

Automating depositing research to the institutional repository and reshaping the 'call to action' for authors

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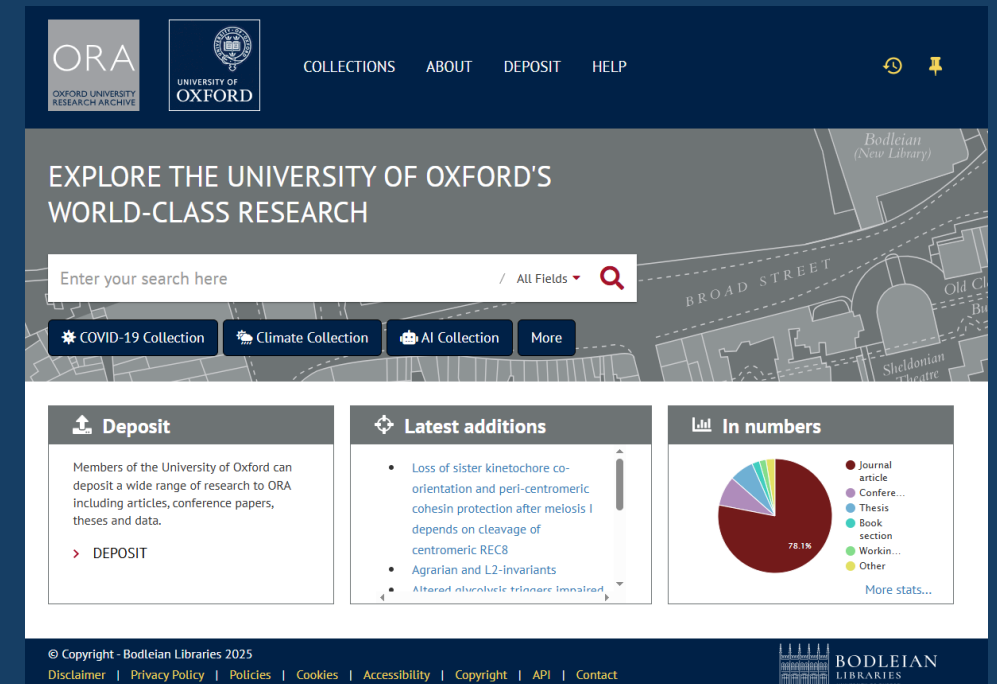
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UK and Oxford policy landscape

- UK research institutions are subject to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise managed by Research England on behalf of UK higher education funding bodies.
- Oxford receives 'block grant' funding to support open access publication from four funding bodies: UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), Wellcome Trust, British Heart Foundation (BHF), and Cancer Research UK (CRUK).
- University of Oxford Open Research Position Statement (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/open-research>).
 - Sets expectations and principles behind other policies regarding: Research Integrity, Open Access Publication, Research Data Management, Research Ethics, Data Protection
 - Which in-turn support: rights retention, FAIR, copyright & licensing, transparency, identifiers and credit.
- Mandatory deposit of research degrees theses to ORA under degree regulations.

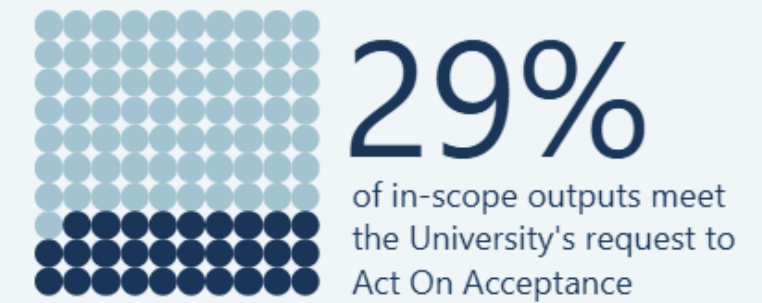
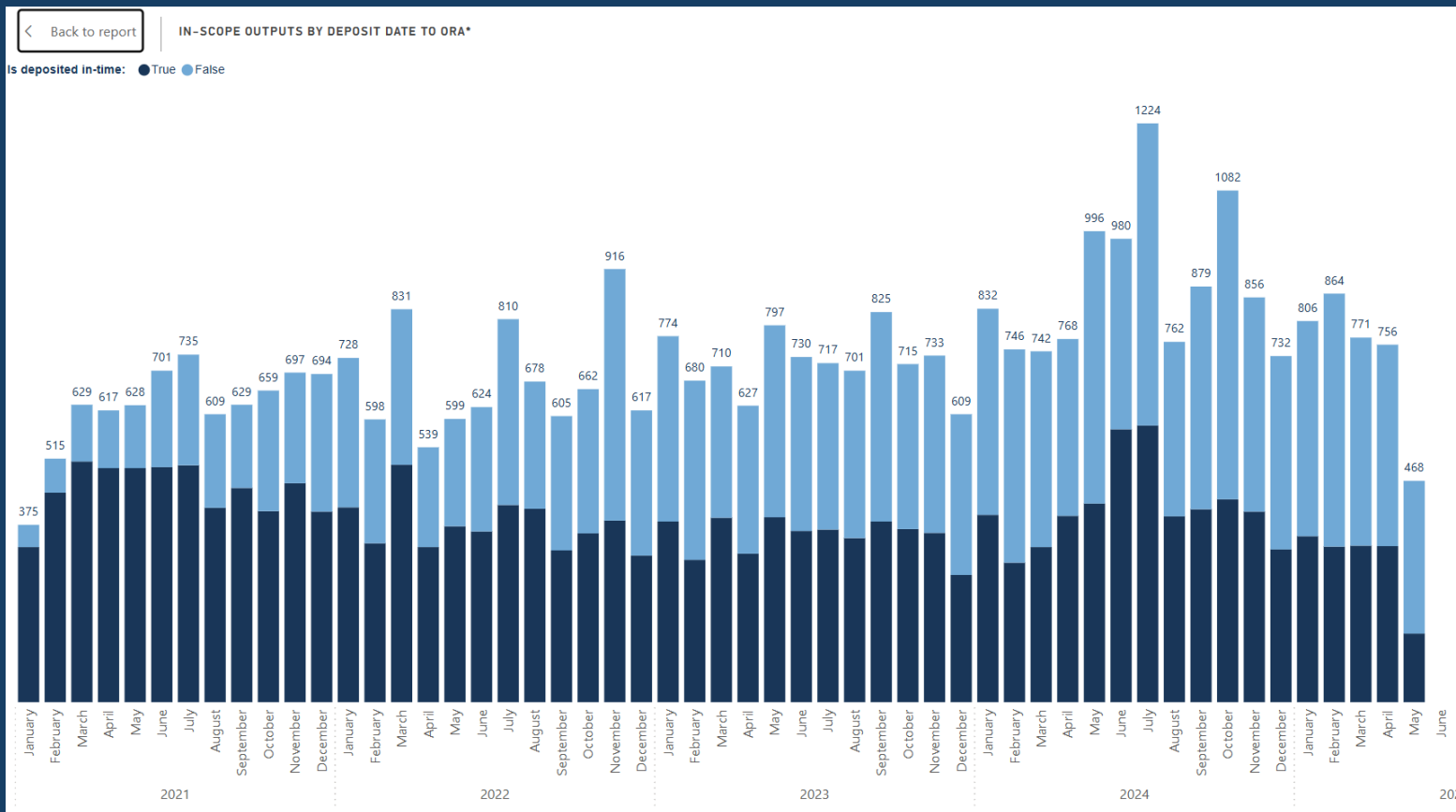
ORA & "Act on Acceptance"

- <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/>
- ORA is the institutional repository for the University of Oxford, managed by the Bodleian Libraries.
- Collecting journal articles, conference papers, reports, working papers, book sections, research data, theses, and more.
- From 2016 Oxford authors have been asked to "Act on Acceptance", and deposited their accepted manuscripts (journal articles and conference papers) to ORA within 3 months of acceptance to publication.



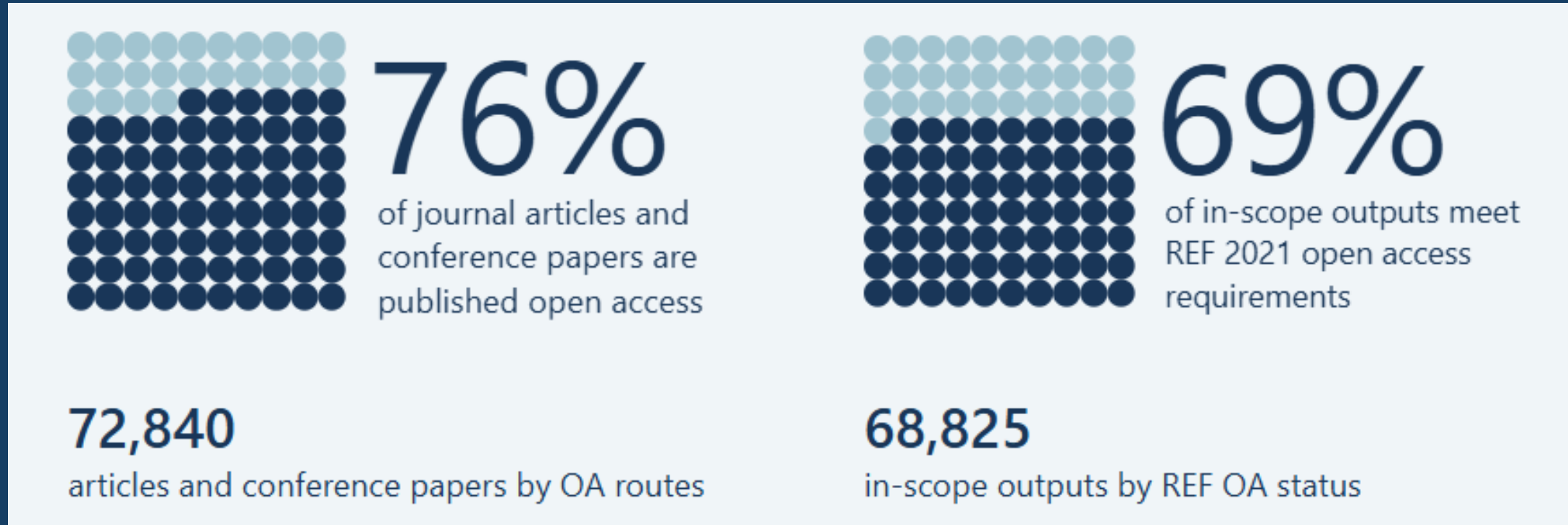
The problem

Act on Acceptance (deposit all eligible publications into ORA) has been our main OA message for almost a decade. Compliance rates are at an all-time low*.



*Journal articles and conference papers being deposited to ORA within 3 months of acceptance for publication.

OA Compliance more generally is much higher



A large portion of compliance is being met by 'Gold' open access through a payment or through the University's subscription to a transitional agreement (or read & publish deal)

Divisional check-ins, 2023, using new OA reporting

Hums: maintain a simple message to researchers. Benefits of OA do not speak much to Hums - but self-archiving will remain main route to compliance.

SSD: focus on 'doing good' rather than stressing compliance. Developing guidance and support will be effective for them. Good relationships with Subject Librarians - will listen.

MPLS: develop ORA's capabilities – as an archive – through automated harvesting. Use new REF policy to reach researchers with new messages (via OA contacts).

MSD: understand benefits of OA; less focus on advocacy. Focus on automation and simplifying process.
Change needs to be at scale to have an impact.

Automating deposit into ORA

The Jisc logo consists of the word "Jisc" in white, bold, sans-serif font, set against a solid orange rectangular background.The Publications Router logo features the words "Publications Router" in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid purple rectangular background.

- Covers major publishers including, OUP, CUP, Wiley, Taylor & Francis
- Went live in June 2024
- ~7k records automatically added to ORA since 'go live'

Further work ongoing (to July 2025) to harvest more content (OpenAlex) and to link up people and publication data for harvesting and automatic claiming in Symplectic Elements

ORCID has been a great success - how do we build on that and embed it?



There are challenges with metadata and obtaining files

Communications and outreach

Problem we knew: our key message and call to action (Act on Acceptance) was not working.

From focus groups in 2024, we learned:

- Awareness of OA was reasonably consistent, with most saying they had heard of it.
- Awareness of REF was *very* patchy!
- Our website is far too big, far too overwhelming, and does not lead with key messages and call to action.
- Respondents liked the more positive messages, rather than repeated beating with the stick of REF/funder requirements.



Assessment from an Open Science Communicator

What we are doing with the current website is telling them:

“Bad news here! We have a lot to say to you about what you must do. It is very, very complicated, it will take a lot of your time, so buckle up. Even for us these topics are complicated and keep changing all the time, so we keep creating new pages for you (call them bandages). It is not our fault, it is the overall funders, REF, and academic policies, a lot of rules to follow. Ah, you don’t know what REF is? No problem, we have some 20 pages to explain”.

We are putting this complex message in a bottle and throwing it at the ocean in the expectation it will reach our audiences. Another analogy would be: it is as challenging as a “escape room” game, only without the fun.

Credit: Patricia Logullo

New (and much delayed) REF OA Policy

Minor changes to requirements (shorter embargo periods, clearer specifications around open licensing, deposit attached to publication rather than acceptance).

Most importantly, clarification that green and gold route outputs are compliant:

Outputs that are made open access through the 'gold' or 'diamond' route (immediate open access) at the point of first publication fully meet the requirements of the REF 2029 open access policy with no further action required.

This includes outputs published as 'gold' in accordance with other funder's requirements and definitions.

A corresponding shift in University policy



Oxford University Open Access Publications Policy

“At the time of acceptance, deposit a digital copy of the author accepted manuscript of all journal articles and conference papers in the Oxford Research Archive via Symplectic Elements”

This will need to change to correspond with new messaging, to reflect new REF requirement and emphasise ‘make it open’ via any valid route.

Simple messaging; a big shift in outreach

1. **For everyone:** Central 'call to action' on keeping your research profile up-to-date: log-in to Symplectic, connect your ORCID, turn on auto-claim.
2. **For many:** Accompanied by messaging on ORA and OA Policy which means we can make manuscript available from publication. 'Deposit, and we will do the rest'. Simple how-to guides (video, one-pager) for deposit. Lean heavily into digital preservation of the scholarly record. Lead with benefits; policies are secondary.
3. **For the eager:** Ramped-up communications to network of contacts. Themed campaign months. Increased events throughout the year. Streamline training and embed open scholarship throughout (tools and practices, as well as policies and money).

Next steps

Beginning now (TT 2025)

- Outreach to Heads of Depts – introducing OA and RDM leads
- Piloting Open Scholarship Events
 - 25th June webinar on author journey of OA book publishing
 - Open peer review event in the works
- Update and consolidate OA networks
- Trickle REF comms via various channels

Major deliverables by end of Sep 2025

- Website refresh work (working with Bodleian Comms)
- Planning new campaign structure
- Report on comms shift for key stakeholders

During MT 2025

- University policy alignment
- Relaunch of website
- Annual event 2026 planning
- Implementing campaigns (REF, ORCID, ORA)

Thanks for listening

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Further reading:

- **"Automating the collecting of full text research articles and descriptive metadata to the Oxford University Research Archive (ORA)"** (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1629/uksg.685>)
- **"Enhancing the Oxford University Research Archive: compliance, consistency, and challenges in supporting researchers"** (<https://journals.cilip.org.uk/catalogue-and-index/article/view/696>)