

Increase the impact of scientific knowledge by making it accessible

All publicly financed scholarly publications should be made available for free (open access), according to the Dutch Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (AWTI). This can strengthen the accessibility of science and its impact for both economy and society, but real openness requires more: scientific knowledge should also be presented in a way that is clear and intelligible for lay people, thus becoming genuinely *accessible*.

This is the main conclusion of the advisory report "[Dare to share](#)" of AWTI that today has become available in an English version. The report's original Dutch version "*Durven delen*" was presented on 20 January to the Dutch ministers of Education, Science and Culture, Mrs. Jet Bussemaker, and of Economic Affairs, Mr. Henk Kamp, as well as the State Secretary of Education, Science and Culture, Mr. Sander Dekker.

In his first reaction Mr. Dekker stated that AWTI's advice supports the plans of the Dutch government on open science during the current EU presidency.¹ This topic will be discussed at a special conference on [4 and 5 April 2016 in Amsterdam](#). Co-author of "Dare to share" and former AWTI member [Prof. Luc Soete](#) will chair a session on improving the social impact of science at this conference.

European Union

"Science is an international activity and we should dare to share our knowledge, also internationally" says AWTI chairman [Prof. Uri Rosenthal](#). "To achieve this, it is important to collaborate on open science within the EU, for which our report gives several recommendations."

Accessibility

Currently, the majority of scholarly publications have only paid access. Most researchers do have access through their university or research institute, but most businesses, citizens and their organisations do not. "Scientific knowledge is therefore not used to its full potential", says AWTI member [Prof. Valerie Frissen](#). "It is a major step forward if researchers would publish more 'open access', but in addition is it necessary to invest in ways of 'translating' those publications for a larger audience, for example through the addition of a lay men's summary."

Masterplan

An important bottleneck for the development of open access in science is the fact that for most researchers the reputation of a journal matters more than open access. "But we have observed that in countries where the main research funders have adopted a clear open access policy, such as the United States and Brazil, open access publishing has made significantly more progress", says Frissen. "Therefore, AWTI recommends the government to play an active role and formulate a masterplan aiming to improve both access and accessibility of scientific knowledge."

Research data sharing

The report "Dare to share" also discusses the topic of research data sharing. This is currently common in some scientific disciplines, but in most disciplines it is not. However, there are many potential benefits of increased research data sharing. Frissen: "Think for example of the establishment of new links between different types of research or disciplines, which could lead to new breakthroughs. Moreover, increased transparency about research data is good for the integrity of science and may make science more efficient if it prevents unnecessary 'double' research."

Additional information

The Dutch version of the report (*Durven delen – Op weg naar een toegankelijke wetenschap*) was officially presented on 20 January to the ministers Kamp (Economic Affairs) and Bussemaker (Education, Science and Culture) and State Secretary Dekker (Education, Science and Culture). A full English translation of the report (*Dare to share – Open access and data sharing in science*) is now available at <http://english.awti.nl>. For more information you can contact Hamilcar Knops (project leader; +31-6-2563 7178, h.knops@awti.nl) or Dorette Corbey (director, d.corbey@awti.nl).

The Advisory council for science, technology and innovation (AWTI) advises the Dutch government and parliament on policy in the areas of scientific research, technological development and innovation. The AWTI enjoys an independent position. The members of the advisory council originate from different sectors of society, such as research institutes and trade and industry. The members do not represent any special interests.

¹ Letter from the State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science to the Dutch Parliament, dated 10 February 2016, Parliamentary Records TK 2015-2016 31 288, no. 527.