



Scientific and Technical Information Department - CNRS

White Paper — Open Science in a Digital Republic — Strategic Guide Study Review and Proposals for Implementing the Act

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Preface

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Preface

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- 1 The French Parliament has now passed the Digital Republic Act, leading to the next, important, stage of implementation. The strong consensus that has prevailed in the world of public research until now will facilitate the drafting of implementing decrees and instructions for applying the Act. All the communities of researchers, users and beneficiaries of digital science systems (CNRS Scientific Board, ADBU, the Couperin Consortium, EPRIST, CPU, CNum, etc.) came together to support the legislative provisions that have just been successfully concluded.
- 2 These Study Review and Proposals have been designed to structure and facilitate the implementation of the Act: they therefore concur with the positions adopted by the sponsors of the White Paper *Open Science in a Digital Republic*, who all clearly wish to associate this new vision for research with practices that will enable it to become a reality.
- 3 As a supplementary report to the White Paper, these Guidelines aim to assist players in what are often complex procedures: researchers, technicians, publishers and users of the results of public science now need to move forward in the same spirit of discovery that characterises the major digital projects for science. First among these is the ISTEX Investments for the Future project, which is the driving force.
- 4 These Study Review and Proposals contain comparisons with practices in other countries, and proposals or reflections that may be useful in applying the Act. The Prime Minister has stated that the Act should come into force by the end of January 2017. The short time frame is the primary reason why the CNRS's Scientific and Technical Information Department (DIST) wished to produce this document immediately after the conclusive vote by Parliament, when, on Wednesday 28 September, the Senate adopted the Bill with a strong majority, and in terms very close to those proposed by the National Assembly.
- 5 The story of the Act's adoption by Parliament shows how a wide consensus was created, from among both the Majority and the Opposition, and within the Government, where the ministers in charge of research and the digital economy joined forces at an early stage to support text and data mining (TDM) and the free circulation of scientific

publications for research purposes: the Government and Parliament thus showed their agreement with the expectations voiced during the national consultation launched by the Prime Minister in September 2015, and subsequently underlined by the presidents of universities and research organisations.

- 6 Europe has been closely following the debate in France and has chosen to move towards greater freedom of circulation and more intensive exploration of scientific results. Now that the Act is soon to come into force in France, Europe's position is both a benchmark and a new challenge: the competitiveness of French science depends very much on this new world of Open Science initiated by Carlos Moedas, the European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation.
- 7 For all of these reasons, the CNRS feels that there are four important lessons to be drawn from these Study Review and Proposals:
 - **Act in a comprehensive manner:** Legal, scientific and technical considerations interact in many ways and must all be taken into account, often in a manner specific to each ecosystem in the world of research. Precise systemic analyses will help avoid excessively vertical or formal approaches, taking advantage of examples from other countries as a matter of course.
 - **Act like a European player:** France now has a dynamic relationship on these issues with the European Commission, where French experience is acknowledged. We need to closely follow the ongoing projects to review European directives; these will provide road maps for the key digital infrastructures that will stimulate the competitiveness of research in the EU.
 - **Make sure that the different provisions of the Act can be used jointly in an optimal way:** The free provision of public data, the free sharing of scientific publications and text and data mining are three inseparable approaches that should be clearly visible to all researchers, users and beneficiaries of public research.
 - **Launch an experimental phase:** There is no denying the importance and the scale of the changes emerging in the digital organisation of scientific work, just as we must not underestimate the complexity of the interactions that are going to occur in the digital system for scientific and technical information (STI). It seems necessary to experiment, assess the new formulae and not declare them to be set in stone from the outset. This task will no doubt require writing progress reports at each step.
- 8 The new science of digital knowledge engineering continues to undergo huge changes. An effort to catch up is under way: it will lead to a new level of competitiveness for research, a step that has already been anticipated by the major universities that are pioneers in the field, grouped together in the League of European Research Universities (LERU).
- 9 These are the key ideas behind these Study Review and Proposals, which are designed to provide assistance with the implementation of this founding legislation for the work of science and the sharing of STI.

The signatories of the White Paper *Open Science in a Digital Republic* (reminder):

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