

NOVEMBER
2025

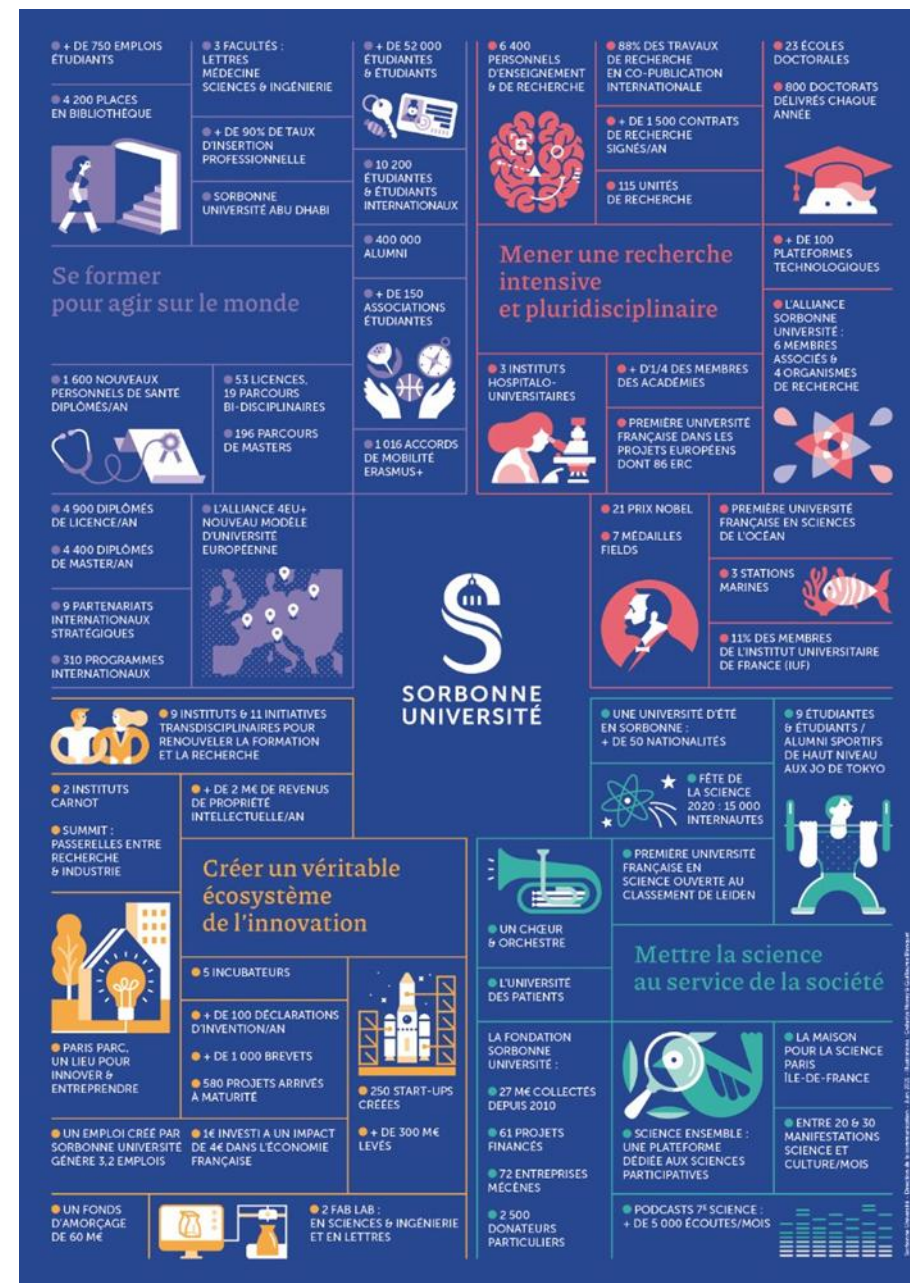
Sorbonne University & Open Research information

NICOLAS ALARCON, IN CHARGE OF THE SCIENTOMETRIC UNIT
AMÉLIE CHURCH, DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY SERVICES AT SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
PASCALE PAUPLIN, IN CHARGE OF THE OPEN ACCESS & SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT



About Sorbonne Université

- Three faculties :
Health Sciences,
Science and Engineering,
Arts & Humanities
- About 7 000 researchers, 3 000 PhD students,
- 135 research structures : lab, institutes, initiatives
- Partnership with national research organisations :
CNRS, INSERM, INRIA, IRD
- 15 000 publications a year : 14% of French
publications



A strong Open Science policy

2011 Institutional repository

2019 Open Access policy

2021 Open Data policy

2021 Policy for promoting open science activity in the internal evaluation of research

2021 Rights Retention Strategy support

2022 MOOC Open Science

2022 Signature DORA

2022 Signature COARA

2024 Barcelona Declaration

2018-2021 National Open Science Plan #1

2021-2024 National Open Science Plan #2

2022 COARA

Cancellation history since 2015

Science



Springer



nature



WEB OF SCIENCE™

1

BACKGROUND OF THE WOS CANCELLATION

PRESS RELEASE

Open Science: Sorbonne University unsubscribes from *Web of Science*

Paris, December 12, 2023

Sorbonne University has been deeply committed to the promotion and development of open science for many years. According to its commitment to open research information, it has decided to discontinue its subscription to the *Web of Science* publication database



EL PAÍS

MANUEL ANSEDE
Madrid - 16 ABR 2024 - 13:29 CEST

La universidad francesa de la Sorbona provocó un terremoto en la ciencia mundial el 8 de diciembre, cuando [anunció](#) que cancelaba su suscripción a [la Web of Science](#), una omnipresente base de datos de la multinacional londinense Clarivate que se emplea en todo el mundo para evaluar a los científicos y concederles, o no, ascensos y financiación. Cientos de millones de euros de dinero público se reparten en función de estos datos de plataformas privadas, sobre todo de la Web of Science y de [Scopus](#), una herramienta similar de la editorial holandesa Elsevier. La Sorbona y otro medio centenar de organizaciones, incluido el Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) español, han presentado este martes [la Declaración de Barcelona](#), una iniciativa para transformar radicalmente este sistema y hacerlo abierto.



ROARS
Return On Academic Research and School

HOME CHI SIAMO ARGOMENTI IDEE APPROFONDIMENTI SEGUICI ROARS IN ENGLISH SOSTIENICI

Scienza Open science

La Sorbona adotta OpenAlex e interrompe l'abbonamento a Web Of Science

Di Paola Galimberti - 28 Dicembre 2023

Sorbonne's embrace of free research platform shakes up academic publishing

Paris university's 'radical decision' to join OpenAlex challenges for-profit providers




The Sorbonne says it made the 'radical decision' in order to 'reappropriate the results of research and to be in a position to regain control and ownership of what we produce' © Loic Venance/AFP/Getty Images

Background at that time

No subscription to Scopus

Web of Science

- Only source for identifying our publications
- Also used by students and researchers

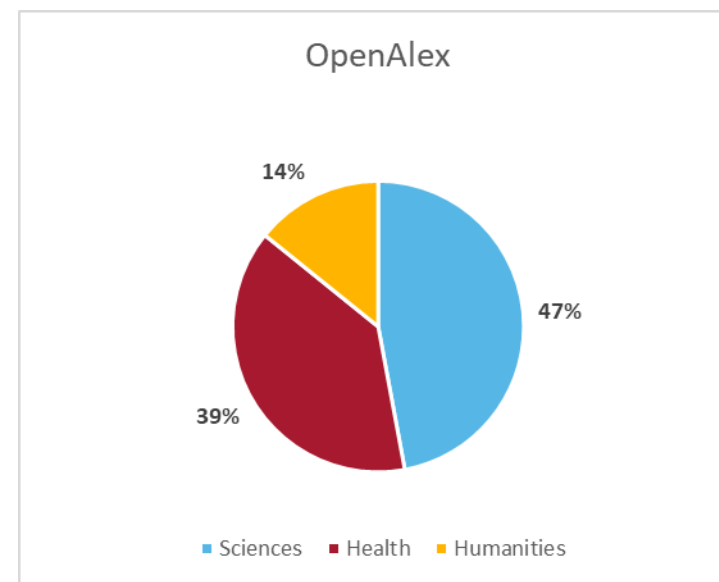
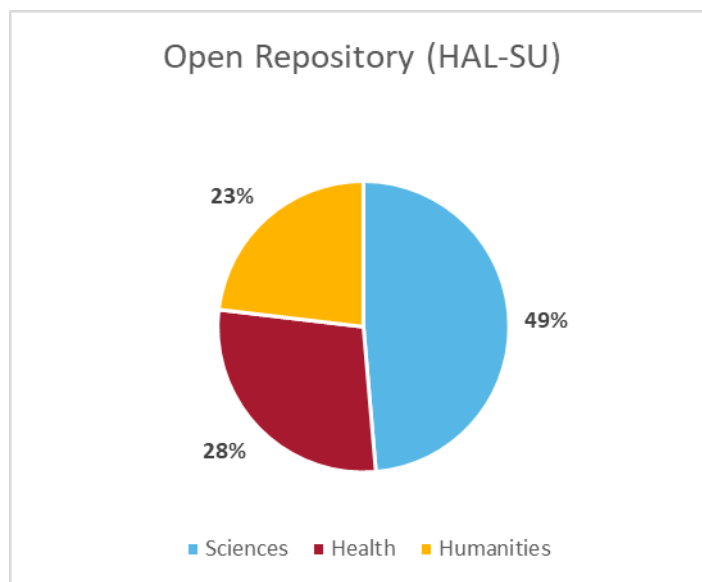
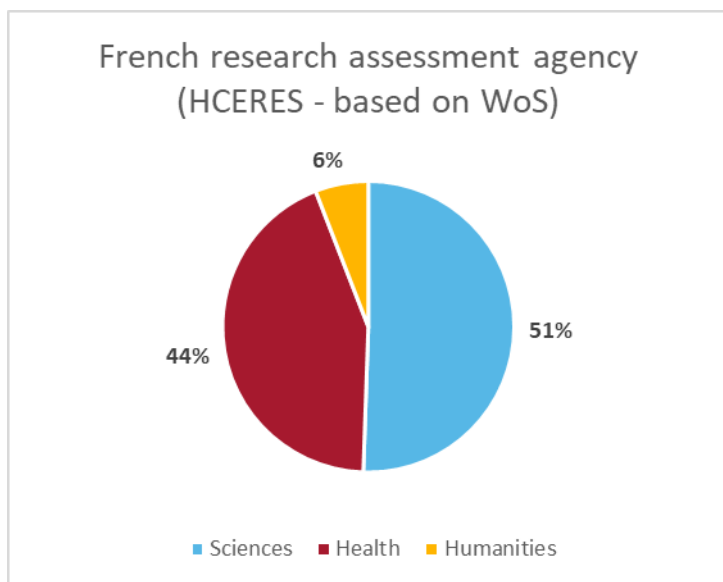


Total searches in
2023 : 222 038

2023 : Negotiations in France with Clarivate (Web of Science)

- New 3-year contract
- +1,5% per year
- No exit clause

Publications in humanities: the blind spot



Limits of proprietary tools

Poor coverage of French language publications

Poor coverage of publications that are not journal articles

Poor quality of metadata, especially affiliation metadata

Need to rethink our bibliometrics

- Using a closed and opaque tool
- Existence of an internal database very cumbersome to maintain
- Lose-lose model : investing a lot of time and effort in correcting metadata in a product we were paying

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
DOI	PY	Type Doc	LA	RP Sorbo	Faculte	UFR	
0076246		2012	Comm / Procee	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Inge
0076295	10.1109/UL	2012	Comm / Procee	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Inge
0076163		2012	Comm / Procee	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Inge
0076230	10.1109/REV	2012	Comm / Procee	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Inge
0076334	10.1109/REV	2012	Comm / Procee	English	RP SU	Faculte des sciences	UFR Inge
0076198	10.1109/DTI	2012	Comm / Procee	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Inge
0076305	10.1109/IED	2012	Comm / Procee	English		Faculte des sciences	
0076321		2012	Comm / Procee	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Inge
0076205	10.1109/ICA	2012	Comm / Procee	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Inge
0085711	10.1103/Phy	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085681	10.1007/JHE	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085687	10.1103/Phy	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085679	10.1016/j.ph	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085686	10.1007/JHE	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085517	10.1126/scie	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085620	10.1140/epj	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085691	10.1103/Phy	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085702	10.1016/j.ph	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
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0085685	10.1007/JHE	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085544	10.1140/epj	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085684	10.1007/JHE	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085683	10.1007/JHE	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085553	10.1140/epj	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys
0085554	10.1140/epj	2012	Article	English		Faculte des sciences	UFR Phys

INTERNAL DATABASE ; SOURCE : WOS, PUBMED, ETC.

Opportunities

End of our contract with the Web of Science

Promising development of OpenAlex

CWTS Leiden Ranking Open Edition

CWTS announcing they would stop using proprietary data for its rankings and use open data

Reflexions on the future Barcelona Declaration

Timeline 2023-2024

Towards Open Research Information at SU



2

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

A carefully prepared decision

Open science advisor

- Raising governance awareness of issues
- Several years' work

Library

- Assessing our needs
- Assessing data
- Starting improving our data in OpenAlex

Cancellation : a political decision

Governance took a collegiate decision (November)

President

Vice presidents

Deans of the 3
Faculty

Research committee endorsed the decision (December)

Researchers and
professors
(elected members)

Library, engineering,
administrative,
technical staff
(elected members)

Students
(elected members)

Communication

Communication elements

- Cancellation decision (**access end date**)
- **Context** of the decision (negotiation)
- **Limitations** of private publishers' tools (why cancellation?)
- **Alternatives** to the use of WOS as a bibliographic database and journal identification tool
- **Actions implemented by the library** (work on metadata)
- **Leverages for action by the community** (signature, HAL repositories, use of PIDs)
- **Contact** address



Service
provider

Negotiators

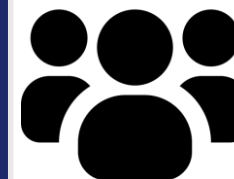
couperin.org



SORBONNE
UNIVERSITÉ

Researchers,
students

Research
communities



Literature search options left

Research tools, bibliographic monitoring, and literature reviews:

- OpenAlex (metadata for scientific publications);
- Matilda (metadata for scientific publications);
- Primo (full-text search of the university's electronic collections: ScienceDirect, Wiley, etc.);
- HAL;
- Isidore (social sciences and humanities);
- The Lens (science and technology);
- Subject-specific databases (such as Pubmed, SciFinder, etc.);
- Google Scholar.

Journal identification tools:

- Mir@bel (French tool that lists and provides access to more than 18,000 scientific journals);
- MIAR (database provided by the University of Barcelona listing nearly 50,000 scientific journals);
- ERIH PLUS (index of European social sciences and humanities journals);
- Latindex (Latin American, Spanish and Portuguese journals);
- DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals).

How did it turn out ?

Very little feedback from the community

- Using not so widespread ?
- Access maintained through other institutions in joint supervision laboratories

Impact on the working methods

- Researchers (metascience) – very small community at SU
- Scientometers

Very rapid development of OpenAlex

The comments made in early 2024 are no longer relevant today.

3

USING OPENALEX

Why choosing OpenAlex among other open databases?

Free bibliographic databases : Matilda, Dimensions, OpenAlex, OpenAire...

Needs

- Open database with ORIs commitment
- Allowing bibliometric studies (affiliation metadata, SDG mapping)
- Broad (non-selective) scope to identify the university's output

Promising development of OpenAlex

What is OpenAlex ?

Metadata with a CC0 license

Good coverage (especially SHS)

Equivalent metadata to those of the WoS

Quality of metadata dependent on OpenAlex sources (i.e. publishers most of the time)

- CrossRef
- DataCite
- Preprint and Institutional repositories (i. e. ArXiv, HAL...)

Open APIs but limited in terms of updates and calls/day

Classification based on domains, fields, subfields, topics and keywords (collaboration OpenAlex / CWTS)

OpenAlex : latest and future developments

Walden : rewriting codebase for

- Adding new works
- Better consistency (ex : with Unpaywall and on open access data)
- Better metadata (citations, language, retraction coverage, keywords, Open access data)

Working on grants

Developing a community curation

More information with Townhall :

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=_6Nt4xuN1jM

Impact on us : first steps

Learning how to use this new tool in depth

Training our community in free bibliographic databases (OpenAlex, Matilda)

Transforming our habits regarding bibliometric

Correcting OpenAlex data

- Comparing HAL / OpenAlex data
- Identifying affiliation type error (qualitative work)
- Bulk affiliation correction (quantitative work)
- Curating ROR data for Sorbonne University and its labs

Impact on us : now, on a daily basis

Curating affiliations

- With the Works Magnet
- On an annual basis

Maintaining and enriching ROR data

- When new labs
- When closing labs
- Works on the history of labs
- Enriching labels for ROR ID when needed

More attention to PIDs and their interoperability

- as a producer and as an end user
- for our benefit but also the benefit of the whole community



Participation in national and international working groups (adoption of PIDs in France, Barcelona Declaration, Cometadata)

Strengthening the bibliometers team

Hiring

- Bibliometric team leader
- Team of 2, then 3 persons and then 4...!

Why

- Developing a strategy on ORIs and on productions other than scientific publications (i.e. podcasts, interviews... = engagement with society)
- Focusing on metadata curation for the benefit of the entire community
- Project opportunities

Profiles

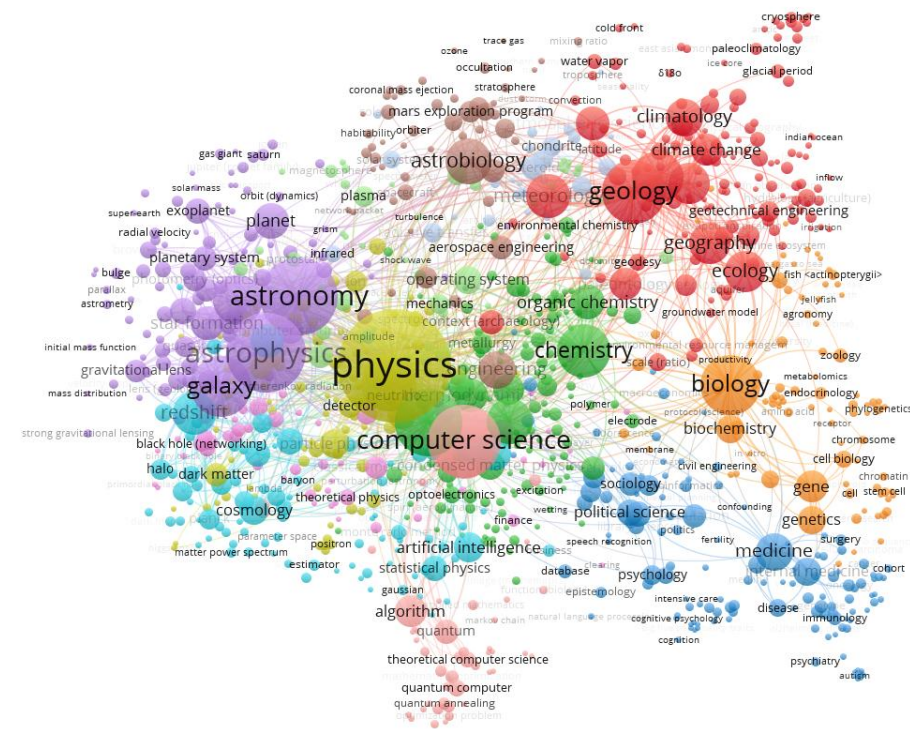
- Team leader
- Bibliometer
- Bibliometer on a specific 10-year project (SOUND project)
- Metadata quality assistant

Writing a bibliometric report using OpenAlex

The Scientometric Unit primarily produces collaboration reports between Sorbonne University and countries, university groups, or individual universities.

These analyses are included in strategic report intended for the International and European Affairs Vice-President

No individual assessment (researcher level)



Example of datavizualisation about co-occurrence network in publications co-affiliated by Sorbonne University and Brazil

Writing a bibliometric report using OpenAlex

Stages:

- Checking how the targeted institution is referenced in the ROR database
- Querying OpenAlex to download the publications corpus
- Checking the corpus (deduplication, homonymous institutions)
- Adapting/launching previous R scripts to produce quantitative indicators and data visualization
- Adding indicators from complementary sources (information from Leiden Ranking, theses, etc.)
- Formatting the report and sending it to the requester

Tips for taking the plunge

- Take stock of your bibliometric uses and user profiles
- Make a list of everything you gain or lose by abandoning your commercial bibliometric database.
- Talk to the signatories of the Barcelona Declaration near you
- Explore Openalex and compare with your current internal or external bibliographic databases
- Explore the Crossref Participation Report and the availability of metadata from your favourite publishers
- Promote ORCID within your community
- Enhance your ROR
- Support open science infrastructures

Keep in mind that the world of open research information is not perfect... but at least the work is done for everyone.

ANNEX

Barcelona Declaration

BARCELONA DECLARATION ON OPEN RESEARCH INFORMATION



Commitment 1

We will make openness the default for the research information we use and produce

BARCELONA DECLARATION ON OPEN RESEARCH INFORMATION



Commitment 2

We will work with services and systems that support and enable open research information

BARCELONA DECLARATION ON OPEN RESEARCH INFORMATION



Commitment 3

We will support the sustainability of infrastructures for open research information

BARCELONA DECLARATION ON OPEN RESEARCH INFORMATION



Commitment 4

We will support collective action to accelerate the transition to openness of research information

Barcelona Declaration WG

Working group 1 - Journal article metadata and book metadata

- Introducing openness of metadata in OA negotiations
- Expanding funding metadata to a wider distributed group of publishers

Working group 2 - Metadata for research outputs in institutional repositories, preprint repositories and data repositories

- Metadata curation in institutional repositories (survey, identify common bottlenecks and solutions, guidelines)
- Hackathon on ML marching pipelines (to detect datasets and software from full-text)

Working group 3 - Funding metadata

Working group 4 - Replacing closed systems for research information

Working group 5 - Sustaining infrastructures

Working group 6 - Evaluating open research information sources

Working group 7 - Evidence of benefits of open research information

Withdrawing from THE

Stopping sharing the data required to be included in the ranking as of 2026

- COARA : “avoiding the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment”.
- Barcelona Declaration : using open research information and supporting the services, systems and infrastructure which allow for it to be produced and shared

Rankings, in general...

- are key communication tools but not management tools
- Fail to convey the diversity and multidimensional impact of the work universities carry out