Promoting greater visibility and application of research through global networks of Open Access repositories

COAR Annual Report 2015-16

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Public Version

written by Kathleen Shearer and Katharina Müller

http://coar-repositories.org
Message from the Executive Director

It has been an eventful year since our last Annual Meeting. In April 2015, the last General Assembly took place in Porto, Portugal in conjunction with the COAR-SPARC Conference. Attendees participated in workshops and other interactive events, as well as a two-day conference that focused on issues of open access and research data management. It was a pleasure to work with the local hosts and SPARC colleagues on this event and it solidified the already close relationship between our organizations.

In October, we were delighted to welcome a new, expanded Executive Board with greater regional representation. The Board is chaired by Eloy Rodrigues. Other members include Carmen-Gloria Labbé as vice-chair, Márta Virágos as treasurer, Wolfram Horstmann, Oya Rieger, and Daisy Selemanatsela.

In terms of membership, COAR extended its outreach to Australia with two members from the region and gained a number of new members from other regions.

Promoting alignment and interoperability remained a key priority for COAR in the last year. We continued to strengthen the alignment of repository networks activities through strategic discussions, promoting the use of harmonized metadata standards, and identifying opportunities for shared services.

COAR also continued to speak out against the adoption of lengthy embargo periods by publishers. As the international voice for the repository community, it’s important to hold publishers to account in terms of their policies and practices, especially given that the vast majority of open access policies and laws require immediate deposit of papers into a repository, with embargoes of 12-months or less.

Tremendous work has also been done by the COAR Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Board to develop the “resource type” vocabulary, which applies linked data principles to make the vocabulary multilingual. The group will be working on other vocabularies in coming months. We also greatly appreciate those who have been helping to translate our website into various languages for their efforts in setting up the translation environment of the COAR website.

With direction from the Executive Board, COAR has published a new strategy for 2016-2018 and a work plan for 2016-2017. These documents outline the priority areas for COAR in the coming years, including continuing our work on interoperability, while intensifying our efforts to support local capacity building for repository managers as well as encourage the adoption of value added services like peer review.

Kathleen Shearer, Executive Director
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I Introduction

COAR is an international association with over 100 members and partners from around the world representing libraries, universities, research institutions, government funders and others. COAR brings together the repository community and major repository networks in order to build capacity, align policies and practices, and act as a global voice for the repository community.

Four strategic directions guide COAR’s activities:

1. Promote the development of a sustainable, global network of open access repositories as key elements of international research infrastructures in support of excellence in scholarship and education

2. Provide support for the OA repository community and build local capacity for the development and management of repositories and repository networks

3. Define and promote interoperability, common standards, and best practices for repositories, repository networks and with other related systems

4. Stimulate the development and adaption of value-added services repositories and repository networks
2 Programmatic Activities

COAR’s programmatic activities for 2015-2016 year are organized according to the four strategic directions.

2.1 Strategic Direction #1

Statement against Elsevier’s sharing policy

On April 30, 2015, Elsevier announced a new sharing and hosting policy for Elsevier journal articles. This policy represents a significant obstacle to the dissemination and use of research knowledge, and creates unnecessary barriers for Elsevier published authors in complying with funders’ open access policies. In addition, the policy has been adopted without any evidence that immediate sharing of articles has a negative impact on publishers’ subscriptions. In May 2015, COAR, along with SPARC NA, launched an online petition to speak out against this new policy strongly urging Elsevier to reconsider this policy and we encourage other organizations and individuals to express their opinions. The petition has gained significant support with over 3000 signatories, but has not resulted in any changes to the Elsevier policy. It does serve notice that these types of policies will not go unchallenged by the community and will hopefully deter others from implementing them.

The Hague Declaration on Knowledge Discovery in the Digital Age

COAR, along with over 50 other organisations signed The Hague Declaration on Knowledge Discovery in the Digital Age in May 2015. The declaration calls for immediate changes to intellectual property (IP) law and the removal of other barriers preventing widened and more equal access to data.

Promoting Open Knowledge and Open Science: the Current State of Repositories

In May 2015, COAR published a report that provides a high-level overview of the international repository landscape. It offers a summary of the current repository environment around the world as well as discusses the future directions for repositories. It also situates repositories as a key research infrastructure component in support of open science. This report was prepared for and submitted to the Global Research Council to raise awareness with research funders of the increasingly robust international support for OA policies via open access repository networks.
Sustainable Development Goals: The Impact of Access to Information on our Societies e-Forum

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and COAR, organised an e-forum on “Sustainable Development Goals: The Impact of Access to Information on our Societies” which took place from 7-18 September 2015. The objective of the forum was to discuss how libraries and information centers can promote the adoption of access to information as part of United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Access to information and open access are cross-cutting issues that underpin most, likely all, of the SDG’s and should be seen as a critical element for being able to achieve them. This discussion will be followed-up with some further collaborative activities as well as resources to support advocacy at the national level.

COAR Guidelines for Assessing Publisher Repository Services

In November 2015, COAR published a set of guidelines for assessing publisher repository services. The guidelines contain criteria that help repositories make decisions about whether or not to adopt the different services being offered by publishers to the repository community. They were developed in consultation with the COAR Executive Board and the Aligning Repository Networks Strategic Committee.

Statement in support of Lingua Editors

On October 27, 2015, six editors and thirty-one editorial board members of the Elsevier journal Lingua resigned in protest of Elsevier’s practices. The Lingua editors argued that the journal’s price has steadily increased year after year, far outpacing the cost of production. The editors also cited Elsevier’s refusal to transition the journal to a “fair open access” model that would charge low and transparent article processing fees for authors, while allowing authors to retain copyright to their articles. COAR joined a number of other organizations in demonstrating their public support for supporting the actions of the Lingua editors.
2.2 Strategic Direction #2

Strategic Direction #2
Provide support for the OA repository community and build capacity for the development and management of repositories and repository networks.

Research data management

COAR has been participating in international discussions around research data management through participation in the Research Data Alliance (RDA). Kathleen Shearer, COAR Executive Director is chair of two RDA groups: Libraries for Research Data and Long Tail of Research Data, along with Wolfram Horstmann, COAR Executive Board member. Much of the activities to date have focused on information sharing about RDM during RDA meetings. In August 2015, the Libraries for Research Data group organized a session at IFLA to try to raise awareness of the importance of this trend within the library community and to develop closer ties. COAR aims to increase its activities in the areas of research data management by developing a road map to assist organizations in expanding repository services to the adoption of RDM in the institutional context.

Joint Task Force on Librarians' Competencies in support of e-Research and Scholarly Communication

The Joint ARL/CARL/COAR/LIBER Task Force on Librarians’ Competencies in Support of E-Research and Scholarly Communication has been collaboratively preparing a series of librarian’s competencies profiles for research data management, scholarly communication and open access, digital humanities research and digital curation and preservation. Pascal Calarco from the University of Waterloo, Canada has taken over as chair of this group from the Iryna Kuchma. This group has not been very active this year, as members have been busy on other tasks, but they are continuing to further develop the competency profiles, several of which are very close to completion: research data management, scholarly communication, and digital humanities.
2.3 Strategic Direction #3

Strategic Direction #3
Define and promote interoperability, common standards, and best practices for repositories, repository networks and with other related systems.

Aligning Repository Networks

A major strategic priority for COAR is to align repository networks in order to create a seamless global repository network and demonstrate that repositories offer a viable solution for open access. This work is directed by a high level committee chaired by Norbert Lossau, former COAR chairman with representation from major repository networks from around the world. The activities target three levels of engagement: (1) strategic, (2) technical and semantic interoperability, and (3) services. The alignment work is being undertaken via several mechanisms including bilateral meetings and agreements between regional major networks, international working groups, and informal conversations with regions/countries not yet involved. Specific activities are described below:

- Meeting of Aligning Repository Strategic Committee: April 2015

On April 16, 2015, COAR hosted an Aligning Repository Networks meeting in Porto, Portugal. The meeting included representatives from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. Meeting delegates shared updates about their individual networks. Participants also discussed priorities for further aligning their networks for the coming year. Activities will include closer cooperation around the development of guidelines and tools, and several bilateral collaborations between different networks were proposed. In addition, it was agreed that a communication strategy be developed to raise the visibility of repositories and their networks as key infrastructure components.

Several bilateral collaborations between different networks were suggested during the meeting in order to show how repository alignment can help moving towards a global knowledge network. Concretely, it was agreed that several networks would engage bilaterally to discuss other collaborations including: Australia, UK, OpenAIRE and SHARE, and Japanese colleagues’ network led by NII.
• **OpenAIRE, SHARE and LA Referencia Meeting: July 2015**

On July 9 and 10, 2015 three major regional open access repository networks and aggregators (OpenAIRE, LA Referencia, and SHARE), along with the Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) and Center for Open Science (COS) met in Charlottesville, Virginia to discuss synergies and potential areas of collaboration. The aim of this meeting was to ensure that regional repository networks are complementary, more integrated, and working together to create a seamless global network. The meeting was very productive and revealed that the objectives, technologies and use cases for all three networks are highly aligned and that there is a strong willingness to work together. It was agreed that the networks continue to share information regularly and investigate the feasibility of adopting an agreement around data sharing.

• **LA Referencia Workshop on Interoperability**

On November 25 and 26, 2015 representatives from LA Referencia, OpenAIRE and COAR met in Rio de Janeiro to discuss the adoption of common metadata guidelines for repository networks and identify areas for further collaboration. The three organizations agreed to pursue their common vision through the following activities:

- LA Referencia and OpenAIRE will adopt common metadata practices, based on the current OpenAIRE guidelines and the vocabularies being developed in the context of COAR, for repository networks and develop these guidelines in collaboration.
- COAR, LA Referencia, and OpenAIRE will explore ways to build capacity for managing repositories and repository networks in Latin America, particularly in terms of the implementation of best practices.
- Under the auspices of COAR, LA Referencia, and OpenAIRE will continue to work with other national and regional networks to promote the vision of a global repository network and investigate common services in support of open access and open science.
• **Asian Open Access Meeting**

On March 4, 2016, the National Institute of Informatics (NII) in Japan hosted a meeting of the Asian OA Community in Tokyo, Japan. The meeting was co-organized by COAR, the Confederation of Open Access Repositories and held in conjunction with the Research Data Alliance Plenary meeting. The aim of the meeting was to introduce members of the Asian open access community from different countries, share information about activities and national contexts, and launch an Asian community of practice for open access (OA), which will facilitate greater knowledge sharing about trends and challenges. The meeting culminated in an agreement to form an Asian OA Community of Practices under the auspices of COAR.

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**COAR Controlled Vocabularies for Repositories**

Through an active, international Editorial Board, led by Jochen Schirrwagen and Imma Subirats, and including partners from the international repository community, COAR has begun to develop a series of controlled vocabularies for open access repositories. The aim of this work is to build broad international consensus around vocabulary items for open access repositories. The strategy presented here seeks to reach a consensus about specific vocabulary elements across participating repository networks, which can then be incorporated into a set of international controlled vocabularies maintained by COAR. The vocabulary supports a hierarchical model that relates narrower and broader concepts. Multilingual labels regard regional distinctions in language and term. The first vocabulary, “Resource Type” was released in draft format in July 2015 for comment by the broader community. This input was integrated into the next draft of the vocabulary, which has been published on the COAR website.

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**COAR Strategy for Metadata Harmonization**

Greater interoperability across metadata standards and guidelines will improve discovery and enable the development of more sophisticated cross-repository services such as tracking research outputs and text mining. A Working Group of representatives from various networks was formed in 2015. They began by characterizing two priority use cases and identifying the metadata elements that are required to realize those use cases. The existing schemas were then compared across the metadata elements to identify differences and commonalities in approaches. This work has been done in conjunction with CASRAI in order to begin to establish greater interoperability between repositories and...
research information systems. COAR is currently re-evaluating this work, to ensure that this is the most effective means for moving towards harmonization.

**COAR Interoperability Roadmap**

The COAR Roadmap: Future Directions for Repository Interoperability was published in early February 2015, authored by Friedrich Summann. The roadmap identifies important trends and their associated action points for the repository community and will assist COAR in identifying priority areas for our interoperability efforts in the future. COAR has done some preliminary work to raise the visibility of the roadmap with other stakeholders such as the CRIS community via EuroCRIS. EuroCRIS is interested in exploring how they can work with us to ensure greater interoperability. This document will also contribute to our discussions about next generation repositories and their necessary functionality.

**2.4 Strategic Direction #4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Direction #4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stimulate the development and adoption of value-added services for repositories and repository networks.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Usage Data and Beyond Interest Group**

A growing number of repositories seek to implement these types of metrics in order to promote and measure the use of their content to authors and research administrators. Currently, there is no comprehensive list of the range of article level metrics available for repositories. This interest group undertakes a review of existing and emerging article level metrics with the aim of identifying a common set of metrics that can be adopted across repositories, enabling the community to compare statistics across repositories. The COAR Usage Data and Beyond group, led by Daniel Beucke (Göttingen State and University Library, Germany) and Paul Needham (University of Cranfield, United Kingdom), has been sharing best practices around usage statistics and impact measures and will be preparing a paper to be published in 2016.

**Peer-Review Services**

In April 2015, COAR Executive Director, Kathleen Shearer convened a meeting with several open access experts to discuss the possibility of building peer review services on top of repositories. The meeting was sponsored by UNESCO and resulted in the development of a concept note that contains a proposal to launch a pilot for these types of services. COAR will use the concept note to raise awareness, build support and seek funding to embark on such a project sometime in 2016.
3 Other Activities

Membership

Overall membership in COAR remained stable during 2015. The geographical distribution of institutions continued to expand with two new member organizations from Australia. Other organizations from Colombia, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and USA joined during the past year. The outreach to the community and enlargement of membership continues to be at the centre of attention for COAR.

4 Governance and Operations

Executive Board

On October 1, 2015, Eloy Rodrigues from University of Minho, Portugal began as the new COAR Chair. Eloy has been an active participant in COAR since its inception in 2009 and offers a wealth of experience with repositories and open access. He is known and respected around the world and brings a valuable strategic perspective about the role of repositories in the future of scholarly communication.

Other members of the Executive Board are Carman Gloria Labbé, Vice-Chair (CLARA, Chili) and Marta Viragos, Treasurer (University of Debrecen, Hungary), Daisy Selemtsele from the National Research Foundation (South Africa), Oya Rieger from Cornell University (USA) and Wolfram Horstmann from Göttingen University Library (Germany) who will all contribute their considerable experience, knowledge and diverse outlooks to COAR.

The Executive Board takes the lead on major strategic decisions regarding the activity areas of COAR as well the overall responsibility for the organization and its finances. A focus of discussions during the past year has been to increase COAR’s funding to ensure greater sustainability and also expand efforts in other areas. These efforts involve raising the profile of COAR and actively recruiting new members, as well as identifying other external funding sources. The Executive Board meets every two-three months via teleconference with one face-to-face meeting during the COAR Annual Meeting.

COAR Strategy 2016-2018 and COAR Work plan 2016-2017

In November 2015, COAR published a refreshed Strategy and Work Plan for the coming years. For the period of 2016-2017, COAR will continue its important work in the area of aligning repositories and interoperability, while expanding activities to support local capacity building at individual institutions, modernizing repository technologies, and progressing the adoption of value added services such as peer review.

Personnel

The COAR staff is working with a double structure due to geographic disposition: As Executive Director, Kathleen Shearer is working from Montreal, Canada. The office, located in Göttingen, Germany, is led by Katharina Müller. Four persons currently work at the office, all in part time and with complementary other tasks at the hosting institutions, Göttingen State and University Library: Katharina Müller, Maxie Gottschling (on maternity leave since 02/2015), Arvid Deppe, and Kurosh Navabi.
5 COAR Annual Meeting

Participants of the COAR General Assembly

The COAR General Assembly was held in Porto, Portugal in April 2015 and presented the activities and operations of the association of the previous year and plans for the upcoming year. In addition, elections for the new Executive Board took place and the Executive Board was expanded from three to six members, reflecting the increasingly international nature of COAR with representatives from Europe, Latin America, North America and Africa.

In addition to the General Assembly, COAR co-hosted with SPARC the conference “Connecting research results, bridging communities, opening scholarship”, was a thought-provoking programme with dynamic speakers from around the world to discuss the opportunities and challenges for libraries in a world of open science and open content. It also offered a valuable opportunity for participants to make connections, and learn best practices from colleagues around the world. The conference was attended by close to a hundred participants from Asia, Africa, North and South America and Europe.

Several preconference meetings were held in advance of the conference addressing various topics including stage researchers and student community, Open access licensing, controlled vocabularies, open metrics, open educational resources, linked open data, open science training and research data management.
6 Marketing and Communications

COAR’s major outreach activities involved presentations about the work of the organizations through public reports, and presentations at conferences and meeting. The major activities are listed below:

Publications


Other


Spanish version: http://lareferencia.redclara.net/rfr/noticias/tras-reunion-en-rio-la-referencia-openaire-y-coar-reafirman-su-apoyo-una-vision-compartida-
## Conference Presentations & Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Conference/Meeting</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 April 2015</td>
<td>Meeting of e-Infrastructures Austria, Graz, Austria</td>
<td>Presentation: “COAR and Aligning Repository Networks”</td>
<td>Kathleen Shearer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11 June 2015</td>
<td>Open Repositories Conference, Indianapolis, United States</td>
<td>Presentation: “Harmonizing metadata and vocabularies for open access repositories”</td>
<td>Kathleen Shearer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11 June 2015</td>
<td>Open Repositories Conference, Indianapolis, United States</td>
<td>Poster: “COAR Interoperability Roadmap”</td>
<td>Friedrich Summann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-21 August 2015</td>
<td>IFLA Conference, Cape Town, South Africa.</td>
<td>Presentation: “Aligning Repository Networks and the National Science Foundation in Africa”.</td>
<td>Daisy Selematsela and Kathleen Shearer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8 Sep-tember 2015</td>
<td>Open Access Days 2015, Zürich, Swizerland</td>
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<td>Session: “Interoperabilität und die COAR Roadmap”</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8 Sep-tember 2015</td>
<td>Open Access Days 2015, Zürich, Switzerland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poster: “COAR Roadmap: Future Directions to Repository Interoperability”</td>
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<tr>
<td>23-26 Sep-tember 2015</td>
<td>China IR 2015, Shanghai, China</td>
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<td>Presentation: “Introduction to COAR”</td>
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<td>5-7 Oct-ober 2015</td>
<td>6ª Conferência Luso-Brasileira sobre Acesso Aberto, Salvador, Brazil.</td>
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<td>Presentation: “Open science and developing a global network of open access repositories”</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Oct-ober 2015</td>
<td>Open Access Korea 2015 conference, Seoul, South Korea</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-11 Nov-ember 2015</td>
<td>euroCRIS Strategic Membership Meeting, Barcelona, Spain</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-4 December 2015</td>
<td>El Tercer Congreso Ecuatoriano de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación 2015. Loja, Ecuador</td>
<td>Presentation: “Open science and developing a global network of open access repositories”</td>
<td>Kathleen Shearer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December 2015</td>
<td>Open Access Information Day, Red CLARA, Chile</td>
<td>Virtual Presentation: “COAR and aligning repository networks”</td>
<td>Kathleen Shearer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 February-4 March 2016</td>
<td>Research Data Alliance 6th Plenary Meeting (RDA), Tokyo, Japan</td>
<td>Meeting Leads: “Long Tail of Research Data Interest Group” and “Libraries for Research Data Interest Group”</td>
<td>Wolfram Horstmann and Kathleen Shearer</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8 March 2016</td>
<td>SPARC Meeting on Openness in Research &amp; Education (MORE) Conference, San Antonio (Texas), USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kathleen Shearer</td>
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8 Appendix: Governance bodies 2015/16

Executive Board

Front row: Oya Rieger, Eloy Rodrigues, Márta Virágos
Back row: Wolfram Horstmann, Carmen Gloria Labbé, Daisy Selematsela

Chairperson: Eloy Rodrigues, University of Minho, Portugal
Vice Chairperson: Carmen-Gloria Labbé, Cooperación Latinoamericana de Redes Avanzadas (CLARA), Chile
Treasurer: Márta Virágos, University and National Library of Debrecen, Hungary
Oya Rieger, Cornell University, United States
Daisy Selematsela, National Research Foundation, South Africa
Wolfram Horstmann, Göttingen State and University Library, Germany
Staff

Executive Director

Kathleen Shearer

Office

Arvid Deppe
Maxie Gottschling
Katharina Müller
Kourosh Navabi

Interest Group and Task Group Chairs

Controlled Vocabularies:
  Jochen Schirrwagen, Bielefeld University Library, Germany
  Imma Subirats, FAO

Usage Data and Beyond:
  Daniel Beucke, Göttingen State and University Library, Germany

Task Force on Librarians’ Competencies in Support of E-Research and Scholarly Communication:
  Pascal Calarco, Association of Research Libraries, Canada
  Iryna Kuchma, EIFL