

Ten Years After DORA: Where Do Publishers Stand on Research Assessment Reform?



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Introduction

The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) was developed in 2012 to address flaws in traditional research assessment, such as:

- Improper use of journal impact factors in the assessment of individual authors and articles;
- Uneven prioritization of journal articles over other research outputs;
- Long-running biases entrenched in and exacerbated by traditional research assessment practices.

DORA has grown into a global community of practice engaging publishers, researchers, and administrators, focused on reforming research assessment worldwide. Now celebrating its 10th anniversary, DORA continues to engage and challenge the research community in taking concrete steps to improve research assessment.

Academic publishers play a central role in research assessment reform: their significant influence over which and how research is distributed has impacted research practices for centuries. It is crucial for these publishers to advance the standards outlined by DORA and other initiatives, implementing transparent and ethical publishing practices and promoting responsible research assessment.

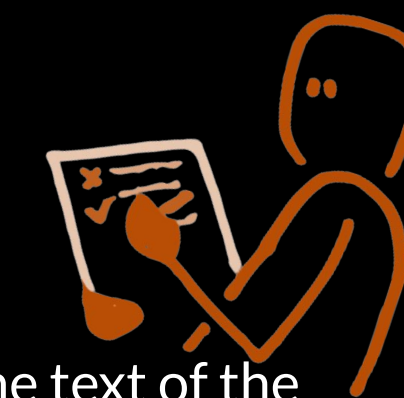
Objectives

This study aims to review and evaluate whether academic journal publishers who have signed DORA are effectively implementing the outlined guidelines for transparent and responsible research assessment practices.

Methods

Working from a list of DORA signatories scraped from the DORA website, we:

- isolated all scholarly publishers;
 - omitted all predatory publishers and book publishers;
- Our final list included 68 academic publishers.



We then:

- developed a checklist of recommendations informed by the text of the Declaration and Hatch and Patterson, 2019;
- assessed publisher websites, author guides and submission policies for compliance with DORA principles outlined in our checklist (Fig 1 and 2);
- used Google Sheets to calculate percentages of publishers whose policies adhere to the DORA recommendation in our checklist (Fig 1 and 2);

Total Number of Publishers assessed = 68

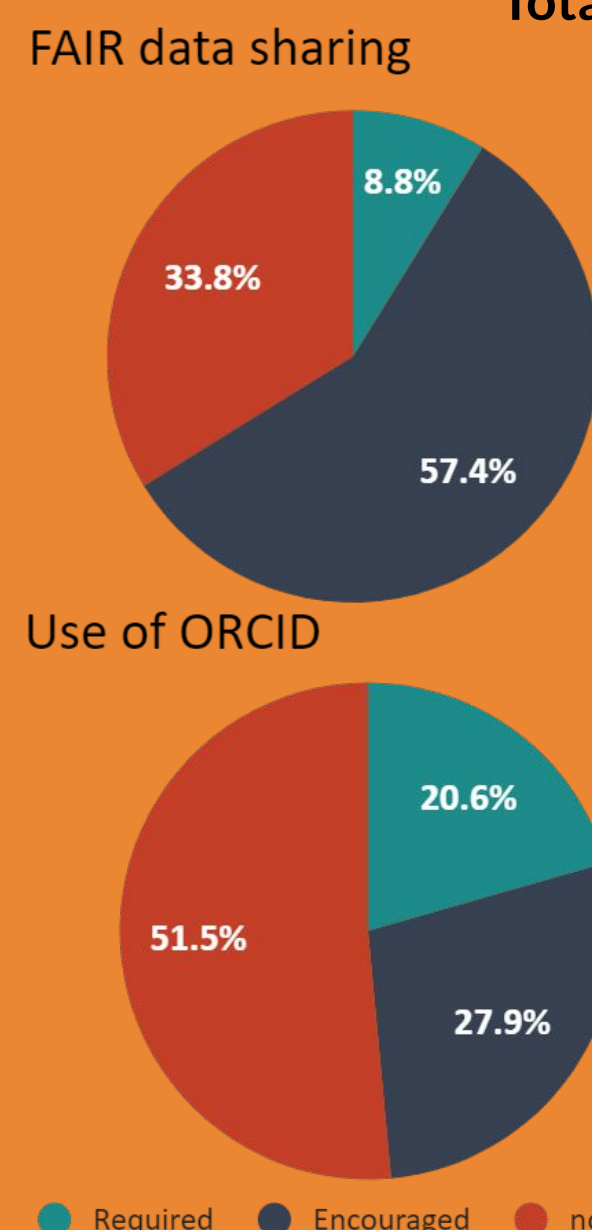


Fig 1. Percentage of DORA signatory publishers who adopted a data sharing and ORCID policy.

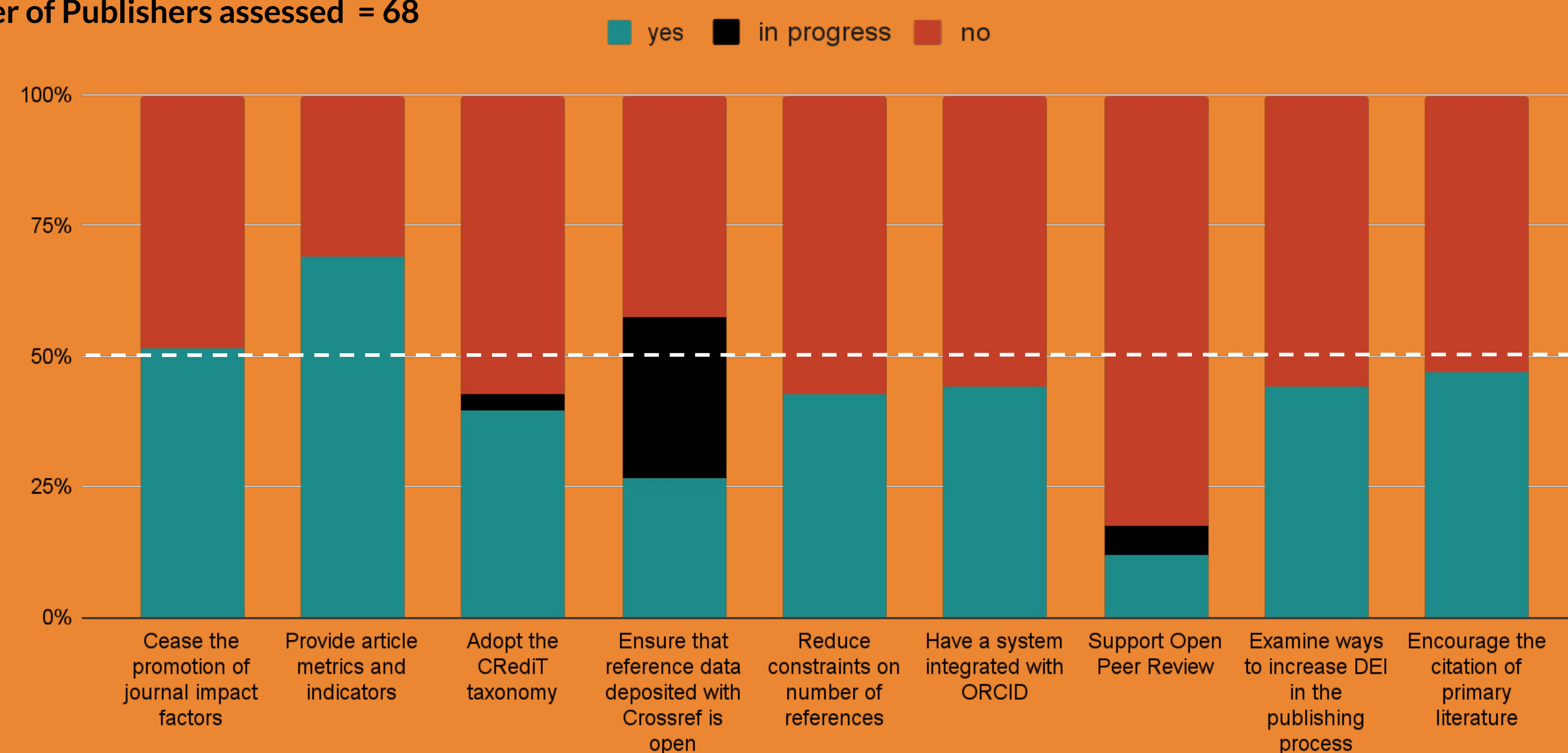


Fig 2. Percentage of DORA signatory publishers whose policies implement DORA recommendations assessed in our checklist.

Conclusions

Our analysis shows that:

- most publishers implemented some of the recommendations in our checklist, while only one - PLOS - has implemented all of them;
- The most widely-adopted recommendation regards the availability of article-level metrics - roughly 70% of publishers analyzed provided these metrics;
- The least widely-adopted recommendation regards open peer review, a model that could be key in advancing DEI commitments across the research continuum;
- Open science practices are still emerging across many of the publishers analyzed. FAIR data sharing and ORCID policy, essential components of the open science infrastructure, are encouraged more than required by most publishers;

Open Challenges faced by publishers

What metrics can be used to assess DORA compliance?
How to make sure new metrics for research assessment won't become the new Journal Impact Factor?
How can publishers help to ensure equitable access to open options in publishing?
Is diamond publishing the solution? Is it sustainable?
Is there a need for better education in the responsible use of metrics and open science practices?
Does "open" signal the end of journals?