a 12-week rollout plan covering governance, staffing, training, and Arabic/English metadata standards.
- Draft a one-page rights-retention/Green OA policy and adoption checklist.

Expected Impact:

- Cleaner attribution and discoverability via ROR/ORCID hygiene and fewer duplicate or misassigned outputs.
- Lower analytics spend by relying on Open Infrastructures, freeing budget for Diamond/S2O/community models.
- Evidence-based Open Access compliance reporting for funders and ministries, delivered faster and with fewer manual steps.
- Stronger campus engagement through transparent departmental scorecards and targeted training.
- Scalable, country-level reporting made feasible through standardised identifiers and interoperable metadata.



Rosalie Lack, Coordinator, Global Sustainability Coalition for Open Science Services (SCOSS), United States of America
Dr. Alwaleed K. Alkhaja, Head of Open and Copyright, Qatar National Library, Qatar
Dr. Mohamed Boufarss, Assessment and User Experience Librarian, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates
Kamel Belhamel, Ambassador and Managing Editor for North Africa and Middle East, Directory of Open Access Journals

Unlocking Open Science: Why Open Infrastructure Matters for the Arab World

Open Science (built on Open Infrastructure) expands research reach to broader audiences while allowing researchers and institutions to retain control over their knowledge and outputs. It provides the foundation for rigorous, reproducible, and trustworthy science. In this session, participants will learn how the Arab world can build a resilient future for Open Science infrastructure.

The speakers represent different facets of the Open Infrastructure ecosystem, and discuss what they are and why they are important. There will be a presentation of the Global Sustainability Coalition for Open Science Services (SCOSS) as a successful model for coordinated, community-driven investment. A researcher will provide insights into the evolving landscape of Open Access and infrastructure development across the Arab world. The session will also feature the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), a SCOSS-endorsed Open Infrastructure, highlighting how collective support has strengthened its services and expanded its global reach to publishers and researchers alike.

This session invites participants to consider Open Infrastructure as a strategic commitment based on the values of equity, transparency, and shared governance. This approach is essential for fostering a resilient research ecosystem and establishing the Arab world as a proactive architect of tomorrow's scholarly communication landscape.

Participants will explore practical methods for fostering collaboration, securing sustainable funding, and mobilising collective action. The aim is to ensure that Open Science initiatives are based on sustainable, community-led infrastructures that prioritise inclusivity, autonomy, and long-term societal impact.



Veronique Lecat, Cataloging and Metadata Librarian, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Navigating a New Copyright Environment: Localising Open Access and Licensing Practices in the United Arab Emirates

For many years, academic librarians in the United Arab Emirates operated under broad interpretations of copyright, loosely based on international norms such as fair use and fair dealing. When the UAE's copyright law was updated in 2021, its implications were not immediately clear. One notable provision was the establishment of a Reprographic Rights Organisation (RRO), namely the Emirates Reprographic Rights Management Association (ERRA), tasked with protecting copyright and related rights and working with institutions to support compliance.

This session offers a brief case study of how our institution's understanding of copyright has shifted in response to these changes. It will highlight how the current legal environment has increased the relevance of Open Access publishing and Creative Commons (CC) licensing as tools for authors seeking to make their work openly available. As CC licenses operate within any copyright framework, they offer a flexible alternative in contexts where statutory exceptions may be limited.

I will also share our efforts at the American University of Sharjah to raise awareness and build support among faculty, including updated copyright guides, Creative Commons workshops, and targeted outreach initiatives. This presentation aims to provide a practical example of how institutions can navigate shifting copyright landscapes while promoting openness and compliance.



**Sarah Lippincott, Senior Researcher, Invest in Open Infrastructure (IOI),
United States of America**

The Cost of Public Access: Do We Get What We Pay for?

Free and immediate access to the results of taxpayer-funded research has gained widespread support from governments around the world over the last several decades. Public access policies, memoranda, and guidance have proliferated, promising to make science more transparent, equitable, and collaborative.

While these policies have garnered widespread praise for their potential to transform research culture, they also raise important questions about resources. Who pays for implementation? What happens when policies mandate Open Access without providing funding mechanisms?

Invest in Open Infrastructure (IOI), an organisation committed to advancing the investment in and adoption of Open Infrastructure, has been closely monitoring the effects of public access policies on research and infrastructure organisations.

Drawing on perspectives from stakeholders in North America, Latin America, and Europe based on their experience implementing such policies, as well as findings from a National Science Foundation funded project on public access compliance workflows in US universities, this presentation will explore the various costs involved and identify opportunities to invest in these areas to promote public access and advance Open Research principles. As reported in IOI's State of Open Infrastructure Report 2025, this presentation will identify factors that compromise public access policies globally as levers of change and opportunities for funders and institutions to build on the momentum that public access policies create.



Nicole Mulaku, Program Officer, Library and Consortia, Training Centre in Communication (TCC Africa)

Raed Al-Zoubi, Jordan University of Science & Technology

Yousef Torman, Arab Scientific Research & Education Network

Community Building and Engagement in Open Science Across Africa and the Arab States

Open Access has acted as a powerful catalyst for scholarly publishing in the Middle East, resulting in the launch of numerous new journals embedded in the region. These journals do more than just disseminate research; they serve as hubs for scholarly exchange, helping to build vibrant academic communities that influence scholarship itself.

This presentation explores how collaborative Open Access journals are actively fostering such communities in the Middle East, using two key examples: المركز: مجلة الدراسات العربية [Al-Markaz: Majallat al-Dirāsāt al-‘Arabiyya, MRKZ] and مجلة اللغويات التطبيقية [Applied Linguistics Journal, ALJ].

Both journals are Diamond Open Access, meaning they are free to read and publish in, and are published in partnership with De Gruyter Brill. But how does a journal evolve from an idea into a platform? And how can one develop such a new journal and ensure that it drives academic engagement and contributes to new developments within its subject field? Professors Chokri Mabkhout (ALJ) and Bilal Orfali (MRKZ) will share their experiences in developing these journals and building engaged scholarly communities.

The impact is clear: Open Access articles in these journals are downloaded up to ten times more frequently than traditional publications, with significant engagement in the MENA region. Arabic-language scholarship, in particular, is reaching broader audiences beyond academia, including educators, students, and the general public.

By aligning publishing infrastructure with local research priorities, these journals are not just increasing access—they are helping to build sustainable ecosystems of knowledge.

This session will highlight practical examples of how multilingual, collaborative Open Access models can contribute to the creation of resilient, connected research communities in the Middle East.



Omino Nicholas, Program Officer, Africa PID Alliance Project, Training Centre in Communication, Faculty of Science Technology and Innovation, University of Nairobi, Kenya
Nabil Ksibi, Nexus Synergy

Community Building and Engagement in Open Science Across Africa and the Arab States

As the global movement for Open Science expands, it is increasingly clear that the infrastructures enabling Open Research must reflect regional priorities, cultural contexts, and sovereign ownership over knowledge. The Africa PID Alliance (APA), through its development of the Digital Object Container Identifier (DOCID™), presents an innovative approach to persistent identifiers (PID) that is tailored to the needs of universities, museums, patent registration offices, research projects, and other PID providers. DOCID™ provides a locally managed solution for assigning, managing, and preserving metadata across scholarly, cultural, and patent innovations by empowering institutions to claim sovereignty and visibility on their research output.

This session explores how DOCID™ has emerged as a tool for capacity building and localisation across Africa, and how its principles and model can be adapted or combined with initiatives in the Arab World. During the session, we will share insights from training programs and partnerships aimed at strengthening Open Infrastructure ownership. We will engage participants in discussion about the benefits of using DOCID™ PID systems that are responsive to local governance and multilingual metadata.

The Forum's theme aligns with APA's core objectives of building capacity and fostering open, equitable scholarly communication ecosystems in Africa and other regions of the Global South. APA's participation in the Forum will contribute a practical model for:

- Localisation of infrastructure to accommodate diverse knowledge systems
- Regional oversight of Open Research resources
- African originated PID development that empowers local institutions
- Strengthening institutional capacity in managing Open Research outputs

By showcasing DOCID as a homegrown infrastructure rooted in openness and equity, this session encourages cross-regional reflection on building inclusive, community-led systems that promotes the Forum's mission of "Becoming Open" in a truly global and representative way.



Dr Raha Orfali, Director of KSU Journals Unit, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia

Nasser-Eddine Rikli, King Saud University

Empowering Scholarship through Institutional Publishing: The Case of King Saud University's Scholarly Journals

Given the immense academic and research capacities of King Saud University (KSU), comprising more than 24 colleges, 120 departments, and over 50 academic societies and professional associations, it is expected that the University would maintain a comprehensive scholarly publishing ecosystem. Currently, KSU oversees the publication of 49 peer-reviewed scholarly journals covering a wide range of academic disciplines and research areas. Many of these journals are indexed in globally recognised databases, reflecting their adherence to rigorous academic and publishing standards.

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the structure, scope, and integration of these journals within the broader academic framework of KSU. It explores the organisational models, editorial governance, and strategic roles these journals play in enhancing KSU's research visibility and academic reputation. The contribution of institutional journals to advancing national development priorities, promoting interdisciplinary dialogue, and fostering a robust culture of academic publishing is also examined.

Several success stories are highlighted, showcasing journals that have achieved significant milestones, including high impact factors, international accreditation, and recognition as reference sources within their respective fields. These cases serve as evidence of the KSU's ongoing commitment to excellence in research dissemination.

In addition, the study addresses a number of persistent challenges in institutional publishing. These include ensuring quality and integrity in the peer review process, sustaining Open Access models, meeting indexing criteria, and strengthening editorial and technical capacities. The analysis also reflects on future directions, with attention to digital transformation, increased global collaboration, and the adoption of innovative publishing practices that align with emerging trends in scholarly communication.

By documenting the experiences, achievements, and lessons from KSU's scholarly publishing landscape, this study aims to highlight the strategic importance of institutional journals. It further seeks to inspire other academic institutions to invest in scholarly publishing as a fundamental pillar of their research.



**Abeer Saad, Information Specialist, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research
KISR, Kuwait**

*Strengthening Open Science in the Arab World: The Role of Institutional Repositories in
Enhancing Research Accessibility*

Open Science is essential for advancing research and innovation in the Arab world, promoting transparency, accessibility, and collaboration. Despite its potential, challenges such as limited access to scientific resources, inconsistent policies, and funding constraints continue to impede progress. Institutional digital repositories provide a practical solution to these issues by offering open access to scientific outputs, preserving research data, and facilitating knowledge sharing.

This paper examines the KISR Digital Repository (KDR) as a case study, emphasising its impact on enhancing research accessibility at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). The repository functions as a centralised platform for storing and disseminating diverse research outputs, including publications, patents, GIS maps, and multimedia resources. Key topics explored include:

- The role of the KISR Digital Repository in advancing Open Science and promoting collaboration
- Challenges in repository management, including metadata structuring, sustainability, and interoperability
- Policy recommendations for integrating institutional repositories into broader regional Open Access frameworks
- The integration of AI in repository management to automate metadata processing, improve content categorisation, and enhance searchability.

By analysing the development and management of the KISR Digital Repository, this paper provides insights into how institutional repositories can support Open Science initiatives. It offers practical recommendations on leveraging AI to improve repository efficiency, maintain metadata accuracy, and foster long-term sustainability. The findings aim to encourage other institutions in the Arab region to adopt similar strategies for enhancing research accessibility and collaboration.



**Fatma Said, Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics, Zayed University,
United Arab Emirates**

*From Passive Subjects to Active Partners: Democratising Research Through Public Participation
and Localised Capacity Building for Gulf Knowledge Economies*

The transition to a knowledge-based economy in the United Arab Emirates and Gulf region necessitates reimagining research capacity building through localised, inclusive frameworks that position the general public as central stakeholders. This paper argues for democratising open science by embedding community participation in research design, execution, and dissemination, fostering societal ownership of scientific inquiry and aligning with national visions such as UAE Vision 2031 and 2071.

Current capacity-building initiatives often prioritise technoscientific paradigms, perpetuating top-down knowledge hierarchies and marginalising local epistemologies. To counter this, we propose a model where community leaders drawn from diverse social, cultural, and professional backgrounds act as liaisons, translating research objectives into culturally resonant narratives and recruiting participants through trust-based networks. These leaders exemplify the transformative potential of research, bridging gaps between academia and the public. Localised training workshops and accessible information sessions in Arabic and other dominant languages further equip communities with the skills to engage in research, fostering a participatory culture that values lived experiences as critical data sources.

Ethical transparency and reciprocal communication are foundational. Research must prioritise transparent, jargon-free dissemination via newspapers, blogs, and institutional platforms, ensuring participants see their contributions reflected in outcomes. Funding bodies should mandate Open Access publication in high-impact journals (Q1/Q2), amplifying reach while addressing the UAE's current efforts to adopt clear Open Access policies. This approach enhances research accessibility and empowers communities to address localised social challenges, from environmental sustainability to urban development, themes central to initiatives like the Mubadala Arabian Centre for Climate and Environmental Sciences.

By centering the public as co-creators of knowledge, this model advances cognitive justice, recognising diverse ways of knowing as vital to solving complex societal issues. It aligns with regional efforts, such as the Forum for Open Research in MENA (FORM), which emphasises grassroots advocacy and policy reform to build equitable research ecosystems. Ultimately, democratising research fosters a virtuous cycle: informed publics drive demand for impactful science, reinforcing the UAE's strategic goals of innovation and global leadership in the transition to post-oil economies.



Maryam Sayab, Director of Communication, Asian Council of Science Editors, United Arab Emirates

The Challenge of Equitable Open Access in the Arab World: Bridging the Gap Through Localised Capacity Building

The equitable implementation of Open Access within the Arab world presents a complex challenge, characterised by significant disparities in access to publishing platforms, resources, and infrastructure. This presentation analyses the systemic factors contributing to these inequities, including variations in funding models, digital literacy levels, and institutional Open Access policies. Drawing upon expert insights into scholarly communication and regional research ecosystems, we will examine the critical role of localised capacity building as a strategic intervention. We propose that tailored training programs, culturally contextualised resources, and collaborative initiatives are essential for empowering local stakeholders and fostering sustainable Open Access ecosystems. This session will offer a critical assessment of existing challenges and propose actionable strategies for bridging the observed gaps, thereby promoting inclusivity and enhancing scientific collaboration across the Arab region. The discussion will emphasise the need for a significant, context-aware approach to Open Access implementation, informed by regional expertise grounded in practical solutions.

Dr Farah Sbeity, Assistant Professor, Lebanese University, Lebanon

Investing in Open Science in Arab Public Universities: A Survey Study of the Views of Heads of Library and Information Science Departments in the MENA Region

Amid the global shift towards adopting Open Science practices, there is a growing need to understand the readiness of public universities in the Arab world to invest in this field. This study aims to explore the perspectives of heads of Library and Information Science departments at public universities across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region regarding the current state, challenges, and opportunities of institutional investment in Open Science. It adopts a survey methodology using an online questionnaire directed at department heads. It addresses several key themes, including institutional policies, digital infrastructure, funding, capacity building, and the role of academic departments in supporting Open Science initiatives.

The research seeks to present a comprehensive overview of current trends, identify gaps, and propose practical recommendations to promote sustainable investment in Open Science within Arab public universities. This study offers a valuable contribution towards building a shared regional understanding of the future of open science in the Arab world and supports efforts to establish an open and collaborative knowledge society.



Touria Slimani, Librarian, National Center for Scientific and Technical Research, Morocco

Samira Nait Ajjou, National Center for Scientific and Technical Research, Morocco

Towards Building Effective Community Engagement to Support Open Science in Morocco

Since the adoption of the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science in 2021, Morocco has shown strong commitment to its implementation, integrating it into national action plans, particularly those led by the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation. While this commitment is clearly visible at the institutional and governmental levels, a noticeable gap remains at the societal level. The broader momentum that this global shift towards Open Science demands across sectors, disciplines, and communities has not yet been fully mirrored within the public sphere.

This presentation aims to shed light on the role of Moroccan librarians and information specialists in raising awareness of Open Science. It explores their level of readiness, familiarity with the core principles of Open Science, and the key challenges they face in contributing meaningfully to its advancement in the country.

The presentation will also introduce a new initiative currently under development: the Moroccan Open Science Community. Inspired by similar national and local groups supported by the International Network of Open Science Communities, this initiative seeks to foster a culture of Open Science in Morocco. It aspires to promote awareness, encourage active engagement from all stakeholders, and complement the institutional efforts already underway.



Nadia Smaili, Lecturer at Khemis Miliana University, Algeria

Governance Strategies for Institutional Repositories: Analysis and Recommendations for Algerian Universities

Governance of Digital Repositories in Academic Institutions is a critical aspect that ensures the effective management, preservation, and dissemination of digital resources. These repositories often contain a wide range of scholarly materials, including research papers, theses, datasets, and multimedia content. Robust governance is essential to safeguard the integrity, accessibility, and long-term sustainability of these digital assets. This presentation reviews governance strategies for digital repositories and provides an in-depth analysis with targeted recommendations for Algerian universities. First, it outlines the theoretical framework for repository governance, emphasising the importance of equitable access to digital resources. It then explores the key challenges facing university repositories in Algeria. It also includes an analysis of global best practices in the governance of digital repositories, with a particular focus on how such practices can be adapted to the context of Algerian universities. Specific recommendations are offered to improve technological infrastructure and to develop clear policies that ensure ethical and legal use of digital content. Finally, the presentation highlights the importance of strategic partnerships between Algerian universities and international academic institutions for the exchange of expertise and resources. By adopting effective governance strategies, Algerian universities can enhance their research capabilities and improve the quality of higher education.



Seyed Mahdi Taheri, Associate Professor, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran

Linked Open Data in Iran: Sharing an Experience

The aim of this paper was to share the Iranian experience in transitioning toward Linked Open Data (LOD) technologies and network. This study was conducted using a systematic-analytical approach. The required data was gathered from linked Open Data projects and best practices. The results revealed that Iran has significant datasets and data repositories. The Iranian government has focused on integrating and unifying these datasets as a national program. To support this, a series of regulations and policies have been established to facilitate the implementation of LOD. The government encourages data-producing organisations such as libraries, archives, museums and, other data centers in health and industry to participate in creating core datasets and LOD repositories. Due to the large volume of data and the need for data management, significant attention has been paid to metadata quality, validation, and enrichment. In this regard, structured descriptions have been used within metadata at the values level. Furthermore, suitable tools such as ontologies, authorities, Vocabulary Encoding Schemes (VESs), localised data models, metadata application profiles, and translation of international standards (e.g., RDA, schema.org, etc.), have been developed in Iranian NGOs and governmental institutes. All these efforts have provided proper theoretical and technical foundations for sharing knowledge and developing tools and software related to linked open data in Iran. For instance, from an infrastructural perspective, an appropriate platform for creating linked data-based systems has been developed in Iran. This system called Knowledge Discovery and Representation (KDR), is a multi-ontological and integrated system for knowledge discovery and management of all kind of data entities, with a context-oriented approach and modular architecture. It ensures consistency in data description and, given its high flexibility, various organizations can use it for data management. This leads to structured data and coherence in data openness. The large volume of structured data and appropriate tools produced in Iranian data and service providers, facilitates opportunities for inter-country collaboration with the Arab world, other MENA countries, and in international level.



Miriam Walpot, Chair of INOSC and Data Steward at Uppsala University, Sweden

The Power of Open Science Communities

The norms and practices in academia are shifting towards Open Science. This shift is an ongoing process and involves universities, research funders, public administration and publishers, across the globe. There is no doubt that Open Science is the way forward. The question is, how?

The transition towards making Open Science the norm can be conceptualised via 5 interventions: infrastructure, user experience, communities, incentives, and policy. Communities are a part of making Open Science normative and something that not only concerns a small number of early adopters but a majority of researchers. We believe that the research community itself is best suited to lead change as those who put Open Science to practice. That is why local bottom-up Open Science Communities are crucial in this transition. These OSCs are places where academia and society meet, interact, and co-create. Besides that, OSCs can interact with institutional stakeholders on policy, infrastructure and support. Practical ideas about how to start-up your own community will be addressed as well.



John Willinsky, Founder of the Public Knowledge Project
Urooj Nizami, Associate Director for Community Engagement and Outreach, the Public Knowledge Project at Simon Fraser University

PKP Does not Just Believe in Open—It Builds It. Now It Needs Your Support

For over 25 years, the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) has developed free and Open Source software to support a more just scholarly publishing ecosystem. Our flagship platform, Open Journal Systems (OJS), is now used by over 55,000 journals across 150 countries, publishing in 60 languages. That's more than double the number of journals using OJS in 2020.

This widespread adoption reflects PKP's commitment to bibliodiversity: Amplifying local research in local languages, particularly from the Global South. With over 9 million articles published, OJS is helping shift the center of scholarly communication toward a more multilingual, decentralised, sustainable, and inclusive future.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), over 1,000 journals are using OJS, with numbers growing. For example, Iraq has 287 journals using OJS today, more than double what it was 4 years ago. Morocco's 148 journals are up from 86 titles 4 years ago, while Iran's 124 journals have increased by 36 titles in that time.

Despite this global and MENA impact and growth, PKP and the broader Open Infrastructure community face an urgent challenge. We need to diversify and broaden our support from among libraries and other supporters to keep up with these global developments.

The funding landscape is shifting: Many of our core library supporters are navigating budget constraints and re-evaluating memberships. PKP now operates alongside a growing number of initiatives competing for limited attention and resources. At the same time, demand for our platforms continues to rise.

In this session, we will share insights from OJS adoption across MENA and invite participants into a broader discussion on how best to sustain and diversify Open Infrastructure support. We'll explore together ways to invest, however modestly, in shared, community-owned tools like OJS that are critical to building the resilient, inclusive diamond Open Access future.



Dr Alicia Wise, Executive Director, CLOCKSS, United Kingdom

Preserving Access: Building Open Science Resilience Through Collaborative Archiving

As Open Science gains momentum across the Arab world, the need for sustainable, long-term access to scholarly content becomes critical. CLOCKSS, a not-for-profit, community-governed digital archive, ensures that both Open Access and subscription-based scholarly publications remain available in perpetuity, regardless of financial, technological, or political challenges. This paper will explore how digital preservation infrastructure underpins resilient and inclusive Open Science ecosystems. It will highlight how CLOCKSS collaborates globally and how it can strengthen local capacity and ownership in the Arab region. Importantly, we will share regional case studies of CLOCKSS partnerships with publishers and institutions in Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, and Qatar, showcasing how preservation efforts actively support access and safeguard scholarly output in areas facing infrastructural or political vulnerability.





4th Annual Forum for Open Research

20th-23rd October | 2025

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