Towards Better Practices for the Community Governance of Open Infrastructures

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Table of Contents

This report has been created as a research output to support the COPIM project. COPIM (Community-led Open Publication Infrastructures for Monographs) is an international partnership of researchers, universities, librarians, open access book publishers and infrastructure providers. Funded by the Research England Development (RED) Fund and Arcadia – a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin – COPIM is building community-owned, open systems and infrastructures to enable open access (OA) book publishing to flourish.

As part of seven connected work packages, COPIM will work on 1) integrated capacity-building amongst presses; 2) access to and development of consortial, institutional, and other funding channels; 3) development and piloting of appropriate business models; 4) cost reductions for presses achieved by economies of scale; 5) mutually supportive governance models; 6) integration of OA books into library, repository, and digital learning environments; 7) the re-use of and experimentation with OA books; 8) the effective and robust archiving of OA content; and 9) knowledge transfer to stakeholders through various pilots.

Work package 4 of the COPIM project is exploring community governance with a view to designing the policies and procedures for community oversight of the infrastructures and models that the overall project is developing. Our aim is to create durable organisational structures for the coordination, governance, and administrative support of the project's community-owned infrastructures. This includes developing new avenues of outreach, communication, and partnership with diverse stakeholders in open research with a shared interest in these infrastructures, enabling community involvement and collective control. In conducting this research, which is reflected in this report as well as in our previous research and reports, we hope both to learn from the governance models that our colleagues in scholarly communication are utilising thus far and to look to the future of community governance for academic publishing.

Methodology

The research for this report has been conducted through desk research and draws on and incorporates a literature review of existing research on community governance and the governance of open infrastructures. It follows on from and can be seen as an extension of COPIM's Exploring Models for Community Governance report, written by Samuel Moore. As the introduction outlines, rather than simply showcasing 'best practices' (though it also does this on occasion) this report looks to plot paths towards *better practices* for community governance by not shying away from the messiness (Adema, 2014), frictions, and compromises that of necessity come with the governance of open infrastructure in development. Next to that this report outlines the process by which the COPIM project itself has developed its governance structures (mostly in relationship to the project as a whole, and to the Open

Book Collective (OBC) platform and collective), as a way to be open and transparent about our processes, to showcase in detail what developing community governance might look like in practice, and to document the process of doing so as a resource for the COPIM project itself and for the governance communities of its future infrastructural outputs. This report outlines our processes until early 2022. Current and future developments will be shared and reflected upon as part of a community governance working paper, to be released later in 2022, which includes the rationale behind the OBC's chosen governance structures and policies, and an overview of its governance model and procedures, based also on the research conducted for and gathered in this report. As part of this process of documenting the OBC's governance-in-development we will also be sharing its Articles of Association and other governance documents openly online once we have formally launched the OBC.

Next to desk research, the findings in this report are also based on a series of both internal and external workshops conducted by COPIM during 2020-2022, which are still ongoing as we finalise the OBC's governance structures and model. The first (external) workshop was conducted in May 2020, and further internal governance workshops have taken place throughout 2021 and 22. The research further draws on informal interviews with COPIM project members on their governance needs. Based on these workshops and interviews several internal documents were created that represent the values, mission, vision statements and governance structures the project aligns itself to. These were developed out of and as part of the workshops through a methodology of co-design (being written in a collaborative manner by the project members) and co-development (being developed in an iterative way, where after each new version input was sought from the project members, both written and orally via workshops, which was subsequently incorporated into a new version). This methodology will be outlined more in depth in the following sections of this report.

Our thanks go out to our COPIM colleagues for feedback on earlier drafts of this report (with special thanks to WP4 colleagues Eileen Joy, Judith Fathallah, Lidia Uziel, and Tobias Steiner) as well as to the members of COPIM's Community Governance Working Group (with special thanks to Samuel Moore, Marcel LaFlamme, and Leslie Chan), The Next Generation Library Publishing Project, and the participants of our first Community Governance Workshop with external stakeholders.

Introduction

By Patrick Hart and Janneke Adema

Structure of the Report

This report starts with this introductory chapter that situates its overarching argument in relation to a current rise in interest in forms of community governance in open infrastructure projects. Arguing that there is a danger in some of the literature around community-driven governance of over-emphasising procedures and processes, this introduction suggests that we need to acknowledge the essentially political character of the drives towards both open infrastructure and community-led governance. It discusses what this might mean, and also emphasises the extent to which, in any given case, both open infrastructure organisations and their governance are embedded in particular histories and in a frequently inhospitable political, social, and economic environment. It then explores some of the most significant governance implications of this for attempts to establish open (scholarly) infrastructures.

Picking up on one particularly important implication, the next chapter asks how we might best understand and deploy that loaded term 'community' in relation to governance practices. Building on the preceding chapter, it points in particular to the importance of paying attention in 'community-led' and 'community-driven' open infrastructure projects to the building up of coalitions and alliances between radical and reforming impulses.

The subsequent chapters outline best and better practices relating to some of the main factors that need to be taken into consideration when developing community governance, and provide links to existing literature, tools, and resources that will help you or your project develop your own governance. These chapters discuss the establishment and articulation of values and principles and their embedding in governance structures and processes, in particular in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion, not least of the Global South; decision-making processes, and the relationship between consensus-seeking and voting procedures; questions of representation and 'direct democracy'; and measures for ensuring the maintenance of and ongoing, iterative development of governance procedures, for carrying out governance 'health checks', and for evaluating and deploying external assessment criteria and tools.

This report also includes chapters that document the development of COPIM's and the OBC's own governance structures. These chapters are designed to be read either separately or alongside and in relation to the better practices chapters.

Motivation: On the Importance of Community-owned Open Infrastructure

The issue of the governance of (open) infrastructures for scholarly communication has grown ever more urgent over the last few years with the ongoing corporate acquisition of (critical) scholarly communication infrastructure (see for example the shock that was caused by Elsevier's acquisition of be.press, the provider of the popular Digital Commons repository platform; or by Wiley's acquisition of Knowledge Unlatched, and Taylor & Francis' acquisition of F1000). This movement towards the 'enclosure of the commons', is evidence of attempts at the vertical integration of academic infrastructure by the big commercial publishers, leading to the further corporate consolidation of the publishing industry, with potentially severe implications for knowledge equality and equity (Chen et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2019; Larivière et al., 2015; Joseph, 2018; Moore et al., 2016; (Bilder et al., 2015). This has resulted in 'an increased role of private sector actors, and more specifically big publishers such as Elsevier and Taylor & Francis, in the design and governance of scholarly communications infrastructure' (Chen et al., 2018). This loss of control and ownership over the key infrastructures that support the research lifecycle has led to calls for a reinstalling and reclaiming of academic oversight of these infrastructures. According to SPARC's Heather Joseph, with these calls for community governance comes 'the need for us to more clearly articulate our vision for the future of scholarly communication, the principles associated with that vision, and to take action to ensure that research communications is a community supported and owned enterprise' (Joseph, 2018).

In relation to this community-led vision for the future of scholarly communication, the ongoing consolidation by commercial players of crucial infrastructure has created an unease within the community on two fronts: first of all, the values of the commercial players are seen to be radically misaligned with those of the scholarly community. The logic of commercial revenue is perceived as being odds with scholarly, intellectual and scientific needs, especially in terms of open access publishing (Joseph, 2018; Fyfe et al., 2017). In addition to that, Jeff Pooley argues that it is specifically the for-profit nature of these consolidating enterprises (which he calls 'full-stack publishers' who are using predictive analytics services on their platforms to skim 'scholars' behavioral residue on the prospect of monetization to come' (Pooley, 2022)) that is problematic for the further development of open infrastructures. For him (and others) it is essential that beyond infrastructures being open, they are nonprofit and community-governed too, as for-profit open entities will simply continue to extract resources (e.g., volunteer labour) from academic communities and/or will be taken over at some point by the big commercial publishers (Pooley, 2017). Beyond the need for open infrastructure, there have therefore been calls to develop governance mechanisms that ensure that community control over infrastructure is maintained, and hence that it cannot be bought out by commercial interests (Joseph, 2018).

Governance and Sustainability

But beyond ensuring open infrastructure projects cannot be bought out, there are further issues that concern the governance of open infrastructure projects that need to be in place to ensure their ongoing sustainability or resilience. Pooley increasingly sees two ecologies developing, one made up of venture-funded infrastructures driven by the large commercial publishers, and one made up of grant-funded open infrastructure projects (funded in the US for example by foundations like Andrew W. Mellon and Alfred P. Sloan), the latter consisting of 'open source projects of various sizes and capacities' (Lewis et al., 2018; Pooley, 2017). Katherine Skinner has highlighted that community-led governance of these open source projects comes with various challenges to take into consideration (Skinner, 2019). She lists several, including most prominently a lack of funding for ongoing infrastructure maintenance. Skinner highlights how 'academy governed' tools, platforms, and services have been well trained to run on as little (grant) funding as possible, but this does not allow them to invest in further maintenance and R&D. A further challenge is the lack of training around governance issues, including, as she states, for governance groups and officers 'charged with protecting and guiding our programs and organizations' (Skinner, 2019). Skinner also highlights the ongoing competition amongst community-led projects for scarce grant funding. With respect to this latter issue, a focus on alignment and coordination and the development of collective investment strategies is therefore seen as crucial (Joseph, 2018, Skinner, 2019). This would require close cooperation between scholarly communication stakeholders, most importantly libraries. In this context of collective investment David W. Lewis has previously proposed the '2.5% commitment', which puts forward that 'every academic library should commit to contribute 2.5% of its total budget to support the common infrastructure needed to create the open scholarly commons' (Lewis, 2017), a collective pledge that would prevent the free-rider dilemma[1] in the creation and support of these kinds of open scholarly commons. Over the last few years projects such as *Invest in Open Infrastructure*, *SCOSS*, and of course COPIM's soon to be launched *Open Book Collective* have started to coordinate these kinds of efforts as part of collaborative consortial funding approaches for the support of open infrastructures for scholarly communication, where funding towards this is still lagging seriously behind the funding available for open access content.

Governance and Scale

To resist the enclosure of the scholarly commons, alternative community-led open infrastructures are increasingly being proposed and developed, not only in the sciences but also in the Humanities and Social Sciences. There remains however a tension around strategy, and whether the focus should lie on developing (top-down nationally or regionally funded) meta-infrastructures or more situated local ones. On a European level there are calls for, as Maryl et al. describe it, the development of a 'dedicated, inclusive infrastructure that can streamline the fragmented initiatives'. (Maryl et al., 2020) This is evidenced by the current drive by the European Commission towards the creation of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) for example, which, Maryl et al. state, is accompanied by a vision of a pan-European meta-infrastructure 'federating existing resources across national data centres, European e-infrastructures and research infrastructures' (Maryl et al., 2020; European Commission, 2017). As Budroni et al. outline, the governance of this infrastructure will be explicitly community or stakeholder driven (Budroni et al., 2019).[2]

But with these meta-infrastructures, the need to ensure all 'stakeholders' are indeed considered remains important. Maryl et al. argue for the importance of evaluating closely what is meant by 'community-driven' in this context. This involves investigating closely and throughout the whole

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[1] For more on this in the context of open source development, see Perens 2005.

[2] Note however that in contrast to this call for community-driven governance, the development of one of the EC's early open infrastructure initiatives, the *Open Research Europe* platform, had been awarded to F1000, just after it had been acquired by Taylor and Francis, which caused consternation among many in the scholarly communications sector. See e.g., https://twitter.com/protohedgehog/status/1241269416706183168.

research process what user needs in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) are with respect to open infrastructure: 'otherwise, there is no guarantee that the infrastructure will address the existing needs of a scholarly community, or that scholars are going to use it' (Maryl et al., 2020). What is needed in this respect, they argue, is a scholar-led, transparent and research-oriented (rather than profit-oriented) infrastructure. Chen et al. and Okune et al. have additionally argued that from a geopolitical perspective there needs to be space for multiple actors to be taken into consideration, to 'reflect critically on who is being both included and excluded in the design and use of knowledge infrastructures' (Okune et al., 2019). Infrastructural initiatives such as those being developed by the European Commission, they claim, are part of a global European strategy to take up a leading role on the international stage and develop a competitive advantage in science and technology R&D in relation to other global north regions. This strategy, as they state:

> exerts pressure on peripheral less powerful actors, for whom the risks of non-alignment and non-participation in the "global and interoperable scholarly commons" as envisioned by the European Union - which can include loss of access to potential funding, loss of legitimacy, and non-consideration for global partnerships and memberships - are much larger than the loss of autonomy in developing open research infrastructures in a more contextualized manner, adapted to local barriers and needs (Chen et al., 2018).

As they point out, we need to keep a critical eye on the 'collateral implications' of the development of open research infrastructures and the power imbalances that they reproduce. What they argue for instead as part of their collaborative work for the Open and Collaborative Science in Development Network (OCSDNet), is a focus on more 'inclusive knowledge infrastructures', that look at the socio-technical mechanisms behind the development of open infrastructures, are inclusive to multiple stakeholders and epistemologies, and seek 'to redress power relations within a given context' (Okune et al., 2019). As an alternative to top-down development projects there is a need to therefore redirect funding and resources 'towards the development of alternative localized infrastructures that bolster the right to research of diverse epistemic communities' (Albornoz et al., 2018).

It is important to highlight in addition to geopolitical scale, how the definition of research infrastructures can be both more narrowly or more broadly perceived.[3] We would argue in this respect, especially within the context of the HSS, for infrastructure to be perceived more broadly, where scholar-led not-for-profit open access presses and publishers should be seen as an integral part of the infrastructure for scholarly communication, especially where it concerns the publication and dissemination of OA monographs. Maryl et al. see in this respect an opportunity in the HSS for the development of both inclusive infrastructures (both physical and digital) with a focus on bibliodiversity and the needs of specific research communities, and a more generic e-infrastructure to support the more widespread needs of the HSS disciplines (Maryl et al., 2020). Similarly, what we within the COPIM project have been arguing for in the form of the governance principle of 'scaling small', exemplified for example by COPIM, the ScholarLed consortium, and the Radical Open Access

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[3] Also see Invest in Open Infrastructure's upcoming report on *Defining Open Scholarly Infrastructure* (Invest In Open Infrastructure 2022, work-in-progress), which is at the point of writing of this report available for open review: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ODB8jSDz7XcgqhjmhtyYKDQrbIbjffD_BAzYNwNnZsE/edit#

Collective, might also form an alternative here, where 'scaling small involves the creation of infrastructures that allow many presses to thrive at multiple scales, instead of taking up a competitive model in which some presses grow stronger in expense of others, or by usurping others' (Adema & Moore, 2021; Barnes & Gatti, 2019).

The politics of infrastructure

As this report will testify, we need to remain aware of the politics of our infrastructures, which run beyond issues such as whether they are open or closed. Moore et al. outline how open platforms and infrastructures, when owned by for-profit entities, are still predominantly focused on monetising the open content on their platforms and the interactions around it. In this respect 'use data and impact analytics are a commodity to generate profit from free scholarly platforms' (Moore et al., 2016). The main issue here is that the research community does not own this data but also does not control how it is being used, measured, and analysed (also see the recent partnering of ArXiv with Elsevier Scopus, to 'optimise' their publication data).

As Angela Okune argues in this respect, it is essential to question who makes the decisions about the way in which our research is produced and communicated. To radically reshape this we need to have those (difficult) conversations about 'what might decentralised, non-hierarchical and locally controlled forms of scholarly communications and knowledge look like? From that vision we can help pluralise forms of knowledge and bring its stewardship and care closer to the communities it most concerns' (Okune, 2019). As Moore et al. warn in this respect, as a community we need to nurture the kinds of infrastructures that operate in the service of research itself, instead of ceding control of its to large commercial publishers 'for whom the research community is not the customer, but the product itself' (Moore et al., 2016).

Further Reading

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1. The Problem of 'Best Practice': Embedded Infrastructure, Situated Governance

By Patrick Hart

Neither governance nor infrastructure is generally seen as an exciting, enthralling topic. Susan Leigh Star's foundational essay in infrastructure studies describes asking people to pay attention to infrastructure as 'a call to study boring things' (Star, 1999). Similarly, the perception of governance as dull is often noted: a recent blog post on its importance for charitable associations, for example, is titled 'Why is Governance soooo Boring?!' (Chamberlain, 2020). Both infrastructure and governance tend to be noticed only when something goes wrong. As long as both are functioning reasonably smoothly, most of us are happy to ignore them and focus on the things they are supposed to facilitate (Ross-Hellauer, 2016, Bilder, 2015).

Yet both governance and infrastructure (and their ongoing maintenance) fundamentally shape the conditions in which we work and operate. Both are, as mentioned in the introduction, profoundly political, and—partly for this reason—both often come to serve the interests of a narrow clique rather than the people and communities they are designed to support. Infrastructure, as Leslie Chan has noted, 'concerns the power (otherwise hidden) to: set agendas and decisions – which are never neutral but embedded with ideological assumptions and biases; mobilize and accumulate resources; set standards and norms; set boundaries of participation; discriminate – or not, hopefully; and control what gets built, what's possible' (Hall, 2021).[4] One of COPIM's workshop participant's ad hoc definition of governance, meanwhile, sums up its deeply political significance: governance is 'how things get decided'. Within this context of power and control, community-led organisations, and movements towards various forms of 'openness' — whether open access publishing, open source software, open scholarship, or any one of a number of others — can be seen as reactions to appropriations and failings of existing publishing infrastructure and governance.

Our initial intention in planning this report was to document best practice in the governance of open source community-owned infrastructure projects—as a useful resource both to others and to ourselves—as well as to provide a record of our own governance practices and how we arrived at them. Two parallel developments, however, one internal to COPIM and one external, have combined to make us revise and supplement this original plan.

On the one hand, as the wider literature on the governance of community-led, open scholarly infrastructure projects has developed, a substantial body of governance best practice guides

[4] IOI's initial work identifies five key takeaways: infrastructure is a socio-technical system rather than a technical product; it is dynamic; it operates at different scales, both temporally and spatially; and it is not neutral. The last of these is of particular pertinence to the argument we make below.

and toolkits has emerged over the last few years. Introduced in more detail below, these already offer extremely useful practical advice and resources for establishing or revising governance structures and procedures. Often written or overseen by prominent figures in community-led open infrastructure projects, they are generally concise, intelligent, well informed and researched, and thoughtfully presented. We have taken the view here that to attempt to further condense, summarise, or synthesize their recommendations would be a redundant exercise: rather, we recommend that readers involved in establishing or revising community-led governance structures and procedures consult them directly.

If these guides and toolkits have a common shortcoming, however, it is perhaps that in focusing (for very good reasons) on the more procedural practicalities of governance and providing widely applicable guidelines, they tend to risk decontextualising, de-situating, and de-historicising governance, and thereby playing down its fundamentally political character. This in turn risks eliding some of the most intransigent governance issues open infrastructure organisations are likely to confront, as well as some of the opportunities. This is rarely if ever an explicit failing but rather a cumulative effect of the main foci of this whole body of literature. This report therefore looks to pay particular attention to these aspects of governance.

As both COPIM's own projects and governance research proceeded, it also became increasingly evident to us that the idea of a widely transferable 'best practice' is an illusion. Since its inception COPIM has produced a number of blog posts and reports on open source and community-led project governance (these can all be read here), and documented the development of its own governance structures and those of the projects it has developed—as we will outline further in this report. Foremost among our research, as has already been noted, is Samuel Moore's extended report on *Exploring Models for Community Governance*, published in May 2021, which this report looks to build on and extend. *Exploring Models* presented our initial work on the various structures that already exist for community governance and discussed their pros and cons for COPIM's open access monograph infrastructures, particularly with regard to one of our main deliverables, the Open Book Collective (OBC). This is a platform and intermediary organisation that allows open-access academic publishers and infrastructure providers ('initiatives') to promote their publishing activities and to sell and manage their funding schemes. Moore's report offers a landscape study of forms of governance within scholarly communication alongside an exploratory study of the theoretical literature on the various forms of governance actually deployed within community-led organisations.

Perhaps *Exploring Models*' most important finding is the extent to which community governance is *situated*: in other words, any good model of governance is invariably 'highly specific to the resource and community in question' (Moore, 2021). This means that it cannot serve as a 'model' at all, if by that is understood a template that might be straightforwardly lifted and applied in a different context or situation. As Moore concludes,

> there is no real 'off the shelf' approach that will work for complex organisations, not least because so much of governance refers to specific values, principles and norms dictating how participants interact with one another. Other considerations such as

> size, history, culture and the kind of resource(s) governed all play a factor in the sorts of accountability models that shape a project (Moore, 2021).

COPIM's identification of the situatedness of governance as its primary characteristic mirrors Star's foregrounding of infrastructure's *embeddedness*. For Star, infrastructure is 'sunk into and inside of other structures': it 'does not grow *de novo*', but 'wrestles with the inertia of the installed base and inherits strengths and limitations from that base' (Star, 1999).

The combination of infrastructure's embeddedness and governance's situatedness has profound implications for any practical attempt to establish community-led, open infrastructure projects. It also makes it even more difficult to establish governance 'best practice' in the case of such projects than it might be for other kinds of venture. In the face of these difficulties, it can be tempting to abandon any attempt to establish basic principles or widely applicable guidelines for better practice. If it is impossible to identify a single preferred method of governance, however, or even a single reliable method for choosing from among and customising the many models of community governance available, this report does attempt to trace a number of pathways. It does this in part by mapping the roads that COPIM and the infrastructure projects whose development it has supported have laid down for themselves with regards to governance. As will become evident, this is better characterised as a series of diversions, remappings, backtrackings, and reroutings than a simple highway. One lesson that emerges from this, though, is the indispensability of this process. Taken together, the embeddedness of infrastructure and the situatedness of governance mean that governance design for such projects is of necessity *iterative*, ongoing, continuously to be revisited and revised.

Yet because of this, learning from others' practices and insights becomes more rather than less important. A number of immensely useful guides to governance have been produced in the last few years for community-led and open organisations. Among the most notable of these are the *Governance Toolkit* and accompanying *Guidebook* produced under the aegis of It Takes a Village, a project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the USA to establish models of collaboration and sustainability for open source software projects. The Educopia Institute has also developed a very helpful portfolio of governance design tools: these include *Governance in Formation: Identifying Priorities for Action and Making Decisions*, a facilitator's guide which also contains helpful templates and a plethora of links to further resources (also available as a Google Doc). Katherine Skinner's *Community Cultivation — A Field Guide*, also from Educopia, ranges well beyond issues of governance, but does explicitly address implementing or updating governance structures, identifying governance as one of five interlinked key growth areas for a community (the others being 'vision', 'infrastructure', 'engagement', and 'finances and HR'). The long chapter dedicated to project and community governance in *The Open Source Way 2.0* (the full guide is also available in PDF, EPUB, MOBI, and Kindle Fire EPUB formats) is another invaluable resource, and one of the most alert to the practical implications of the conflicts and tensions that community-driven projects have to deal with. The University of Kansas's *Community Toolbox*, meanwhile, includes practical sections on organisational structure, writing bylaws, and other governance issues (see the Table of Contents for a full list). Similarly, the Open Source Alliance for Open Scholarship

Handbook includes a dedicated section on ‘Governance in Open Source for Scholarship’. This sets out some useful initial questions that any project should ask itself about its governance, aimed particularly at smaller scale projects, including those initiated by a single individual. The OSAOS Handbook also includes a handy governance ‘Resource List’.

Organisation	Resource
It Takes a Village	Governance Toolkit & Guidebook
Educopia Institute	Governance in Formation: Identifying Priorities for Action and Making Decisions (+ Google Doc version)
	Community Cultivation — A Field Guide
The Open Source Way	chapter on Community Governance in The Open Source Way 2.0 (+ multi-format full guide)
University of Kansas	Community Toolbox (incl. sections on organisational structure, writing bylaws, etc.)
Open Source Alliance for Open Scholarship	OASOS Handbook & dedicated section on 'Governance in Open Source for Scholarship', governance 'Resource List'.

Each of these documents sets out invaluable guidance, recommendations, and best practices for the governance of community-led and/or 'open' projects and organisations. Together they offer what is in many ways an excellent starting point for any practical attempt to establish or review the governance of any given infrastructure project. All published within the last five years or so, they are indicative of a recent growth in such projects, especially within academia, and of the slow but unmistakable growth in funding and interest that makes such reports possible. They also reflect a widespread recognition that the neglect of governance (which has sometimes shaded into outright hostility) has been a real hindrance to many open projects, and in some cases led to painful fractures within and between the communities they seek to serve. This report is indebted to this literature and draws upon the examples and reading it references, and one of its purposes is to highlight its key points and elements of particular relevance to the governance of open infrastructure for scholarly communications.

The Politics of Governance

Yet in performing the necessary and invaluable labour of providing practical frameworks and tools for establishing governance structures, the collective effect of this proliferation of reports, guidebooks, toolkits, worksheets, and field guides, mostly produced from within Europe and the Anglophone world, also runs the risk of reducing governance to a predominantly managerialised, procedural affair.[5] While acknowledging the importance of

[5] We have to do here with a deep-seated distinction between two understandings or uses of 'governance': one which understands a form of governance to refer to 'a mode of communal self-organisation' (Graeber 2007: 329), and another which sees it as akin to what some (mostly anarchist) thinkers about bottom-up organisation and mutual aid dismiss as 'policy' (which is also close to what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten mean by 'governance' in

establishing and articulating a project's values and principles, this can lead to governance being presented as occurring within a vacuum. One thing that we therefore would like to add to the existing governance guidance emerging mainly from the Anglophone and European ecosystems, is that many community-driven projects committed to values of openness find themselves embedded in quite inhospitable environments, which makes it hard to apply an off-the-shelf approach to governance. A range of powerful pressures either actively work against—or create conditions in many ways extremely hostile to—open-source and community-led organisations. Whether we group these forces, irreducible to just another 'risk factor', under the shorthand of the neoliberal university, big tech or simply capitalism, their gravitational pull is likely to be the single most disruptive influence upon attempts to sustain alternative infrastructure projects that have an impact on the intellectual communication ecosystem and that actually *function*. Establishing governance without a clear-eyed, conscious, practical reckoning with these forces may result in a compromised organisation whose 'open', 'community' credentials are mainly window-dressing, or in a bad utopia liable to shatter or crumble at its first impact with brute reality.

Foregrounding the search (or the need) for a more explicitly political mode of community-led governance has the potential to be deeply discomfiting. For open infrastructure organisations constrained to operate in inhospitable environments and built on potentially fragile coalitions, there are good reasons to shy away from the disruption and antagonism that any mention of the political can provoke. But governance, like infrastructure, can never be objective or neutral: and in a radically inequitable environment, anything that casts it as such, even if unintentionally, is liable to reinforce inequity. The same holds for scholarly practice and publication too. As Connelly and Joseph-Salisbury note, while 'myths of objectivity and neutrality characterise traditional academic practice, more radical work, particularly within feminist and anti-racist traditions, has insisted on the importance of rejecting neutrality' (Joseph-Salisbury & Connelly, 2021). We follow Connelly and Joseph-Salisbury in arguing that 'rather than undermining academic rigour, the explicitly political and partisan nature of anti-racist scholar-activism offers a higher level of integrity and honesty than scholarship that purports to be objective,' making clear the assumptions that underpin not only scholarship but also, we would emphasize, its publication, exchange, and circulation (Joseph-Salisbury & Connelly, 2021).

The widespread 'illusion that we can finally dispense with the notion of antagonism' has been diagnosed by Chantal Mouffe (among others) as the 'evasion of the political', a symptom of the 'rationalist, universalist and individualist' underpinnings to a great deal of the current (liberal) democratic thinking on which the current infrastructural norms that open infrastructures challenge are also founded. The main shortcoming of this evasion, Mouffe argues, is that it 'cannot but remain blind to the specificity of the political in its dimension of conflict/decision, and that it cannot perceive the constitutive role of antagonism in social life' (Mouffe, 2005). Open infrastructure governance has lessons still to learn (and, perhaps, also to teach) to other

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their attack upon the phenomenon in their essay on 'Blackness and Governance'). (For an anarchist 'tiny manifesto' against policy, see Graeber 2004: 9.)

more explicitly political projects about how to situate the antagonism and the 'conflict/decision' at its centre in a creative and productive (rather than wholly destructive) manner.[6]

In *Revolutions in Reverse*, David Graeber tells a story that serves as a useful parable. Graeber is describing his involvement in the Direct Action Network (DAN) in New York, a decentralised group at the forefront of the global justice movement in the city, 'operating on principles of direct democracy according to an elaborate, but strikingly effective, form of consensus process'. DAN 'existed in a purely political space', with 'no concrete resources, not even a significant treasury, to administer' (Graeber, 2011):

> Then one day someone gave DAN a car. This caused a minor, but ongoing, crisis. We soon discovered that legally, it is impossible for a decentralized network to own a car. Cars can be owned by individuals, or they can be owned by corporations, which are fictive individuals. Governments can also own cars. But they cannot be owned by networks. Unless we were willing to incorporate ourselves as a nonprofit corporation (which would have required a complete reorganization and abandoning most of our egalitarian principles) the only expedient was to find a volunteer willing to claim to be the owner for legal purposes. But then that person was held responsible for all outstanding fines, insurance fees, and had to provide written permission to allow anyone else to drive the car out of state; and, of course, only he could retrieve the car if it were impounded. Before long the DAN car had become such a perennial problem that we abandoned it (Graeber, 2011).

This relatively minor story struck Graeber as having something important to tell us about why projects aiming to democratise society are 'so often perceived as idle dreams that melt away as soon as they encounter hard material reality'. Contrary to one common narrative, this has nothing to do with any supposed inefficiency of radical, community-led forms of organisation: in the case of DAN, 'police chiefs across the country had called us the best organized force they'd ever had to deal with' (Graeber, 2011). Instead, Graeber writes of the 'reality effect (if one may call it that)' that occurs when radical projects engage with the embedded infrastructure of the status quo. For Graeber, this effect is particularly associated with the moment at which such projects 'enter into the world of large, heavy objects'. This, he suggests, 'is not because these objects are somehow intrinsically difficult to administer democratically – history is full of communities that successfully engage in the democratic administration of common resources – it's because, like the DAN car, they are surrounded by endless government regulation, and effectively impossible to hide from the government's armed representatives' (Graeber, 2011). It is when radical community-driven networks and

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[6] We may need in future to engage more explicitly and seriously with models whose greatest influence has been in spheres far removed from our own, such as Murray Bookchin's communalism. Bookchin's proposal has been described by David Harvey as 'by far the most sophisticated radical proposal to deal with the creation and collective use of the commons across a wide variety of scales' (quoted by Debbie Bookchin and Blair Taylor in Bookchin 2015: xix)

organisations come up against this reality effect that they 'tend to founder, or at least become endlessly difficult'.

The experiences of movements for open scholarship suggest that today it is not only (or even principally) large heavy objects that trigger the effect Graeber describes. Any attempt to exercise influence over anything that might be commodified or otherwise turned to profit is liable to do so. Practically all open access and community-led projects have their own stories of running up against such regulations. Yet because infrastructure is by definition not simply a single instance of work but the very systems and services that make possible the continued functioning of the whole, any attempt to reform, challenge, or set up alternatives to established infrastructures is likely to come up especially quickly against the kind of structural violence Graeber outlines, even if that violence sometimes remains hard to see. Infrastructural changes, by their very nature, have system-wide implications. The fate of Aaron Swartz should serve as a reminder, however, of the deadly consequences of structural violence for those who explore solutions that existing infrastructures consider too radical to the way scholarly knowledge 'is increasingly [...] locked up by a handful of private corporations' (Swartz, 2008).[7]

Infrastructure projects also sometimes pull together a more diverse range of actors and organisations than other kinds of open projects, creating a broader 'community of communities'. This can be a source of strength, but it can also mean that the alliances and coalitions involved are more fragile and fraught. In particular, because they 'encourage system-wide changes' (as Educopia describes its mission) such projects arguably have to bridge the gap between a radical, alternative, oppositional 'undercommons' (from which many of the various movements for 'openness' emerged) and those embedded within existing infrastructures who recognise their flaws and the need for reform, and who often have most power to transform them, but may be hesitant or reluctant to disturb the established status quo. For these reasons, infrastructure projects may find themselves having to engage more immediately and directly with existing, deeply embedded structures and regulations than do other (open) projects, for example as part of incorporation processes. Measures such as legal incorporation may be the best or only way to provide legal protection to community members driving a project forward, for example, or to enable them to apply for much-needed grants. But these concessions and compromises need to be recognised as such, and their costs weighed.[8] The initial, significant challenge of governance then becomes how to guard against

[7] Swartz was accused in 2011 of using an MIT computer system to download and redistribute numerous academic articles from the online archive JSTOR, an important infrastructural scholarly repository for the humanities and social sciences. 'JSTOR decided not to pursue charges, and asked the government not to prosecute, but Swartz was indicted by federal prosecutors for 13 felony charges. Prosecutors refused all settlement offers that did not include jail time, and required Swartz to plead guilty to felony charges.' The case was pending when Swartz died by suicide in January 2013, aged 26.

[8] COPIM's Open Book Collective has itself taken the decision to legally incorporate; not doing so would make it very difficult for OBC to contract with other entities, act as a financial intermediary, or apply for and distribute grants without personal liability.

surrendering communitarian values and principles of openness against external more vertically and hierarchically established structures.

The scholarly communications landscape is littered with examples of how ostensibly community-driven projects attempting to open up the existing infrastructure have succumbed to just the kind of structural violence of which Graeber writes. Only a few months ago, COPIM responded in a blog post to the acquisition of Knowledge Unlatched (KU) by Wiley (global profits in 2021 $1,941,500,000). This acquisition followed KU's opaque transition in 2016 from a UK Community Interest Company (a non-profit organisation) into a German GmbH (roughly equivalent to a UK PLC, i.e., a for-profit company).[9] As COPIM's blog post noted, this move by Wiley was only one of several recent takeovers of open access (OA) infrastructure by large commercial organisations. Other examples include the acquisitions of Mendeley, the Social Science Research Network (now SSRN), and of bepress by Elsevier, in 2013, 2016 and 2017 respectively, and of F1000 Research by Taylor & Francis in 2020. These takeovers reflect 'an ongoing consolidation of research infrastructure by major publishing corporations, and in particular the increasing attempts to monetise and, potentially, monopolise the infrastructures of open knowledge dissemination' (COPIM, 2021). They often fit within a broader programme of 'openwashing', 'deployed as an intentional marketing tactic [...] to co-opt the values of Open for profit' and 'mobilized through subtle methods such as appropriating the language of Open to redefine its meaning' (Waugh & Carlisle-Johnston, 2022). Each of these cases has its own distinct history, but the general pattern is all too evident. Other fields of open, community-led endeavour outside academia have their own stories to tell.

Under such circumstances, the probable outcomes are that any open infrastructure organisation for openness will either be radicalized or will 'sink into a morass of compromises that absorb it back into the social order that it once sought to change' (Bookchin, 2015).[10] The broader socio-economic and political structures that make such acquisitions common are precisely those that existing infrastructures of scholarly communication are deeply 'sunk into and inside of' (to reprise Susan Leigh Star's phrase), and within which projects that would provide new, open infrastructures must find a way of operating as they look to establish alternatives. In such circumstances, good governance is perhaps best thought of as an important tool in negotiating that difficult relationship. Good governance may require above all a clear-eyed alertness to the reality of the landscape in which an infrastructure project is embedded and its governance situated, as well as of the nature of alliances that are being entered into and of the likely costs and benefits of compromises made. Only such an awareness will lead to governance structures and mechanisms that provide meaningful defences against co-optation, commercial appropriation, or takeover. Most open source, community-led projects are either explicitly inspired by or implicitly sympathetic towards at least some part of 'that anti-authoritarian tradition that wishes to replace bureaucratized

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[9] For more on the Knowledge Unlatched case and its broader implications, see Knöchelmann 2018, Gatti 2018.

[10] Bookchin here is describing the options that confront communalism as its decentralised power structures increasingly challenge national institutions, but the structural parallels should be apparent.

forms of *violence* with bottom-up, directly democratic structures' (Graeber, 2017). There do remain 'pockets of contradiction and possibility' within all forms of hegemonic infrastructure, whether within the contemporary university, the publishing world or beyond, and ultimately negotiation and engagement with existing infrastructures is not only worthwhile but in most cases all but unavoidable for open, community-driven projects (Joseph-Salisbury & Connelly, 2021). This report therefore begins by urging that ultimately, this is what governance *is* – or must be – for the kinds of projects it discusses: a means of exploiting to the maximum the specific situated affordances of both the cracks and nooks in existing hegemonic structures and regulations, and—through an alternative ethos of mutual aid and collaboration—the possibilities offered by an emergent community-led ecology, and its capacity to scale small.

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Developing Community Governance for COPIM

By COPIM

COPIM, as a project, has from the outset argued for the importance of developing and maintaining community-owned and -led open infrastructures to support scholarly communication—or in our case the publication of open access books. This report, which outlines better practices for the governance of open infrastructures, also includes documentation about *our* governance practices as developed within COPIM, including the lessons we learned along the way as a (largely) horizontally governed community-led project developing forms of community governance for its infrastructures, workflows, and platforms.

During the first half of the project, based on a mixed methodology that included desk research (resulting in an article (Adema & Moore, 2021), a report on models for community governance (Moore, 2021), and a series of blog posts), internal and external (stakeholder) workshops, interviews with project members, and exchanges with similar like-minded projects, we developed a process to support the governance needs of the project. With this process we aimed to cover the needs of the project as a whole as well as (in applied form) the various open digital infrastructures, platforms, workflows, and financial models that the project is developing in support of the enduring resilience of open access book publishing. As we will outline more in-depth underneath, this process is based on a methodology of co-design and co-development, which structures and continues to inform the development of our community governance. The research and methodology that has informed this process has been developed, conducted, and performed by a core subgroup of current and past COPIM work package members, including Samuel Moore, Patrick Hart, Janneke Adema, Eileen Joy, Sherri Barnes, Lidia Uziel, and Judith Fathallah.

As the article Moore and Adema wrote during the first half of the project outlines, the project as a whole works according to the overarching principle or philosophy of 'scaling small'. Scaling small is an alternative organisational principle for governing community-led publishing projects based on values of mutual reliance, care, and other forms of commoning. This principle eschews standard approaches to organisational growth through economies of scale—which tend to flatten community diversity. Instead it puts forward the idea that scale can be nurtured through intentional collaborations between like-minded community-driven projects that promote a bibliodiverse ecosystem while providing resilience through resource sharing and other kinds of collaboration. This principle contends that through establishing strong relationships between existing independent organisations, as well as by sharing open source tools, infrastructures, resources, skills, and best practices amongst each other in a non-competitive environment, organisations can together grow stronger and scale both horizontally and vertically whilst becoming more resilient and retaining their independence. Organisations such as ScholarLed and the Radical Open Access Collective (ROAC) exemplify this principle and our aim has been to extend this even further through the services, infrastructures, and platforms provided through COPIM.

COPIM is both decentralised and distributed across a variety of geographical contexts (albeit predominantly concentrated in and focusing on a US, UK, and EU context, as this is where the project partners are situated). As a project we favour horizontal modes of collaboration that foreground non-hierarchical structures, cooperation, and coordination between groups of pre-defined stakeholders (Moore, 2021). Drawing on the philosophy of scaling small, COPIM has been setting up an open, community-led governance system for its infrastructures and processes, a structure that we have been developing together with the community of stakeholders that is involved in the project more broadly, including scholars, publishers, librarians, technology and infrastructure providers, researchers, and knowledge managers. One thing that stands out is that the COPIM project consists of multiple partners that themselves have different governance structures and values as do the numerous libraries, publishers, scholarly societies and other stakeholders that form its community to come, and which will contribute to the overall community-led governance models we are developing. These stakeholders are either active participants of the project (i.e., as project members of COPIM) or they may be representatives of stakeholder groups which we have consulted through our research and outreach efforts. In this process we have also been learning a lot from and have been actively collaborating and exchanging knowledge with several other scholarly publishing projects and organisations that have been exploring issues of governance or have inspirational governance models, including, most notably, the OPERAS-P project and the Next Generation Library Publishing (NGLP) project.

What we want to outline underneath and as part of the following chapters, is some of our findings and the processes we have developed and followed to explore what community governance means for COPIM, and how we have been and will continue to implement this for the project and its various elements. We are currently finalising this process for one of the main outputs to come out of COPIM, the Open Book Collective (and platform), and next to writing up our experiences and findings as part of this better practices report (which again includes *our* governance practices and the lessons we have learned in establishing community governance), we will continue to monitor and document the implementation of community governance for the OBC via a soon to be released working paper and blog posts.

In our initial desk research, which also informed Moore's report, we explored and tried to define what community governance is by looking at the variety of approaches to and models of governance that are being used within like-minded not-for-profit open scholarly communication organisations (such as SciELO, CLACSO, SPARC, AmeliCA, OPERAS, Humanities Commons, OpenAIRE, Redalyc, and Educopia). Many of these organisations are also in their own way scaling small by supporting each other and closely working together.[11] Based on this initial research we identified a number of features and considerations that are

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[11] See for example how CLACSO, Redalyc, and AmeliCA are directly collaborating following 'efforts conceived in the South and for the South'.

important to consider when a community or project wants to determine what good governance is. These included: the scale or scope of the organisation; the formality of the governance system required; and the extent to which governance relates to the mission of the project.[12]

When looking at different forms of more formal and informal governance, it became clear how scale and collaboration might further influence how formal governance models are. For example, one of our findings was that many organisations rely on simple advisory board structures for their governance, where actual procedures can remain quite opaque. However, we also looked at how perhaps in some cases 'good' or 'better' governance involves less formalised and hierarchical structures, rules, and procedures, for example where it concerns smaller scholar-led and not-for-profit entities. Following these insights, we therefore asserted that governance is *situated*, which is to say it depends on the kind of organisation, network, project or infrastructure being governed, the community governing it, and the scale of its operations. The situatedness of an organisation therefore is vital to consider when devising systems of governance, especially also considering the approach to horizontality and community governance we are exploring for COPIM.

Workshopping Governance

Building on and extending our initial desk research we organised a half-day workshop focused on community governance which brought together governance experts, key stakeholders in OA book publishing, and representatives from allied large community-led projects, to collaboratively explore what the governance procedures of COPIM's open publication ecosystem for monographs should look like and to begin thinking about developing models to sustain the governance of the infrastructure as a community-based OA service organisation. The discussions with the workshop participants focused on two key questions ('What does good governance mean?' and 'Who or what is our community?') and we further explored with the participants how scale or scope, formality, and the values and mission of an organisation influence its governance.[13] Underneath some of the main findings that emerged from the discussions during the first part of this workshop, which focused on the question 'What does good governance mean?'. In the next chapter we will focus on the second question.

Situatedness

Situatedness or the situated nature of governance, includes a consideration of how good governance provides accountability to a specific community or range of communities. This involves mapping that community's norms, values, and practices to inform decision-making

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[12] We have previously written up our findings based on this literature review in a blogpost, of which the below is an extract (Moore and Adema 2020).

[13] We have previously written up our findings from this workshop in two blogposts, of which the underneath is an extract (Moore and Adema 2020b, 2020a).

powers based on the resources being managed. This situatedness also determines how to promote equity and fairness in a specific community or project and is at the same time what makes it difficult to assess objectively what good governance is as this is always context-specific. This context-specificness also brings with it certain expectations about governance, which might inhibit experimentation with different models (e.g., when organisations rely on existing models rather than experimenting with new structures—this also relates to how they can be bound by rules and regulations around incorporation, which don't always offer as much flexibility to try out different structures as these are governed by specific regulating institutions: in the UK the Charity Commission and Companies House for example). The situatedness of an organisation or project thus influences the kinds of normalised governance models in a particular field. For example, as explained earlier, as part of our initial research for COPIM when we analysed the governance models of a selection of scholarly communication organisations and projects, we found that most of them follow a quite standard governance structure with general meetings, advisory boards, and bylaws, a set-up which then becomes an expectation of good governance.

Formality

Good governance can also involve developing more formalised rules around how to govern. Yet formality can also create issues, especially also in the realm of small, community-led scholarly communication organisations, which we at COPIM consist of. Governance has often been an afterthought here, something that will come later as there are more pressing issues at hand when for example setting up a press. Especially when they start off, many of these kinds of organisations rely on forms of benevolent dictatorship (a term used by media theorist Nathan Schneider in the context of online communities (Schneider, 2021)) or on a few individuals initially running an organisation on their own. If and when an organisation grows or develops, who then gets to design the systems of governance? Yet there is also an issue with the imbalance of labour in more horizontal and informal organisations that needs to be acknowledged, where governance often comes down to those who have time to actually do the work.

Process

Given the above, good governance can best be seen as an ongoing process. Reggie Raju (Director of Research and Learning Services University of Cape Town Library), talked in the workshop about a 'flexible tenancy' mode of governance that adapts as stakeholders change and organisations develop. Still, a solid foundation from which to grow is very useful, meaning it was advised that governance needs to be part of the conversation from the outset of a project and needs to be continually re-assessed when an organisation adjusts its processes and assumptions. Joe Deville (editor at Mattering Press and COPIM project member) argued that organisational growth and greater financial sustainability necessitate dynamic models when an organisation moves from an informal to a formalised system of governance. As mentioned earlier, more formalised structures can also pose a risk to the more informal relationships and community norms that have been developed within a community or project, but on the other hand, good governance might also imply setting up formal structures for long-term governance that allows the founders of a project, for example, to step away without it falling apart, where the systems that are in place will in that case allow it to continue to function smoothly.

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2. Community Governance: The Romance of Community, The Real of Coalition

By Patrick Hart

One difficult question that comes to the fore when thinking about community governance is the issue of 'community'. It is twenty years since Miranda Joseph explored how the relentless ideal of community serves to legitimise the social hierarchies of gender, race, nation, and sexuality that capitalism implicitly requires (Joseph, 2002).[14] Yet the discourse of community remains all-pervasive. Across the literature dealing with open scholarship and open infrastructure, 'community' is often upheld as a guarantor of the values governance should enshrine. For Laurie Gemmill Arp and Megan Forbes, for example, the core goal in establishing governance is to 'Plan and implement the governance model or models that best reflect the values of the program and community' (Arp & Forbes, 2018). Similarly, the OPERAS research infrastructure takes its principles by which infrastructures should be run and sustained from The Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure (POSI), which defines governance as follows:

> Governance: a system to ensure that the central services serve the community, not themselves or certain interest groups, to ensure that they are responsive to changing needs, etc. (Mounier et al., 2018)

As Cameron Neylon (Professor of Research Communications at the Centre for Culture and Technology at Curtin University and one of the co-authors of POSI) acknowledged in COPIM's initial community governance workshop, POSI 'dodged' the task of defining a community because of how difficult this is to do in the abstract. The 'slippery' quality of the concept of community emerged strongly from this workshop with external supporters and allies of the project. Participants recognised how 'community' is used to impart an often ill-defined or unacknowledged shared identity, while also suggesting that 'working out who your "community" may be is the most important question' that an infrastructure project has to answer. These discussions are documented in a COPIM workshop report 'On the Meaning of Community' (Moore & Adema, 2020), which we will discuss more in depth at the end of this chapter. We recommend this as a helpful introduction to the complexities of thinking about community. The authors, Sam Moore and Janneke Adema, also record there the lessons COPIM learned from these discussions. Among the most important of these lessons is the necessity of establishing a pluralistic understanding of *communities*, or what Leslie Chan (Associate Professor Critical Development Studies at the University of Toronto) termed a 'community of communities'.

[14] Joseph examines how the ideal of community recurs relentlessly, from debates over art and culture in the popular media to the discourses and practices of nonprofit and nongovernmental organisations.

One key aspect of the problem with "the community"', as Kathleen Fitzpatrick (Director of Digital Humanities and Professor of English at Michigan State University), who also attended the workshop, puts it in *Generous Thinking: A Radical Approach to Saving the University*,

> might be less about "community" than about "the"; it's possible that acknowledging and foregrounding the multiple and multifarious communities with which all of us engage might help us avoid the exclusions that the declaration of groupness is often designed to produce, the "us" that inevitably suggests a "them" (Fitzpatrick, 2019).

The homogenising and exclusionary potential of 'the community' emerged as another central preoccupation from COPIM's first governance workshops. One example of homogenisation, raised by Arianna Becerril García (executive director of Redalyc, founder and chair of AmeliCA) during the workshop, is the way open access advocates in Europe and North America tend to talk about open access in Latin America, ignoring immense ideological and geographical distances between various groups and contexts. Florence Piron (founder of Éditions science et bien commun) meanwhile highlighted how a community that prides itself on being open to all can nevertheless function to exclude. She herself noted that she does not feel part of the open access 'community' that supposedly welcomes her, primarily because of its anglophone character which excludes many non-native English speakers.

Despite all these issues, 'community' clearly retains the power to suggest a different way of doing things. 'Community-led' and 'community-driven' suggest values and practices that operate in distinction to top-down or market-led approaches, such as bibliodiversity, open and public knowledge, and collaboration and anti-competitiveness. The notion of the community of communities, which encourages attention to the diversity of interests and stakeholders in a project, has been taken up not only by COPIM but by other infrastructure projects and organisations that aim to be community-driven. In practice, though, the tendency, at least in much of the English-language governance guidance cited above, is to conceive of this community of communities primarily in terms of institutional roles or functions: the various overlapping stakeholder groups, including publishers, researchers, librarians, and wider audiences and publics.

The extent to which these different categories of stakeholder are likely to be differently situated, to have differing goals and working methods, presents particular issues for infrastructure projects, particularly in terms of structure and representation (see chapters 4 and 5). As COPIM has grappled with the practical difficulties of ensuring that the Open Book Collective's governance aligns with both its business plan and legal requirements without compromising its core values and principles, another important way of thinking about this 'community of communities' has become more apparent. Crudely put, this is the often unstable alliance between what we might call, in one unsatisfactory shorthand, 'reformers' and 'revolutionaries'. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's influential essay 'The University and the Undercommons' frames this relationship in a manner that is especially relevant to the governance of community-driven infrastructure projects aimed at supporting open scholarly and intellectual exchange:

> Worry about the university. This is the injunction today. […] Call for its restoration like Harold Bloom or Stanley Fish or Gerald Graff. Call for its reform like Derek Bok or Bill Readings or Cary Nelson. Call out to it as it calls to you. But for the subversive intellectual, all of this goes on upstairs, in polite company, among the rational men. After all, the subversive intellectual came under false pretenses, with bad documents, out of love. Her labor is as necessary as it is unwelcome. The university needs what she bears but cannot bear what she brings. And on top of all that, she disappears. She disappears into the underground, the downlow lowdown maroon community of the university, into the undercommons of enlightenment, where the work gets done, where the work gets subverted, where the revolution is still black, still strong (Harney & Moten, 2013).

It is from somewhere akin to this 'undercommons of enlightenment', this 'maroon community of the university', that many of the first small-scale open access publishing and scholarship projects emerged. These are often precisely the sort of ventures from which COPIM grew and which its model of 'scaling small' sets out to support. Many of the scholar-led publishing projects arose historically out of intense frustration with—and in explicit opposition to—the marked indifference and structural hostility on the part of 'upstairs', exemplified by a lack of institutional support or interest in the kind of publishing projects they wanted to initiate (open access, not-for-profit, inter-institutional) (Adema & Stone, 2017). More often than not, those who have led the way in opening up scholarship have found themselves in something resembling the ambivalent relationship towards existing infrastructures of scholarly, intellectual and educational communication that Harney and Moten articulate: 'in but not of' the university, unable to deny that it 'is a place of refuge', but forced 'to abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment' in order to do its real work. Similarly to the figuration of 'para-academcs,' punctum books' Eileen Joy outlines how 'These are not groups who reject the museum, the gallery, the conventional publishing world, or the university -- rather, they seek to inhabit the position of the 'para-' [the 'beside'], a position of intimate exteriority, or exterior intimacy' (Joy, 2013).

As the open access movement has matured and developed, it has expanded its original focus to look towards a broader conception of open scholarship, taking in not only how research is accessed but the conditions of its production. In parallel with this development, the argument for opening access has begun to influence 'polite company', those who 'worry' about the university and look to reform it. This has opened up the possibility for significant change to the existing infrastructure, with initiatives such as Plan S promising to make 'full and immediate' open access the norm rather than the exception in scholarly publishing, and open access projects able to attract significant funding. But as we have seen, this has also brought with it risks of dilution, compromise and takeover. Led by a group of European national research funders and global charitable funders which includes the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Plan S has been criticised for promoting a 'gold' APC or BPC model of open access ('pay-to-publish') that entrenches existing inequalities and for its potential to reduce diversity in the scholarly publishing ecosystem.[15] Early advocates of open scholarship understandably fear that commercial publishers and other interests deeply embedded in the existing infrastructure will have little trouble co-opting such top-down, policy-driven forms of openness (Kember, 2014).

This situation has led to perhaps the most complex coalition or 'community of communities' of all: the alliance between upstairs and downstairs, between those who find themselves occupying the position of the 'subversive intellectual' (in Harney and Moten's terms) or 'scholar-activist' (in Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly's), and those who 'worry' about the university. This uneasy coalition between the 'maroon community' on the one hand and 'polite company' on the other is fundamentally, deeply political. A situated and embedded recasting of the historically fraught relationship between reformists and revolutionaries, it has serious implications for any attempt to establish forms of governance. It cuts across the various other communities commonly identified in a way that gives rise to both conflicts and alliances and any discussion of community-led governance should take it into account.

Of course, in practice the alliance between 'upstairs' and 'downstairs' is more complicated than this binary picture suggests. Those with secure positions near the centre of existing scholarly infrastructures are often in safer and more powerful positions from which to express and pursue radical change than those on the margins. Many of those working in the field of 'community-led' scholarly communication negotiate a position for themselves that looks to bridge the two roles of the reformist who worries about the university, and the radical.[16] Others find themselves pulled relentlessly between the two positions, the alliance barely, painfully held together within the individual subject.

It is extremely difficult (and perhaps simply too early) to suggest any kind of 'better practice' for approaching this kind of upstairs-downstairs coalition-building. As with so much else in governance, this is as much (or more) a matter of politics as it can ever be of policy or procedure, and the best solutions or approach for any given project or organisation will be dependent upon its own contexts, and the (often highly specific) cultures and expectations of its communities. We incline to prefer an approach that, at least internally, makes explicit any

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[15] As Samuel Moore notes, Plan S is 'wholly embedded in the liberal political economy of European nation states. The policy cannot and will not improve or fix precarity, biblio-monoculturalism or the marginalisation of minority scholarships' (Moore 2021b: 1521); Moore nevertheless offers support for 'tactical engagement' with Plan S, on the basis that its zero-embargo repository approach 'may encourage a responsible, ethical and positive conception of academic freedom for scholars around the globe'.). For further critiques of Plan S see, for example, Aguado López and Becerril García 2020; Aguado López and Becerril García 2019; and Debat and Babini 2020.

[16] The title of Kathleen Fitzpatrick's recent book, *Generous Thinking: A Radical Approach to Saving the University*, quoted above, encapsulates the liminal position in which those who occupy senior positions within academia and 'worry about the university' while also aiming to offer 'radical' solutions find themselves. Fitzpatrick is Director of Digital Humanities and Professor of English at Michigan State University, and previously served as Associate Executive Director and Director of Scholarly Communication of the Modern Language Association. She is also project director of *Humanities Commons*, an open-access, open-source infrastructure network serving nearly 30,000 scholars and practitioners across the humanities and around the world.

differences in position and goal between members, as best facilitating the construction of honest, meaningful and effective coalitions and alliances. (This may mean in turn that an organisation's values and goals are best articulated in relatively broad terms, as is discussed in the following chapter.) However, in many contexts and organisational cultures a certain vagueness may enable unlikely allies to work together in a way that would become impossible were their differences to be drawn into a sharper focus.

While clear better practice is hard to pin down, then, we've nevertheless felt it important to draw attention to this issue here, for several reasons. First, it can have such significant consequences for any community-led open infrastructure organisation's effective governance that to continue to skim over it, as much otherwise excellent governance advice does, risks presenting a false picture of the challenges that governance of such organisations involves. Secondly, while we're not (yet) in the position to offer any very concrete guidance that is anything close to universally or even generally applicable, the members of any organisation are likely to be in a position to identify localised, situated governance solutions and strategies. Thirdly, by drawing attention to this area, we hope to stimulate the sharing of such solutions and, as a wider community, move towards a better understanding of the specific challenges such 'upstairs-downstairs' coalitions entail.

Killjoys

Finally, perhaps, a better awareness of the kinds of alliances we are building can lead to a fuller appreciation of the importance of 'killjoys', and to a governance culture more accepting of them. Borrowing the term from Sara Ahmed (and noting that she is building on the work of Audre Lorde and bell hooks), the vision statement of punctum books (COPIM member and one of the founding members of ScholarLed) celebrates the role of the killjoys

> who serve as "blockage points" that threaten the group's social bond, and who "get in the way" of any group's "enjoyment and solidarity." The killjoy is a "willful" figure who might *never* "get over it," who importantly enacts a critical "style of politics: *a refusal to look away from what has already been looked over."* We need the killjoys, whether they arrive from the inside or outside of our community, to unsettle our so-called "successes" and "happiness" and to break the ground on which we think we stand, however disorienting (punctum books, n.d.).

When organisations recognise that they represent a coalition of interests, roles and positions (or at least as a community of often disparate communities), raising uncomfortable, difficult objections is less liable to be seen as merely obstructive than when they are conceived of simply as a community of shared interests and views. The killjoy can and should always remain in some sense the outsider on the inside, the one who refuses: but conceiving of the collective as a *critical* community, or, in Ambalavaner Sivinandan's terms, as a 'community of resistance', may help ensure that the killjoy is heard (Sivanandan, 1990).

Better Practice Recommendations

Community is a necessary but not an adequate concept for thinking about the diverse actors and stakeholders involved in an open, community-driven infrastructure project, and for evaluating not only the risks but also the opportunities to which this diversity gives rise. The discourse of 'community' can easily become a way to avoid thinking about, benefiting from and addressing differences, tensions, and conflicts within a project.

Think in terms of *coalitions*, *alliances*, and even *individuals*, not just communities.

This will help to

- make clear the areas in which different participants are in agreement, useful areas of discussion, compromise, and negotiation, and any 'red lines';
- establish a space for healthy disagreement and debate.

This is one area in which the default best practice of outward transparency may not apply.

Regularly map both your existing community of communities, and the community of communities you want to bring about.

There are various ways to do this. One good starting place might be with an exercise such as McCandless and Lipmanowic's Social Network Webbing exercise. This quickly illuminates for a whole group what resources are hidden within their existing network of relationships and what steps to take for tapping those resources. It also makes it easy to identify opportunities for building stronger connections as well as new ones. The inclusive approach makes the network visible and understandable to everybody in the group simultaneously, and encourages individuals to take the initiative for building a stronger network rather than receiving directions through top-down assignments. Informal or loose connections—even friends' friends—are tapped in a way that can have a powerful influence on progress without detailed planning and big investments.

An excellent follow-up tool is 'Vision in Formation: Articulating Your Community's Purpose' (available as either a PDF or a Google Doc), part of Educopia's growing *Community Cultivation Resource Library* (check back regularly for new community-related resources). 'Vision in Formation' enables a facilitator to 'guide the initial members of a new community or network to articulate and document the shared purpose of their collaboration' and may also help 'existing communities that are in transition and reconsidering their shared purpose'. The resource also includes useful templates.

Further Reading

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Who or what is COPIM's community?

By COPIM

Defining Communities

For us as a project, establishing who our community is, or will become, was essential to us from the start, and we started the project from the outset with the idea that the main stakeholders that we felt should collaboratively create and maintain open infrastructures for scholarly communication and publishing, should be included in the project consortium itself, namely scholars, publishers, libraries, universities, and technology providers (and of course funders, who generously supported the project). We further set out to define who our community is as part of the first workshop we conducted together with external stakeholders, including representatives from the above mentioned groups as well as experts in governance, organisational theory, and critical management studies.[17] The workshop participants discussed how community-led as a concept comes with a set of implied values or practices (such as inclusivity, informality and a values-driven approaches to organisation), often in opposition to top-down or market-led forms of publishing. Yet community-led often remains ill-defined and as a concept or model is rarely used 'unfavourably'. This highlights the difficulty of defining what or who a community is in the abstract, even though, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, this might be the most important thing to establish for an organisation or project when starting up. In the case of a project for example, when do its individual participants become a community?

One solution to this conundrum is to work with a more pluralistic understanding of communities (such as the 'community of communities') to indicate different needs within a project or organisation consisting of different groupings: stakeholders, beneficiaries, and partners for example. Defining a community by identifying the groups it is made up might help determine a community's interconnections and relationalities and can also help make more visible the inequalities within communities, for example around labour input: who puts in the work and who benefits from it? Establishing who this community is that we are supporting through our work at COPIM whilst at the same time bringing this community about through our ongoing development, research, advocacy, and collaborations, is therefore essential. As is exploring how best to involve this yet undefined and perhaps in some ways always contingent community in our governance structures.

Homogenisation, Diversity, and Exclusion

One important issue mentioned is how 'community' also brings with it certain homogenisation effects, as it can obscure the difference within by assuming a shared and common identity. We

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[17] We have previously written up our findings from this workshop in two blogposts, of which the underneath is an extract (Moore and Adema 2020b, 2020a).

see this also when community-led projects rely solely on their private networks in way that may reinforce existing power structures. Many participants to the workshop therefore mentioned the importance of ensuring diversity within an organisation's governance in order to move beyond these networks. Community definitions therefore require attendance to detail and difference so as to not homogenise such diverse contexts. Yet we need to remain aware how community also by definition implies exclusion: there will be those that are not part of the community. How then do we take on a welcoming stance as a community? See for example the issue of the anglophone and English language nature of many OA communities. How will we account for different linguistic and geographical contexts? This also reflects the importance of who has a say and who is able to participate in a project or community and who gets to speak on behalf of everyone else (which also feeds into how conflict is resolved and how labour is valued, for example). Within a publishing ecology we might also have to consider non-human actors and assemblages rather than just prioritising the human, as Chris Land (Professor of Work and Organisation at ARU), one of the workshop participants, reminded us.

Community Building

All of this again emphasised the importance of community building as one of the main findings that came out of the workshop. How as a project do we identify our stakeholders, beneficiaries and partners and how can we best support all of these groups? Communities need to be nurtured in a processual way, this work is never done. It is a matter of keeping an eye on both the community that is and the one that as a project we are involved in bringing about. And this involves how we can support communities in a continuous way through interconnections with many other communities, again following the principle of scaling small. It is important in this respect to remain open to the linkages and relationalities with other communities that themselves can be nurtured. Community then becomes less a standalone thing and more something that reveals the interconnectedness of our efforts. As Chris Land explained, 'scaling small' allows for the collective coordination of resources across a 'diverse ecology of organisations' that creates a meta community, or a community of communities, for the provision of diverse approaches to publishing.

In this respect one of our other takeaways from the workshop was that our understanding of community within the COPIM project must appreciate antagonism both within and outside what we are defining as our community. Being 'community-led' is not as simple as identifying a homogeneous group of people to whom we are answerable and/or steered by (which can lead to the exclusion of certain perspectives).

Community Governance Working Group

After our initial Community Governance workshop, which heavily informed our further research, we set up a Governance working group or advisory board on the Humanities Commons platform, which included participants of the workshop and other governance experts. We set up this working group to share (our) research around community governance, and to ask for community feedback on the governance elements we were developing. The working group has been incredibly helpful in providing us with a research direction while at the same time forming the kind of proto-governance community we would like to establish around the COPIM project and its various elements. Next to using the Humanities Commons platform to share our findings with the Working Group we also invited them to several of our internal governance workshops, which were devised by former COPIM project member Samuel Moore.

Models for Community Governance

Based on the above described workshop and our initial desk research, Moore wrote a research report, *Exploring Models for Community Governance*, outlining current models of community governance as explored both within scholarly communications and outside of it (looking more generally to frameworks relating to cooperativism, the commons, and community rule and how they can be applied) and the advantages and disadvantages of these different approaches to governance. The report serves as a resource for both COPIM and for the scholarly community, especially for authors and publishers interested in exploring alternative, community-led forms of governance for their research and publishing projects. It does this through 1) a landscape study of forms of governance within scholarly communication and 2) an exploratory study of the theoretical literature on alternative forms of governance appropriate for community-led organisations (Moore, 2021). As the report outlines, thinking about community governance is ever so important in a context in which control of academic publishing has been largely ceded to or is being usurped by private firms within the market. As a consequence many researchers are now arguing for new kinds of governance by the diverse communities that hold a stake in the academic publishing industry ((Fyfe et al., 2017); Moore, 2020). This, they argue, will allow the workflows and infrastructures for publishing to be accountable to a broader range of stakeholders, such as authors, librarians, early-career researchers, the broader public, and of course, publishers.

As Moore outlines, governance is not the same as management and therefore does not refer to the day-to-day running of an organisation, where it is instead more strategic and refers to the structures and values that shape an organisation's work (which includes accountability to and oversight of these structures and values to a broader community in the case of community governance, i.e., via structures such as voting, boards, and bylaws (Crow, 2013)). Governance, Moore points out, is thus more holistic, comprising a number of different elements such as organisational structures (boards etc.) and their interactions, values (ethics that underpin the community), principles (actionable statements reflective of certain value propositions), norms (informal cultures that influence interactions within a community), mission and vision statements (one or two sentence summaries of what an organisation hopes to do), voting rights, and bylaws or rules for participation or resolving conflict (also named charters, constitutions, articles of association etc. often depending on the form of incorporation). Good governance then involves describing what these elements mean or involve in a specific project or for a specific community, and ensuring they are correctly applied and kept up-to-date. Describing what exactly these elements are for COPIM formed the basis of our internal governance workshops (which we will describe more in depth underneath and in the next chapters), which have helped us understand what kind of governance system we needs by asking ourselves the right questions about what kind of organisation we hope to be.

Internal Governance Workshops

Our workshops were structured on the basis of a model Moore describes in detail in his report. The *Institutional Analysis and Development* (IAD) Framework was developed by Elinor Ostrom in the 1980s and has been further updated since in the context of the knowledge commons by Frischmann et al., which, as Moore outlines, is a framework designed to study commons rather than governance but is still helpful for exploring what it is that makes a commons successful (Frischmann et al., 2014). Attributes to explore in this context are:

1. **Resources** – what is being shared and consumed, and by which actors?
2. **Community** – which actors make up the community and what are their roles?
3. **Goals and objectives** – what is the commons trying to achieve?
4. **History and narrative** – how did the commons come about, and where is it heading?

Determining what these elements are for COPIM also again aids in determining how the project and its community are situated, and this situatedness can be crafted in terms of a rich narrative of the various actions, interactions, actors, and resources at play, creating a narrative around the project, seeking to capture who COPIM and its various elements are, what it is producing, what its goals are and where it is heading, which will feed into the governance models that the project is developing. This, as Moore outlines, also means that governance is an activity of community co-development, not just decided by one group at one time but continually evolving as the organisation itself evolves.

Based on Moore's research we took a holistic approach to governance and the various elements that make up governance, from mission and vision statements to bylaws and more formal governance structures. We then translated these governance elements into initially three internal workshops to further explore these elements with the COPIM project members (a further three internal workshops — up to the date of writing — were organised after this, in which we applied this holistic co-designing approach to the development of governance structures for the Open Book Collective (OBC)).

During our first internal workshop we tried to develop COPIM's mission and vision statement, as well as the values and principles that guide the project, which we will discuss more in depth in the next chapter. During our second internal workshop based on the approach outlined in the Knowledge Commons framework by Frischmann et al., we set out to determine what makes up the basic attributes of the specific knowledge commons we are creating and contributing to with the COPIM project. This workshop challenged us to 'think like commoners' especially in relation to the three parts to the commons, following De Angelis and Stavrides, i.e. **common resource(s)** (what is being shared); **the commoners** (who is sharing and how?); **and commoning** (the social relations that sustain the commons) (De Angelis & Stavrides, 2010). This included determining what our resources are, who make up our community, what our goals and objectives are and what the history and narrative of the project is. We will describe our findings around what our resources, goals and objectives, and the history and narrative of the project are in the following chapters. Here we will shortly focus on what we defined as our community.

Co-design and Co-development

During each workshop three groups were formed that each tried to formulate the various governance elements we identified during our initial research followed by a discussion between the three groups. We subsequently colour-coded the notes made by each group and when we wrote-up these governance elements we took an active effort to keep the voices of the different groups alive by ensuring not one voice or colour became dominant, something that easily happens when writing up qualitative research. We then shared these co-designed governance elements with the COPIM members to further incorporate feedback via a co-development method, which involved various rounds of feedback on these draft elements, also from the members of the Humanities Commons Governance Working Group. Several rounds of feedback and development of these processual or 'living' governance elements have led to the elements we will discuss here in this report.

Community – Which Actors Make Up the Community and What are their Roles?

Before we tried to list who made up our community we discussed several issues related to this exercise. First of all we emphasised that there is a difference between stakeholders and community. Stakeholder as a term might not always capture the individual in any meaningful way. For example, the term 'librarian' designates a lot of complex positionings within the library itself. How do we account for different types of librarians? Does this mean we need to reach out to and involve a mix of different types of librarians? Or different library advisory boards reflecting different stakeholders within libraries?

We also wanted to highlight who we are currently missing in our consortium, and who is currently being excluded? Although our consortium is international, the context we are predominantly working in (e.g., championing alternatives to BPCs) is that of the Global North and the presses involved in the consortium publish mostly English-language books (with the exception of Meson Press). We also highlighted that perhaps we were missing researchers as a specific group: many of us are researchers within COPIM and we run scholar-led presses but we maybe do not represent them as such, in the same way as e.g. a scholarly association would.

Finally, we discussed how to capture relevant stakeholders who are not tied to institutions in our governance models. Is it the values of the person or the values of the institution we are after in the end (of course this might differ according to the context)? We need to recognise people's roles, the fact that they have multiple (work) identities and the difference between people, their opinions, and their institution. How much are we bound in this respect by institutions as stakeholders within our communities?

In the end we came up with the following list of actors, who will play different roles at different stages of the project, also corresponding to and in relation with COPIM's different work package activities. We will also continue to update this list throughout the project.

- **The book** as an agential actant around which everything centres itself
- **Presses** (and publishing roles: typesetters, copyeditors etc.). What is the main publishing community we engage with? The OA Book Publishing Community: non-commercial , university presses, and scholar-led presses, small or medium-sized publishers, not-for profit publishers, independent publishers.
- **Authors and content creators**. Researchers/(para)academics/scholars/, including ECRs, senior researchers in unis, teaching and research staff.
- **Readers** (academics/students/non-academic)
- **Infrastructure providers and technical experts** (including platforms). The open source software community (open-source tools and the developers around them). Also as a service (on top of the book) that we are providing to libraries, for example DOAB.
- **Students** as readers and 'funders' of universities (in a fee-based system) and as scholar-led publishers to come.
- **Librarians.** Libraries are very heterogenous in their organisation and the term librarian aligns a lot of complexity within the library itself.
  - Scholarly communications librarian; in some libraries the scholcomm library is better able to direct spending strategy than in others. Scholcomm librarians often have more of an advocacy role.
  - Collections/acquisitions librarian; the collections librarians typically have more financial heft (often by committee).
  - Digital initiatives librarian (also digital resources librarian)
  - Repository Managers and Digital Assets Managers
- **Archivists & preservation experts** (long term preservation)
- **Universities/Faculties/Research Institutions**
- **Consortia:** universities, libraries, other scholcomm organisations, etc.
- **Aggregators**
- **Funders**
- **Policy makers** (at the level of government and also within/extending from institutions)
- **The Alt-ac community**

- **Non-human actors and relationalities**: machine readers, reading machines. Also reflects planetary issues around climate change etc. Who speaks on behalf of the book and non-human actors and how can we create accountability for that?
- **The entire publishing ecosystem**. Everyone who takes out data from COPIM.
- **Other projects and organisations** in the open access realm we are engaging with (and/or which we might engage with more).

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- **Other projects and organisations** in the open access realm we are engaging with (and/or which we might engage with more).

Figure 1: COPIM subsequently colour-coded the notes made by each group and when these governance elements were written up, the team took an active effort to keep the voices of the different groups alive by ensuring not one voice or colour became dominant, something that easily happens when writing up qualitative research

Further Reading

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3. The Importance of Values, Missions, and Visions

By Patrick Hart and Janneke Adema

This section opens with a discussion of some of the contexts that community-driven open infrastructure organisations may need to be especially aware of when identifying and articulating their values and principles, and some of the issues that they may encounter when attempting to embed these in their governance. It then looks at some recent examples of how scholarly open infrastructure organisations have addressed these contexts and issues, identifying examples of good practice. It also identifies a number of very useful practical resources and tools. This is followed by a discussion of mission, vision, and value statements, which also includes some helpful resources and examples. The section closes a summary of recommended procedures and practices.

Identifying the values and principles on which a community-led open infrastructure organisation is founded is widely recognised as an important first step towards good governance. The values motivating open scholarly infrastructure projects will in many cases also entail a broader opposition to what Janneke Adema calls 'the current attention system and politics of valuation in academia', which is predominantly based on metrics, brands, and individualised outputs (Adema, 2021). In light of the considerations discussed in the preceding chapters, we suggest that this should also mean relating values and principles clearly and explicitly to the organisation's situatedness, its embeddedness in a concrete context. Values and principles gain meaning and have a practical effect when articulated in relation to a particular political, cultural, and socio-economic ecosystem.

Most community-led open infrastructure projects arise from a shared commitment on the part of their participants to a 'relatively consistent' set of values and principles (Skinner & Lippincott, 2020). This commitment is usually accompanied by a common frustration at how existing infrastructures cement structural inequities and injustices. However, there are increasingly urgent concerns across diverse fields of practice that the drive towards openness, rather than fundamentally challenging these inequities, risks merely reproducing them: both inwardly, within open organisations' internal power structures, and outwardly, through their external impacts upon their wider communities. In this context, the manner in which the values and principles of any open project are not only identified and articulated, but reflected in (and, insofar as is possible, guaranteed by) its governance becomes especially important.

Openness and Global Inequity

A long-established aspiration of the open access movement has been to narrow the gap between rich and poor institutions and individuals, and to facilitate intellectual, scholarly, and educational exchanges and flows between the Global North and the Global South.[18] Yet as Albornoz, Okune and Chan demonstrate, there is 'growing evidence that "openness" or open research practices—when decontextualized from their historical, political, and socioeconomic roots—rather than narrowing gaps, can amplify the over-representation of knowledge produced by Northern actors and institutions and further the exclusion of knowledge produced by marginalized groups'.[19] Open systems 'may potentially replicate the very values and power imbalances that the movement initially sought to challenge' (Albornoz et al., 2020).

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility

This has led activists for open infrastructure to identify a need for a more comprehensive and contextualised understanding of how and where it fits into a wider framework of values. Writing in a parallel vein to Albornoz, Okune, and Chan, for example, Alexia Hudson-Ward describes as 'head-scratching' the fact that the open access community has not made more affirmative statements about the connections between openness and DEIA, 'especially given the fact that 'the "A" in DEIA stands for accessibility and the "E" for equity' (Hudson-Ward, 2021).[20] Rather than being a surprising, incidental failure, however, the apparent neglect of these values by some open organisations may be a consequence of their specific historical and cultural roots.

The Tyranny of Openness

Precisely because organisations promoting openness conceive of themselves as value- or mission-driven, there is a risk of assuming that these values will automatically underwrite the organisation's practices, or can stand in place of governance structures and processes.

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[18] Like Albornoz et al., we follow decolonial scholars such as Anne Mahler, Maria Lugones, Arturo Escobar and Boaventura de Sousa Santos in using the term 'Global South' to refer to 'a sociopolitical and epistemic space that extends beyond geographical lines and represents those who are at a disadvantage due to unjust sociopolitical and economic structures (such as capitalism, patriarchy, postcolonialism, and others) regardless of where they are placed in the world' (Albornoz et al, 2020: 65).

[19] The corrective influence of the movement towards openness is often conceptualised (at least implicitly) as unidirectional, granting the Global South access to the scholarly riches of the North. As Albornoz et al. and others have pointed out, however, open infrastructures also—and equally importantly—have the potential to make visible for the North the knowledge produced in the South but 'rendered invisible by the Global North's publishing and academic system' (Albornoz et al. 2020: 65).

[20] 'DEIA' is an acronym for 'diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility'. As an example of this failing, Hudson-Ward notes Toward Inclusive Excellence (TIE)'s surprise that 'DEIA principles were not raised in a more pronounced way by the Open Access (OA) community when the UC-Elsevier deal was announced'. And as Hudson-Ward's MIT Libraries' colleagues Chris Bourg and Roger Levy also commented with regard to the University of California – Elsevier deal, 'Locking in a norm where an author, funder, and/or institution must pay an opaque and often costly fee for the right to publish an article risks locking out scholars from less privileged institutions and less well funded disciplines. Equitable opportunity to contribute to scholarly literature is as important for the integrity and usefulness of scholarship as is the open accessibility to read' (Bourg and Levy 2021).

Moreover, the anti-authoritarian, 'open' impulses that often render the cultures around open infrastructures distinct can also in certain circumstances make them liable to become inhospitable to habitually marginalised groups. As Christina Dunbar-Hester puts it, writing of open-technology organisations,

> they are largely convened in places where human resources departments or equal opportunity legislation do not hold sway, as they are voluntaristic, and they are (or traditionally have been) governed relatively informally. This means that participants have historically had little formal recourse to redress instances of either abuse or subtler unequal standing. Moreover, specific cultural barriers to addressing these issues, including the belief that these communities are open to whoever "wants to be there," have tended to perpetuate the notion that if some people are not there, it is because they do not want to be (Dunbar-Hester, 2019).

Dunbar-Hester is in part building here on arguments put forward in the early 1970s by the feminist activist Jo Freeman, most notably in her essay 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness'. This essay drew attention to how supposedly leaderless, horizontal, open forms of organisation can allow pre-existing, implicit structures of power and prejudice to remain embedded, making them harder to recognise, challenge, and root out. Freeman's arguments have found a new resonance in the context of debates around the governance of commons-based open-source and open-scholarship infrastructure projects, and have recently been rediscovered in Silicon Valley, leading Nathan Schneider, for example, to write of 'The Tyranny of Openness' (Schneider, 2021).

In the first of COPIM's Community Governance workshops, held in May 2020, Katherine Skinner (Executive Director of the *Educopia* Institute), made a related point when she articulated the widely held concern that community-led projects can tend to rely largely or wholly on private networks, thereby reinforcing existing power structures (Moore & Adema, 2020). Community-driven open infrastructure projects such as COPIM may differ from the hacker cultures that are Dunbar-Hester's main focus in that many of their members are situated within or representing HE institutions such as universities and libraries, each with their own HR departments and regulations. Nevertheless, participants within a multi-agency infrastructure project can come to occupy an ambiguous, liminal status in relation to those institutions and their rules and regulations. This can lead to similar problems to those described above, where access to help and support is either poorly defined or entirely lacking, and trust in shared principles at the expense of more formal governance can also end up undermining these principles. Issues arise, for example, when conduct breaches happen between project members who work across different institutions. How can a cross-community project guard against subtler, often unintended inequities, and to what extent can and should these be addressed through formal project governance? Matters may be further complicated by ambiguities over the extent to which a project member is acting as an employee and a representative of an institution rather than in a personal, voluntary capacity. Collaborative work, community-focused work, and work on open access and open source projects has all been particularly liable to be undervalued by institutions, and consequently performed in a liminal grey area between professional activity and personal interest.

Against the 'Opt-in' Approach

Accounts such as Dunbar-Hester's and Schneider's offer important warnings regarding the blindspots in common interpretations of terms such as 'openness'. Take, for instance, the Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure (or POSI), which at the time of writing is in a position to become one of – if not *the* – most influential set of principles governing open infrastructure projects within the scholarly world (POSI is discussed in more detail in chapter 6). One of POSI's seven principles of governance is that of 'Non-discriminatory membership'. On the face of it, this is an admirable and uncontentious principle. However, what may be more problematic is its 'opt-in approach':

> **Non-discriminatory membership** – we see the best option as an "opt-in" approach with a principle of non-discrimination where any stakeholder group may express an interest and should be welcome. The process of representation in day to day governance must also be inclusive with governance that reflects the demographics of the membership.

The opt-in approach has obvious attractions, not the least being that it requires no outreach work beyond the (often already substantial) investment necessary to make a project viable. However, it risks throwing up precisely the kinds of cultural barriers to inclusivity that Dunbar-Hester highlights, perpetuating the belief that 'these communities are open to whoever "wants to be there"' and that 'if some people are not there, it is because they do not want to be'. This risk becomes worse when the 'opt-in' approach is explicitly held up as best practice, and being able to point to its existence is taken as evidence of equitable and inclusive behaviour. As punctum books' vision statement notes, 'commitments to and care for diversity, equity, and inclusion' are 'often expressed but without meaningful follow up'. The 'opt-in' approach is in danger of leaving in place a closed loop, where an organisation appears to be inclusive and to reflect the demographics of its membership because it is making no attempt to extend its community to those habitually excluded. To those on the inside, the door appears to be wide open; to those on the outside, without active outreach, the reasonable assumption is likely to be that it is closed. Again, as Skinner and Wipperman (Skinner & Wipperman, 2020) argue, commitments need to be linked to specific, measurable outcomes, and to be evidenced: punctum books' vision statement, for example, points to its Directorship and staff, its catalog and the make-up of its Editorial Advisory Board.

What to do: Models and Resources for Better Practices

Several open infrastructure organisations in the Global North have recently begun both to make statements of the kind Hudson-Ward calls for, and to take meaningful action to embed accessibility, anti-racism, inclusion, equity and diversity in their governance structures. Punctum books' aforementioned vision statement is one notable example. Another is DORA's move to revise its governance. As it set out in a blog post in January 2022 ('Why DORA's Governance is Changing'), 'we must live up to our own standards of inclusion', reviewing our operational structures in order 'to see how we can better live our values as an organisation'. DORA noted that while it had '*global* aspirations to accelerate research assessment reform', its governance had 'effectively limited participation in the Steering Committee to representatives from organizations in Europe and North America'. Building on work by Invest in Open Infrastructure and Code for Science & Society on developing anti-racist governance, DORA implemented a number of changes to its governance procedures, detailing specific, concrete, and measurable steps to distribute power outside of Europe and North America on the Steering Committee; to reduce financial barriers for organisations in developing or transitional economies that wish to support DORA; and to ensure that leadership positions on the Steering Committee reflect the wide diversity of academia.

In setting out clear, measurable actions to be taken, DORA's statement outlining its revisions to its governance practices is in tune with Katherine Skinner and Sarah Wipperman's report on *Living Our Values And Principles: Exploring Assessment Strategies for the Scholarly Communication Field* (Skinner & Wipperman, 2020), published by Educopia as part of the Next Generation Library Publishing (NGLP) project. This report analyses 120 values and principles statements and manifestos in use within scholarly communication organisations in order to provide recommendations to academic stakeholders on how to 'more concretely define their values and principles in terms of measurable actions, so these statements can be readily assessed and audited' (Skinner and Wipperman 2020: 4). Although we feel there is a need to remain critical of and keep our distance from using language such as 'auditing' and 'measuring', we agree with the authors that more clearly outlining their values and principles not only helps organisations with their self-assessment (see chapter 6), but also helps funders make informed decisions around whether the organisations that they want to or are investing in support the values they subscribe to.

Although there are drawbacks to too rigidly setting principles and standards—which as the authors also note, runs the risk of creating barriers and of excluding organisations that for different reasons are not able to comply with these standards (for example because they are small and structurally understaffed and underfunded, which is often the case with open community-led projects)—it does help organisations understand better what kind of expectations (different kinds of) funders could have of them. At the same time, having more broadly defined values and mission and vision statements can also enable an organisation in certain contexts to be more flexible and open in its responses to changing conditions, which might be helpful if an organisation is still in a start-up phase and trying to define itself. (It can also facilitate the forging of coalitions and alliances of the sort we have argued for in chapter 2.) As the authors of the report also state, it is a tough balance to strike to 'provide enough structure and information to engender trust, guide investments, and incentivize alignment with shared principles and standards, but not so much structure and information that it creates artificial barriers to entry for these marketplaces' (Skinner & Wipperman, 2020).

This is all the more important in the context which we have described in our introduction, and which Skinner and Wipperman also refer to. Many of the manifestos and statements of values they examine have been developed in the open access and open source landscape to differentiate between those projects that are mission-driven and those that are profit-driven (Skinner & Wipperman, 2020). The transition or buying up of several former non-profits (such as Knowledge Unlatched and bepress) within this landscape to or by for-profit entities has affected the level of trust within the scholarly community, and especially notably within the library (funding) community. Therefore, as the NGLP report also states:

> Many of the values and principles documents discuss how governance structures can help to build trust within the communities they serve. For these groups, a trustworthy governance system generally is one that a) cannot be co-opted or overtaken by the interests of a few players and b) puts the interests and voices of its community members first. There is consensus among these documents that user communities for products and services should have agency in their development and governance, including seats at the table and, ideally, decision-making power (Skinner & Wipperman, 2020).

One issue that is also noticed in this report, and which also has been an ongoing struggle within the COPIM project, is how to align as best as possible our values and principles with our organisational structure, where differences in organisational structure and the legal designations that come with them might influence the implementation of previously defined values and principles and, as the report states, create explicit boundaries to how a wide variety of stakeholders 'can respond to and enact certain values and principles' and to how organisations can behave (Skinner & Wipperman, 2020).

The Next Generation Library Publishing (NGLP) team, in connection to the report, also developed several tools and resources, to which the COPIM project was also invited to provide input and feedback as part of our regular meet-ups and knowledge sharing, including an Annotated Bibliography, a Values and Principles Framework and an Assessment Checklist, which we highly recommend. The report also discusses various principle-based accountability measures, including the FAIR Guiding Principles (2016) and the Jussieu Call for Open Science and Bibliodiversity (2018), both developed by the scholarly community.

Mission, Vision, and Value Statements

Mission, vision, and value statements, where clear and concrete (and free of the hypocrisy and sloganeering that tend to accompany them in corporate environments and the neoliberal university), can serve a number of useful functions for open projects. They are often the first point of contact and an ongoing point of reference for potential new members, funders and partners, communicating concisely what your project stands for and what it is trying to do. For a group of partners that is trying to establish (or feels that it has lost) a shared sense of coherence or purpose, the exchanges involved in revisiting or establishing such statements can pull into sharper focus both key disagreements and common ground. This can make easier both practical (if sometimes painful) decision-making about a project's future, and the fashioning of meaningful coalitions and alliances. But the process can also be especially useful precisely where all project partners *appear* to share a common goal and common values: in the process of making these explicit, hidden tensions, differences and potential grounds for conflict may emerge. Such underlying misunderstandings can be particularly common in open projects that bring together partners from diverse fields with differing vocabularies and objectives. In general, recognising and acknowledging such differences rather than eliding them allows them to become productive rather than disruptive, and can help truly common ground to be identified. This in turn can mitigate against future problems.

A common criticism of such statements is that preparing them costs time, effort and resources that could perhaps be better deployed elsewhere. However, when viewed as opportunities to clarify an entire project's direction of travel and sense of cohesion, and to articulate these clearly and concisely not only for existing members but for prospective members, funders and partners, as well as a broader external community, they seem well worth the investment.

Ultimately, whether a project chooses to adopt such statements should depend on the views of members, and is something that should be considered, discussed, and, if necessary, voted upon. Unless there are clearly articulated reasons for not doing so (which as a default should also be publicly shared), however, we recommend as good practice that organisations:

- (a) create a values statement, mission statement *and* a vision statement;
- (b) publicise these statements prominently together;
- (c) use these statements as touchstones for decision-making; and
- (d) build in mechanisms for revisiting these statements on a regular basis (e.g. through a standing item on an AGM agenda, or as part of a three-yearly governance review).

Where a project decides against such statements, there should be a clear rationale behind this decision, and considerations should be given to providing some public-facing alternative.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is often a single sentence that describes what an organisation *does*, its *raison d'etre*. A good mission statement is Janus-faced: it communicates concisely to those outside the organisation your core purpose, while also speaking to those within, providing focus, direction, and motivation. The mission statement functions as a touchstone, a 'guiding star' when considering strategic priorities and new initiatives.[21] Unrealistic statements which set up impossible goals are demotivating for those within and prompt suspicion and skepticism in those outside the project, and can put off potential new members.

It also tends to use concrete, simple language, avoiding jargon and buzzwords and strings of adjectives. One resource aimed at non-profit organisations recommends using 5-14 words (20 maximum): while organisations serving scholarly communities may find this overly restrictive, others may find this a useful target to aim for. The same resource provides 50 examples of clear, concise, and useful mission statements by non-profit organisations, evaluated for readability, reach, and reading level.

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[21] TopNonProfits, 'Guide to Creating Mission & Vision Statements' (2017): https://topnonprofits.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/USE_Mission_and_Vision_Statement_Worksheets.pdf.

Vision Statement

A vision statement is usually considered distinct from a mission statement in describing the ideal future you are working towards, rather than what you do. The task of articulating imagined futures is an immensely complex, perpetual one, but the formulating of a concise vision statement can serve as a prompt to undertake that work, and the statement itself as both its articulation and a call to action. A vision statement gives expression to the necessary utopian thinking behind any worthwhile project.[22]

Vision statements, like mission statements, are often kept to a simple sentence or two. But they can also be a place for setting out a more extensive manifesto, and for situating an organisation in relation to the issues raised in the preceding chapters. The vision statement of punctum books, one of the founding members of ScholarLed, is a good example of this approach. Rather than seeking to encapsulate its mission, vision, and values in short, pithy slogans, it sets out in detail the intellectual, ethical, and political values that drive the publisher's work, and also clearly identifies what it stands against (such as the 'deception' of 'Gold Open Access', and the ways the open access movement 'is now being thoroughly co-opted and marketized by behemoth for-profit publishers').

Recommendations

The following recommendations are for consideration and discussion: whether they are appropriate for any given organisation will depend upon many factors.

- In many cases, it may prove helpful to **set up one or more dedicated working groups or subcommittees**, with explicit briefs to focus on identifying and articulating an organisation's values and principles; embedding them in its culture and governance; recording and auditing progress; and/or identifying internal and external risks to the organisation's principles and goals which might result in them being compromised, undermined or frustrated. Having such a group (or groups) in place can ensure that there is a powerful collective voice within the organisation focused on establishing, protecting and furthering its values. It can also shift responsibility for playing the important role of **killjoy** (see discussion in preceding chapter) from the individual to the group. Much of this work is time-consuming, and having a dedicated group can also help ensure that the work is carried forward – or at worst, that problems in doing so are clearly flagged.

- **Create mission, vision, and values and principles statements** (we recommend *It Takes a Village*'s worksheet), and tie these to concrete, measurable goals and objectives.

[22] On the necessity of utopian thinking, see Fredric Jameson's voluminous writings on the topic, which also offer an extended and nuanced critique of 'the loss of that place beyond all history (or after its end) which we call utopia' (Jameson 2004).

- Put in place **a mechanism for revisiting these statements** on a regular basis (e.g., through a standing item on an AGM agenda, as part of a three-yearly governance review (see chapter 6), or through a dedicated working group or subcomittee).

- Establish a **Code of Conduct** that all members should sign up to and be expected to abide by. COPIM's own Code of Conduct took inspiration from those of like-minded open source community-led groups and organisations such as the Ada Initiative, The Carpentries and the Contributors Covenant (see discussion above). Invest in Open Infrastructure's code of conduct may also be of particular relevance. Like several of these organisations, COPIM set up a temporary Code of Conduct Committee to push this work forwards, something we'd recommend to other organisations.

- Establish a **Code of Ethics** for those most involved in the organisation's governance (often trustee board or council members) to sign up to. COPE's 'Code of Ethics' is clearly and attractively presented, and strikes a good balance between providing enough detail to be meaningful, and being short enough to actually be read and digested not only by board members but anyone interested in COPE's work and governance. This might be done by the same committee as discussed above.

- No open scholarly infrastructure organisation from the Global North can pretend that its work does not have a global scope and implications.

Addressing issues of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Anti-Racism

- Establish a **separate working group, committee or task force focused explicitly on issues identified as of particular concern**, making recommendations for practical actions to embed these values in the organisation's governance and culture, and for recording and auditing progress.

- Introducing genuine diversity and the involvement of the Global South in the governance of open infrastructure organisations originating in the Global North presents significant long-term challenges. This is something COPIM is wrestling with itself. Where a project's membership and/or board are predominantly white, middle-class, tenured (or in stable, senior positions), the private networks through which new participants in governance are often attracted may be far from adequate. **Put in place a practical, measurable medium- to long-term action plan** to ensure the organisation's governance is not reinforcing the values and power imbalances between North and South.

- **Sign up** to a 'Joint Statement of Principles', such as that of the Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications (C4DISC), or the Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure (POSI). (This option, and some of the attendant risks to be aware of, is discussed in more detail below in chapter 6; see too the discussion of POSI above.)

- **Make an explicit public commitment** addressing how your organisation's governance will further diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and anti-racism (see, for example, the Society for Scholarly Publishing's 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment'). Supplement this with an action plan. As with other such commitments, include concrete, auditable measures and a **plan of action**.

- **Log and make public** the measures being taken and progress made to embed IDEAAR in your organisation's culture and its governance structures and procedures. (Again, the Society for Scholarly Publishing's 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment' is a good example of this, including a record of 'Programmatic and Operational Efforts to Date').

Board Nominations, Onboarding, and Best Practices

Address how the make-up of your Board(s), and your processes for nominating and onboarding new Board members, embed your values in your organisation and its governance. We recommend the suite of guidelines and tools for ensuring best practice for board governance produced by DeEtta Jones & Associates (DJA) for the Code for Science & Society (CS&S) and Invest in Open Infrastructure (IOI):

- Board Nomination: a defined, research-rooted method for carrying out board nominations and selections that prioritize equity

- A template worksheet to help enact this nomination and selection process.

- Board Onboarding: Connect new board members to the knowledge and colleagues they need to shepherd your organisation well, with an IDEAAR lens

- Best Practices for Board Governance: sets out ways to operate for inclusion, individually and collectively, that prioritise effective group process *and* shared understanding

Running Conferences and AGMs

- Consider how meetings such as AGMs can be made more open to all. While focused on conference planning, much of the guidance in Opencon's 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Learnings and Next Steps' report is applicable to the running of any kind of large meetings, including AGMs.

Resources and Tools for Diverse, Inclusive and Anti-Racist Governance

The Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications has produced two excellent 'Toolkits for Equity': the Anti-Racism Toolkit for Organisations and the Anti-Racism Toolkit for Allies. While not explicitly focused on governance both have highly relevant bearings on governance practices and structures, as does the Discussion Document on diversity and inclusivity produced in late 2021 by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

The Society for Scholarly Publishing's 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment', already mentioned above, is a useful model. The discussions and resources on SSP's Scholarly Publishing DE&I Resource Forum are also highly recommended to those who can access them (Society membership is required). The Library Publishing Coalition's 'Ethical Framework for Library Publishing' includes sections on 'Accessibility' and on 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion', each of which contains recommendations, links to a number of useful resources (including guides to best practices), and a further reading list. Again, while not focused specifically on governance, these are highly relevant.

The theme of the 2019 Triangle Scholarly Communication Institute was Equity in Scholarly Communications. The Institute's webpage collects a number of useful outputs, including:

- a zine titled "The Labor of Open" and a report from the team that created it
- a Feminist Framework for Radical Knowledge Collaboration including an editable version with translations in Español and Português
- a discussion of the work of one team working on toolkits for equity in scholarly communication
- videos of the final presentations of the five teams on the last day of the program
    - Bringing Equity and Diversity to Peer Review
    - Communicating the TEI to a Multilingual User Community
    - A Feminist Framework for Radical Knowledge Collaboration
    - The Labor of Open
    - Toolkits for Equity in Scholarly Communications

Institution	**Resource**
Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications	Anti-Racism Toolkit for Organisations Anti-Racism Toolkit for Allies
Society for Scholarly Publishing	Committee on Publication Ethics' Discussion Document Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment Scholarly Publishing DE&I Resource Forum, particularly the sections on 'Accessibility' and on 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion'

Institution	Resource
Triangle Scholarly Communication Institute	"The Labor of Open" zine & report Feminist Framework for Radical Knowledge Collaboration, incl. editable version with translations in Español and Português discussion of the work of one team working on toolkits for equity in scholarly communication selection of videos, incl. • Bringing Equity and Diversity to Peer Review • Communicating the TEI to a Multilingual User Community • A Feminist Framework for Radical Knowledge Collaboration • The Labor of Open • Toolkits for Equity in Scholarly Communications

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Co-developing COPIM's values, mission, and vision

By COPIM

As described in the previous section, we organised several internal workshops with COPIM project members (and where appropriate we included our Community Governance Working Group) to co-design and co-develop the project's governance elements. During our first internal workshop we tried to develop COPIM's mission and vision statement, as well as the values and principles that guide the project, also based on the The Next Generation Library Publishing project's Values and Principles Framework, which we consulted to try and translate our values into actionable principles. In groups we devised a vision statement (Where are we going? What will the future look like?) and a mission statement (How are we getting there? What do we do? Who do we serve?) and we tried to list what COPIM's values should be, values that guide COPIM's work. We then tried to turn each of these values into an actionable principle to which we could adhere.

As described in the previous chapter, during each workshop three groups were formed that each tried to formulate the various governance elements we identified during our initial research followed by a discussion between the three groups. We subsequently colour-coded the notes made by each group and when we wrote-up these governance elements we took an active effort to keep the voices of the different groups alive by ensuring not one voice or colour became dominant, something that easily happens when we write up qualitative research. We then shared these co-designed governance elements with the COPIM members to further incorporate feedback via a co-development method, which involved various rounds of feedback on these draft elements, also from the members of the Humanities Commons Governance Working Group. Several rounds of feedback and development of these processual or 'living' governance elements have led to the elements we will discuss here in this report.

Code of Conduct

This method or approach is something we tested out in the first instance when we co-designed our Code of Conduct to ensure governance is an activity of community co-development, not just decided by one group at one time but continually evolving as the project itself evolves. In designing this CoC, we took inspiration from the experience of like-minded open source community-led groups and organisations, from the Ada Initiative and The Carpentries to the Contributors Covenant, all of which have previously developed Code of Conducts and have in some cases also published their process of developing guidelines online, sharing best practices and how-to documents. COPIM's CoC has been based on different elements and remixes of these existing CoCs which have subsequently been developed further by the project members in a process of co-design. Similar to many of our project documents and outputs, this CoC remains a processual document, open for community feedback, which we might update as the project changes or our community grows, or now that we start to work with and apply the CoC in practice, to fine-tune how it works best for us as a project and to make sure it continues to work for us and our community in the future. We then copied this co-design approach for our further governance elements, for example when formulating our values.

Vision Statement

COPIM envisions and supports an open, inclusive, diverse, and community-led ecosystem for the creation and dissemination of open access books **in which all knowledge producers are maximally empowered to communicate their research** to the benefit of society without economic or technical barriers. We imagine a world in which open access books in all their forms are produced and disseminated anti-competitively and collaboratively, while also being responsive to, **as well as driven by, the community of communities dedicated to** public knowledge and **the love of the book.**

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Figure 2: Collaboratively-drafted colour-coded version of COPIM's Vision Statement

Mission Statement

COPIM is a community-led research project and incubator. It creates and maintains open publishing infrastructures that are inalienably owned by the community and that support and bring together knowledge communities through the processes of open access book publishing in all its shapes and forms.

COPIM brings together many different publishing initiatives and encourages and supports those collectively by 'scaling small.' Instead of standard approaches to organisational growth that tend to flatten community diversity through economies of scale, scale is nurtured here through intentional collaborations *between* community-driven projects that promote a bibliodiverse ecosystem while also providing resilience through resource sharing and other kinds of collaboration.

To realise our vision, COPIM therefore strives to:

- build and bring together open socio-technical infrastructures enabling smaller publishers to thrive independently, while at the same time stimulating connections and interactions between knowledge producers;
- develop organisational frameworks, governance structures, and economic and funding models that will hopefully more durable foundations for community-driven publishing standards;
- encourage resilient longstanding collaborations and enable partnerships with the community of communities dedicated to public knowledge and the love of the book.

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Our Values and Principles

All of our principles are based on our values. However, as all values are always contextual and situated, we will always remain critical of friction-free utopias. Hence, we see our values and principles as a process of *working towards*, of working with and across difference. They should be read as a reflection of intention. We don't see friction or conflict in defining our values and principles as a hindrance but as part of our working mode. Therefore, we will continue to update them as we progress forward and as our surrounding environment changes, following our living/versioned document or processual publishing approach, reflected in our co-design and co-development methodologies.

Bibliophilia (love and care for books)

We care for books and profess a dedication to quality content, good design, good open principles, user-friendliness, and a dedication to (different forms of) quality peer review. We care for the preservation and archiving of open access books and argue for care-full and broad open dissemination. We work to enable open books of many kinds being shared as widely as possible.

Community-led (driven by the community of communities dedicated to public knowledge and the love of the book)

- We pledge to create inalienable systems that cannot be co-opted or overtaken by the interests of a few players or commercial entities;
- We will remain community-driven and non-competitive, and encourage horizontal structures empowering the community to make strategic, operational, and financial decisions;
- We want to support a broader network or ecosystem of community-led scholarly communications organisations dedicated to the production and long-term maintenance of an open commons.

Open and public knowledge (inclusive, open source, open access, open ways of working)

- We support open infrastructures and interoperability between infrastructures, and pledge to work towards openness in all of the ways in which we run our projects and organisations;
- We will be dedicated to public knowledge that is open and shareable across multiple borders;
- We support open-source, portability, open standards and metadata, reuse, and reproducibility (copyright).

DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion)

- We will be governed by representatives from a broad cross-section of stakeholders;
- We work towards supporting a plurality of research subjects, technologies, approaches, languages, nations, agents (scholars, the academic and research community, the general public) with the aim to traverse multiple discipline, geographic, national, and institutional boundaries;
- We strive for inclusivity in all our community structures, spaces, and interactions;

- We will empower community members to take collective action, provide space for the community to grow, and encourage different voices, perspectives, and approaches;
- We will strive to recognise potential barriers to participation and work to avoid and overcome them in the structures we create.

Scaling Small (collaboratively networked with like-minded entities)

- We aim to bring people together who are interested in developing a shared vision for open access;
- By working together, we will scale small in order to enable equitable participation in the development of open access books;
- To enable open access book publishing we will design and build infrastructures of different types and scales that can be engaged with and adopted in a range of different levels by actors of different sizes and backgrounds, who share our vision.

Anti-competitive (opposed to the competitive practices that pit presses as well as other stakeholders in open publishing against one another in the pursuit of financial profit)

- By bringing like-minded entities together, we will nurture an **anti-competitive** ecosystem for open access book publishing.

Non-hierarchical (pro-horizontal relationships)

- Within COPIM we strive towards non-hierarchical or horizontal ways of working. We also want to promote these ways of working through our partnerships with stakeholders who are working within the same terrain to create open ecosystems.

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Figure 4: Collaboratively-drafted colour-coded version of COPIM's Values & Principles

Goals and Objectives

Developing sustainable infrastructures for OA books that can be adopted by others. We are trying to influence an ecosystem that allows for the publication of OA books as equitably and ethically as possible. Two potential routes to do so: influence the ecosystem of those actors that are not publishing openly yet and/or encourage new actors to take up open, community-focused, non-profit publishing. Showcasing that these alternatives we are developing can be supported and can work. Building a platform and sharing it to allow other people to use it: that in itself helps to reshape/re-envisage what 'sustainability' means for academic publishing. It is based on sharing our resources and allowing other people to use them. These kinds of sustainable funding models allow for a better/more ethical use of public money.

Enabling a thriving alternative to the commercial, big-publisher-driven way of doing OA. Supporting the transition to OA publishing by regaining control over the scholarly communication ecosystem. Sustaining and maintaining a not-for-profit publishing ecosystem, promoting experimentation, sustaining diversity of OA publishing, sustaining scholarly independence. Influencing others (including funders) to support this alternative way of doing things, to trust these networks with their work, with their funding, and with their support.

Promoting an understanding that publishing is part of research and the means of production of scholarly works is a commons (publishing is a commons), which is integral to research and not an afterthought or something that can be outsourced. Responsibility for the publishing process becomes part of research and the scholarly community should take more responsibility, taking responsibility for the publishing process back into the scholarly community

Influencing policy. Helping shape e.g., the next REF/UKRI policy and the SPARC National OA Policy. UK funders want to go forward with OA for books and they need to evidence that solutions are available to assist in this transition, which is one of the reasons why they are funding us. We are therefore engaged in the policy and compliance landscape (cited as a supporting action). There has been a lot of pushback from existing publishers and we have provided a very useful counter point to their narrative that policy makers have: a) found useful to have, and b) helped spread increased recognition amongst them that the APC/BPC model is not necessarily the only way to fund OA books and that they can fund alternative non-BPC routes.

Building a community supporting our goals and objectives. There is a need for advocacy for not-for-profit presses, providing new venues for OA publishing. Similarly, there is a need to build an open infrastructure and provide services to stakeholders in the scholarly community, including creating a community supporting the same values. Encouraging researchers to understand the advantages of OA and that it is powerful, and worth pursuing in its own right. **Open Access is** not just legitimate but a good thing to do.

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Figure 5: Collaboratively-drafted colour-coded version of COPIM's Goals & Objectives

4. Governance Models and Structures

By Patrick Hart, Samuel Moore, Janneke Adema, and COPIM

The COPIM report *Exploring Models for Community Governance*, written by Samuel Moore, is a good starting point to explore different models of community governance as used both within scholarly communication organisations (mainly structured around advisory boards, steering committees, and multi-board governance structures) and outside of this realm (looking at frameworks relating to cooperativism, the commons, and community rule and how they are being applied) and the advantages and disadvantages of these different approaches to governance. The report thus explores what can be learned from other forms of inclusive and cooperative governance outside of the publishing ecosystem. As such the report provides both a landscape study of forms of governance within scholarly communication and an exploratory study of the theoretical literature on alternative forms of governance appropriate for community-led organisations (Moore, 2021).

One of the main takeaways from Moore's report is that in order to enable equitable, community governance a continual negotiation between centralised control as part of the pragmatism of running an organisation and the idealism of devolving powers to community stakeholders to make key decisions, reflecting more community control or horizontal forms of governance, might be needed. As Moore argues, for COPIM and other projects an organisations interested in establishing models for community governance what would help with this and with deciding which structures fit best with a specific organisation, is 'defining the activities that need to be governed and the actors who can participate in this governance, in addition to the values, mission and principles that define the organisation's culture. From here, adequate structures and bylaws can be designed to implement this vision.' Moore mentions the IAD Framework (mainly in its knowledge commons adaptation (Frischmann et al., 2014)), which we have also used to develop COPIM's governance elements, as one potential way of doing this.

To highlight again here some of the other resources that were mentioned in this report and that we can recommend exploring:

- Nathan Schneiders' *CommunityRule Governance Toolkit* includes nine templates for organizational structures that, as the toolkit states 'communities can choose from, combine, or react against': https://communityrule.info/templates/

- Red Hat has developed a guide to open source project governance models, which 'describes some of the most common open source project and community governance models and offers guidance on getting started in projects that have adopted each model': https://www.redhat.com/en/resources/guide-to-open-source-project-governance-models-overview

- Loomio is an open source online platform for community management and consensus-building, which originally emerged from the Occupy Movement: https://www.loomio.org/dashboard

Further Reading

Frischmann, B. M., Madison, M. J., & Strandburg, K. J. (Eds.). (2014). *Governing Knowledge Commons*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199972036.001.0001

Moore, S. A. (2021). *Exploring models for community governance*. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4730687

Governance Structures for COPIM

By COPIM

As described above, to determine what our preferred governance structures would be for COPIM, we explored the IAD (Institutional Analysis and Development) framework as part of a series of workshops (looking at *resources* the project shares and consumes, who makes up its *community*, what are its *goals and objectives*, and its *history and narrative*, where is the project heading?). In the chapter on community governance we looked at how COPIM members identified the 'community of communities' they consist of, and in the last chapter of this report we will reflect on the narrative that informs the project and in specific looking at how project members envision where the project is heading, or what might be the future of COPIM. In this section we will first look at the remaining part of this exercise, namely, a reflection on what resources are being shared and consumed by the project, before moving over to a discussion on potential governance models for COPIM and its infrastructures.

Resources – What is Being Shared and Consumed, and by which Actors?

- **The book** (and different elements related to it, e.g., metadata, an index, the publishing process + stakeholders connected to those elements e.g., copyeditors, typesetters, indexers etc.);
- **Best practices, (soft) skills, knowledge, and experiences/expertise** (particularly unusual/uncommon/experimental). This includes sharing best practices via scoping reports and documents, toolkits, wikis, standards, methods, processes (workflows), governance models, legal frameworks (contracts with authors etc.), and financial resources;
- **New methods/new ways of doing things.** Including
  - Sharing our process (in a way that is helpful and can't be co-opted) - e.g., PubPub, processual reports, governance co-development and co-design;
  - Doing OA advocacy, i.e., from the researchers' perspective opening the process up so more people see how (OA) publishing works in different ways (e.g., not just BPCs) and can learn about its underlying structures so they can make more directed, purposeful choices about how they publish or what types of publishing they support;
  - Highlighting our mission, vision, value and principles as they are guiding all underlying COPIM activities and resources;
  - New/alternative/experimental forms of publishing, giving permission thereby for others to experiment and do things differently;

- Highlighting the forms of secrecy that we still need to deploy (no binaries between closed/open) e.g., you might not share an author contract with everyone;

- Collaborating with other groups (scaling small). How we collaborate with different groups so that we can share openly

- **Technology: tools, platforms and services** (to put in place a publishing infrastructure that helps us with access and discovery, with financial components, dissemination of open access content, and long-term preservation infrastructure, including any kind of software or technology involved in publishing). Infrastructures, software, code, data;

- **Our networks and our voices as a community**. Which ensure we have a large voice and are heard and can support each other in a spirit or attitude of collaboration. Highlights the importance to share our voice and to communicate and collaborate across all the stakeholders

- **What are we consuming:** funding, salaries, time/labour, financial support (revenue streams and grant).

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Figure 6: COPIM's team explored the question of resources being used in the project. The screenshot shows the collaborative colour-coded collection of items mentioned by the team. Guiding question: "What is Being Shared and Consumed, and by which Actors?"

Discussing Organisational Structures

During the third internal governance workshop we conducted, based on Moore's report, we discussed and asked for feedback on three organisational structures that we deemed most appropriate for COPIM to help the project move towards a representative structure for its governance: one that is polycentric and horizontal, another that is more hierarchical according to stakeholder groupings, and a final one that is purely cooperative. This workshop was guided by the following question:

- Which structure(s) or mixture of structures would fit COPIM or its various elements best and why, also in relation to the mission, values, and narrative we have tried to formulate around the project previously?

Participants were asked to read Moore's report beforehand and the three models were shortly presented as per the underneath descriptions – including the pros and cons of each – while at the same time remaining aware that they are ideal types, that there will always be hierarchical horizontal and cooperative element in each governance structure. Underneath a description of these models, followed by a reflection on the discussion that was subsequently had about these models and the questions they brought up for project members.

Polycentric Governance Model: this is a decentralised model which groups stakeholders into areas of particular expertise or representation (e.g., libraries, publishers, technical developers, etc.) and gives them autonomy to manage their own functions. Each stakeholder grouping is given one representative on a central board for deciding cross-COPIM matters. It is polycentric in that there are multiple centres of responsibility, each with equal weight to them. It is therefore broadly horizontal in that no one grouping has more power than another and that representation is equal within the central committee. As Moore explains, 'For a complex community-governed organisation, polycentricity will be vital for avoiding simple hierarchies while still allowing for different areas of the organisation to control its own business. (…) Polycentricity responds to the fact that size and expertise matters in community governance. Smaller teams knitted together fare better than larger ones with single governance model' (Moore 2021a: 24–25).

Cooperative Governance Model (direct democracy: everyone gets a vote): The cooperative model is based on organisational membership and democratic participation. There is a central body handling the administrative work of the project or organisation – alongside a democratically elected board if needed – and then all decisions are made through membership voting. Membership could be determined at the organisational level (e.g., through individual libraries), although this may tip the balance of the stakeholders with the most representation. For example, if there are 90 libraries, 10 publishers, and so on, library decision-making power would be greater.

Hierarchical Governance Model – a more hierarchical approach would be to have an executive board and then various stakeholder boards sitting underneath, along with community— interest groups that could feed into decision-making. This is a more participatory model in that it extends outwards to many different groupings, but also maintains the hierarchy that indicates how certain decision-making functions need to be preserved for people more actively involved in the project or organisation.

Overall, the preference amongst the COPIM project members was for a mixture of a polycentric and a hierarchical model. As such, we agreed that we are aiming at developing a hybrid model for COPIM. Perhaps a polycentric model with a (horizontal) hierarchy above it might be the most effective model because it combines communal governance with some co-ordination and steering, for example by a horizontal hierarchy that would connect all different polycentric entities (WPs/projects) and guide the cooperation according to a common purpose, on top of COPIM's mission, vision, values, and principles. The entities would then be polycentric, with individual governance structures at the entities level, but each of the groups has an equal representation within a horizontal overarching structure. At the same time, we felt that the way we have set-up the current work packages and project(s) and the values that underlie them, really lines up well with a horizontal approach. Representation is important in this respect, to make sure there is equal representation within this horizontal meta-structure and within the different polycentric entities. It was felt that there is a need for COPIM in a next stage to determine who gets to be on the governing committees and to outline how they get there. Who makes up the polycentric circles? Collaboration between all entities remains key here, where it would work well if the basis would be a polycentric model with representation of various experts in different areas in polycentric groups that have autonomy and their own decision-making process. These different expert groups in this polycentric structure can then be connected in a horizontal hierarchy.

Cooperative Model

The cooperative model was not preferred. It was felt that a direct democracy model of 'one member, one vote' is not effective for the kind of set-up that we envision with COPIM. However, co-operation is important in the structure as a whole. If there are a large number of representatives, not everyone can have an equal role in governance, and in this sense even co-operatives have decision-making bodies (representative democracy). Hierarchical models can have advantages in this sense in that they can act quite nimbly, where with co-operative models it can take a long time to get to a consensus. One suggestion that was offered was that voting on certain issues can maybe be set up using the co-operative model.

Open, Flat, Horizontal

COPIM members felt that open horizontal flat organisations with no hierarchy, and no (clear) roles, work well when things are smaller and more informal (e.g., Occupy, many art groups). These organisations work fast and efficiently, and burden some people more, but those who do the most work also get to decide. It is maybe not the most stable model, and works for only a limited amount of time, which might not be good for creating long-term sustainability. There are also examples of paralysis where there isn't a (clear) direction, so you need a clear purpose with this model; otherwise, it hampers you and people tend to fall back into specific roles or groups.

Flexible and Processual

COPIM as a project is developing something that emerges and evolves and that keeps on evolving and this element of process remains really important when thinking through what it will be that we are developing to ensure that it remains flexible. It might be that our governance starts off quite horizontal, informal, and flat and when it evolves, as some things do not scale, we might need more structure going forward, e.g., when we see divisions starting to appear. At that point some form of hierarchical structure might be useful to move things along. COPIM, for example, as a project, was set up as flat and cooperative as possible, but going forward this depends on what COPIM will be in the future. What is the governance whilst COPIM is being set up and what is the legacy of that governance once COPIM is running? COPIM's purpose might still be changing a lot, so how can we match our governance with that?

Relation between COPIM and Individual WPs

Different parts of COPIM might also have a different make-up of their governance structure (and possibly also a different structure). For example, it might be appropriate for libraries to have greater representation in relation to the OBC's activities compared to the activities of Thoth. Thoth, as an element/project within COPIM, already includes several components that together make up the project. Some of these need maintaining, and some are more processual and need more building out; in other words, they might need different forms of governance too. In this respect we are talking about COPIM as a project on the one hand with all kinds of elements/projects within it, but probably these elements within it might need different combinations of governance structures too. In this sense COPIM is a project consisting of different multiple elements with different forms of sustainability, or different sustainable models for their future development.

COPIM's (base) identity is important too in this respect. It will sit on the top of the various WPs/projects (that will have their own identities) that need to be connected via a need to identify the mission, principles, visions, objectives, goals, ideals that tie them all together. If we have common objectives, they can serve as a base for a common identity, some "touch-base" to agree on. The values that COPIM agrees upon might be important to ensure COPIM will maintain its identity within a more democratic structure. We need to think through why we need a structure separate from individual entities. What do we want from the meta layer? How do we collaborate across our preferred horizontal-polycentric structure?

Creating Commitment in Community-Governance

Who is the community that has a stake in governing? Who are the insiders and outsiders in our projects, and who are the member-producers and the users? We need to think through who would actually want to be involved in our governance, which would also be the people and communities who would help to define the governance structure. For example, smaller libraries will have fewer time/economic resources to commit, and a lot of librarians aren't all that interested in or quite clear on whether they want to be part of our governance structure. Would it then make sense to make, for example, a really big library advisory board if most of them are not actually committed to doing this work? The makeup of the various stakeholders for each project or work package may also be very different. In the end we want decisions being made by those closest to the actual use of the infrastructures we produce.

If governance is completely open, people won't necessarily participate. Participation might also look different to different members (with potentially different resources in terms of time, etc.). For example, some might only want to stay informed via a governing body (and maybe have a say only in very major decisions), whereas others might want to participate directly, and to steer things more closely.

Design vs. Implementation of Governance

We need to bear in mind the difference between the design and implementation of governance (for example between our governance model and our form of incorporation). And that is before the participation question, which is where things start breaking down further, i.e., when you start adding people into the mix. How do we battle the lack of agency and impact of some individuals within governance structures on the decision-making processes, sometimes combined with a lack of understanding of how the governance structure operates? When governance consists of too many bodies, is too complex, and too intricate, the effect is disengagement and confusion. How can we empower individuals at different levels to make decisions, to be active participants in the decision-making process? How can a large number of people remain involved in governance? We need a structure that is clear enough, also for small players to understand it. Being understandable to your members is something to aim for. Otherwise, those with the most know-how of how the governance model works end up doing most of the governing.

Similarly, how do we address the constant tension that exists between the different horizontal entities and some sort of vertical/hierarchical structure that will keep all things together. How do we retain a clear focus on both the separate entities and on the mission and the base identity for COPIM as a whole?

The Agency of Platforms/Software

Next to thinking about our stakeholder communities (e.g., libraries and publishers), which already come with different ways of funding and different expectations and traditions of governance, we are also creating open-source software and infrastructures. This also already assumes forms of governance. For example, look at the way GitHub is organised (everyone can fork, pose issues, and contribute to a project) as an infrastructure for people to engage with how things are being developed, with certain people being moderators and certain people having the power to merge certain issues into the main branch etc. In this respect the way in which we have been developing some of our projects (for example, Thoth) comes with an implicit form of governance already in place, which might not be based on what, for example, publishers and libraries might want. We need to keep in mind that the way we develop our projects and the platforms that we use to do so already imply certain modes of governance.

5. Decision Making: Seeking Consensus, Voting, and Elections

By Patrick Hart, Janneke Adema, and COPIM

This chapter discusses various ways in which open infrastructure organisations can make decisions. It focuses first on forms of consensus-based decision-making processes, before considering when, how, and why it might be appropriate to have recourse to an informal or a formal vote.

Rather than seeing consensus-based decision-making and voting as two alternative methods, we suggest that better practice is to see them as complementary. Having clear voting procedures in place can in fact encourage consensus-building, allow space for productive disagreements to be explored, and ensure the best final outcome. We also warn against the dangers of imposing consensus where none in fact exists, and note how the use of formal or semi-formal voting, including such measures as indicative votes at the beginning of discussions, can allow voices that are sometimes marginalised or drowned out to be heard. This section also looks at how elections to boards and committees can best be run, as well as some of the risks involved and how these can be minimised. The section concludes by exploring the possibilities that adopting some form of 'liquid democracy' (a method of blending direct and representative forms of democracy, usually through the use of digital technology) may provide for open infrastructure organisations, while also noting some of the potential obstacles in relation to conflicts this could create if not incorporated properly.

Consensus

At its best, consensus decision-making processes are characterised by cooperation, egalitarianism, and inclusivity, and can result in better decisions being made, with the support of the whole community. Consensus decision-making processes have been particularly associated with anarchist groups, being employed in anything 'from tiny affinity groups to gigantic spokescouncils of thousands of people':

> In consensus process, everyone agrees from the start on certain broad principles of unity and purposes for being for the group; but beyond that they also accept as a matter of course that no one is ever going to convert another person completely to their point of view, and probably shouldn't try; and that therefore discussion should focus on concrete questions of action, and coming up with a plan that everyone can live with and no one feels is in fundamental violation of their principles (Graeber, 2004).

However, there are many different models of what constitutes a consensus and how it should be arrived at, drawing from communities of practice as diverse as Quaker meetings, Japanese corporations and the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy Grand Council.[23] Consensus means different things to different people. This is especially likely to be the case in infrastructure projects that bring together disparate allies from different institutional cultures and political backgrounds. It is important that where consensus decision-making is preferred, it is made clear in governance documentation which model is being adopted and how the existence (or otherwise) of a consensus is to be measured, as well as what procedures are to be followed when no consensus can be reached.

Some of these models, such as the spokescouncil model widely used by social centres, workers' cooperatives, and peace and environmental movements, are designed to enable consensus decision-making among groups of hundreds and even thousands, and can be quite complex, with their own terminology ('fish bowls', 'spokes'), specialised roles ('empath', 'consensor'), and even a repertoire of hand-signals. It seems likely that the movements for open scholarship, education and intellectual exchange have a lot to learn from such models (easy as they occasionally are to make fun of) and this is an area in which much more work needs to be done. Organisations looking for more formal structures and procedures by which to arrive at legitimate consensus-based decisions are likely to find such work particularly rewarding.

For most community-led open infrastructure organisations, however, the more minimalistic, stripped-back consensus models generally favoured by open source projects will be more immediately applicable. Two such models of consensus decision-making are outlined below. 'Lazy consensus' is a lightweight solution especially recommended where most decisions are not expected to be controversial but nevertheless require the oversight of the larger community. 'Rough consensus', while a more problematic model, may be an appropriate solution for some organisations in certain situations. **In most cases, however, consensus is probably best seen as a goal to aspire to and aim for which is best tested for and registered through some form of vote.** This can often be done quickly and informally (or semi-formally), using tools such as indicative voting and Apache voting (see below).

Any over-emphasis on consensus, however, can have negative consequences no matter what model is chosen, stifling dissenting opinions and neutering creative disagreement. In 'The Tyranny of Consensus', M. Treloar describes how consensus decision-making has often been imposed from above or promoted by a largely white, middle-class community in ways that fracture the fragile alliances that hold together the 'community of communities' seeking change. As Treloar puts it, the 'notion embedded in consensus process that '*everyone will eventually agree if they talk about it long enough* comes as a complete and unpleasant surprise to many groups with roots sunk in the working class or communities of color' (Treloar, 2003).[24]

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[23] The Wikipedia page on 'Consensus decision-making' is as good a starting-point as any for a quick overview of the various models and debates.

[24] Treloar's short essay is recommended reading for any organisation considering making consensus decision-making central to its processes. While Treloar's focus is on activist politics and the more elaborate forms of consensus process, his cautions regarding the limitations of consensus hold good in a broader context too.

An analogous truth applies in the world of scholarly communication. Like Treloar's black and working-class activist groups that 'have learned by painful experience that there are clear divisions in society', the small publishers that have been at the front line in fighting for open access and promoting the values of open scholarship, often at considerable personal cost, 'have also learned that no group in history has ever given up its wealth or power through consensus process' (Treloar, 2003).[25] More generally, as is discussed in more detail in the section on voting that follows, consensus decision-making brings its own risks and should not be seen as a straightforward, comforting panacea to the difficulties of decision-making in the face of real disagreements.

Lazy consensus

Lazy consensus is a method of decision-making in which 'silence equals consent'. The exact manner in which lazy consensus operates varies from project to project, but in its most common form, any member of a project can put forward a proposal. If no one objects or calls for further discussion or a vote within a pre-established time-frame, then the proposal is considered to have the support of the community and be approved. It is commonly practiced via group email or online discussion boards and collaboration platforms such as Mattermost.

Lazy consensus can be especially useful in situations where serious disagreement is not anticipated and it is important to keep governance lightweight and a project fast on its feet while also maintaining a degree of oversight. This method has been commonly employed in open source communities in particular (see, for example, Apache, gem5, Velero[26]), where it would be impractical for every minor change to a codebase, for example, to be discussed in detail and voted upon. For those doing the majority of the work it can be enabling, allowing them to proceed without having to refer every decision to a meeting or vote. It also allows all project members to be as actively involved in decision-making processes as they wish, and to focus on areas they know most about.

Any organisation employing lazy consensus decision-making will need to think carefully about (and periodically revisit) how long to allow for objections or calls for further discussion to be made. Apache normally allows 72 hours, for example, though it notes that this period may need to be extended where it overlaps with a weekend. Others allow longer: Velero allows 5 days, while gem5 allows two weeks. This latter requirement is put in place to ensure that 'everyone is given enough time to read, digest and respond to the proposal [...] and to be as inclusive as possible of all participants, regardless of their location and time commitments'. Additional factors to consider include members working across different time zones; members

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[25] 'Allowing meetings where any one or two individuals [...] can outweigh the wishes of hundreds of community members seems suicidal to these groups.'

[26] *gem5* is an open source computer architecture simulator used in academia and in industry, run as a 'meritocratic, consensus-based community project'. *Velero* is an open source tool to safely backup and restore, perform disaster recovery, and migrate Kubernetes cluster resources and persistent volumes. *Apache* claims to be the world's largest open source foundation, and is responsible for *OpenOffice*.

contributing to a project on a part-time basis (especially likely to be the case on open infrastructure projects); and the platform used and different cultures and expectations around these. Online collaboration platforms can be a good way of keeping project proposals and discussions distinct and allowing for more rapid decision-making; for many project members with overflowing inboxes, emails about project proposals may risk going unnoticed until the time for raising objections has elapsed.

For open infrastructure organisations, lazy consensus can be especially useful where an individual or a working group is tasked with a relatively self-contained sub-project which nonetheless needs a degree of oversight, and for its decisions to be visible to all project members for the sake of transparency. For instance, an infrastructure organisation in which new members will need to be brought on board quickly and smoothly might establish a working group to evaluate and approve (or reject) applications, rather than wait for an AGM and/or have all members or a board of trustees formally vote. The working group's decisions might then be put forward as proposals on a lazy consensus basis, with the group's decision being accepted in the absence of any objections. Only in the case of an objection or query arising would a wider discussion and vote then be required.

It is worth bearing in mind, however, that in some cases it may be both more empowering and more efficient to give individuals or working groups the autonomy to make their own decisions. This can include the option of referring any decision to the wider community, whether through lazy consensus or a more formal discussion and vote. (This is commonly done when a working group cannot itself arrive at a unanimous consensus.)

Lazy consensus has proved its value as a powerful tool for streamlining decision making: where adopted, though, it should be as one element in a tiered decision-making process. As Gabriel Hanganu notes, 'not all decisions can be made through lazy consensus: issues such as those affecting the strategic direction or legal standing of the project must gain explicit approval in the form of a vote' (Hanganu, 2013).

Strengths

- **Lightweight and efficient** - minimises meetings and governance workload, and allows those doing the work to proceed with mimimal delays;
- **Flexible** - accommodates differing (and fluctuating) levels of engagement in decision-making by individual members;
- **Focused** – encourages members to focus their governance efforts on their areas of expertise, without restricting them to doing so.
- **Horizontal and egalitarian** - in its most common form, it allows any member to propose and follow through a course of action, or raise an objection or call for further discussion;

- **Adaptable** – can be modified to suit different contexts, from small working groups to wide memberships; ability to make proposals, raise objections, or call a vote, while generally open to all, can be restricted where appropriate.

Limitations & Considerations

- **Requires platform buy-in** – relies on all members committing to the chosen decision-making platform.
- **Not suitable for all decision-making** – issues of strategic direction and legal standing should go to a formal vote.
- **Relies on a 'sweet spot' of engagement** – if enough members do not monitor proposals and intervene where appropriate, a few over-zealous actors can take control and bad proposals can be approved. Conversely, if every proposal is met with an objection, then lazy consensus ceases to function.
- **Requires the support of a voting system** – like all forms of consensus decision-making, lazy consensus needs to be backed up with some method for reaching a final decision when a consensus cannot be reached.

Rough consensus

In situations where a unanimous agreement cannot be reached, a decision must (usually) nevertheless be taken. The most common solution is to resort to some form of voting. Forms of 'rough consensus' provide an alternative. Peter Resnick of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) notes that while unanimity is ideal, IETF meetings don't require it. One of the problems with many consensus models is that, as Resnick puts it, they allow 'a single intransigent person who simply keeps saying "No!" to stop the process cold' (Resnick, 2014). At IETF, working group chairs are empowered to declare the existence of a 'rough consensus' if they determine that an objection has been fully considered and answered by the group, or does not identify a significant enough problem to justify not moving forward.

Despite its obvious advantages in terms of speed, rough consensus places significant power in the hands of the chair and without controls in place could be open to abuse. When combined with a quick informal vote, however, rough consensus in some form may have a place in community-led open organisations that need to be light on their feet and whose chairs have the community's marked respect. In general, we would recommend that any decision based on rough consensus be supported by an informal vote (a show of hands, a +/-1 in a chat channel or email thread) that requires a **supermajority** of at least two-thirds of those eligible to vote—or in other words, on a rough count more than twice as many people have to support a motion as oppose it for it to be carried.

Consensus Decision-Making: Further Reading & Resources

- Michael J. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends* (Philadelphia: Religious Society of Friends, 1996).
- M. Treloar, 'The Tyranny of Consensus', *Clamor*, issue 20, (May/June 2003), pp.38-40. (Available on the Internet Archive at http://ia800401.us.archive.org/33/items/clamormagazine20mult/clamormagazine20mult.pdf)
- 'The Spokescouncil (or Delegates' Meeeting), *Seeds for Change.* https://seedsforchange.org.uk/spokescouncil
- 'Consensus Decision Making', *Seeds for Change.* https://seedsforchange.org.uk/consensus

Voting: When and How to do it

For open infrastructure projects that need agile forms of decision making, deciding (a) when a vote is necessary and (b) how to conduct it presents numerous challenges. It doesn't help that the literature on voting and electoral systems is vast and hard to navigate. Without getting into technicalities or laying down any definitive 'best practice' (which will need to be adapted to an organisation's specific situation, culture, scale, and maturity), this section (a) highlights the key questions and issues around voting, and arguments for and against; (b) presents some models which are widely applicable, simple to implement, and easy to tweak and develop, which organisations unsure where to start may wish to adopt; and (c) introduces a handful of more distinctive methods and interesting tweaks that might be of particular relevance to community-led, open infrastructure projects, especially those looking to refine or revisit already well-established decision-making procedures. For those wishing to explore voting models in more detail, a selection of useful starting points is offered in the 'Further Reading' section below.

When to Vote

'The hardest thing about voting', as Karl Fogel points out, 'is determining when to do it' (Fogel, 2022). The culture of many open source, community-led projects is such that consensus-building tends to predominate. This is especially true of smaller projects and projects in the earlier stages of development, where most or all participants are founder members and share a common understanding of the project's goals and values. In such projects an actual vote is often not necessary to decide upon a course of action. Where opinion is split, it will often be evident who is in a minority, and that minority will often accede to the majority decision in order to maintain group cohesion and good feeling prior to any formal vote being taken.

For Fogel, therefore, taking a vote 'should be very rare — a last resort for when all other options have failed'. Votes don't end debates but do end discussion, he argues, and therefore also often end creative thinking about the problem. 'As long as discussion continues, there is the possibility that someone will come up with a new solution everyone likes. [...] Voting's only function is that it finally settles a question so everyone can move on. But it settles it by a head count, instead of by rational dialogue leading everyone to the same conclusion' (Fogel, 2022).

The kind of consensus-based culture this presupposes is generally very healthy, and one of the most attractive characteristics of many community-led, open organisations, but it is accompanied by certain risks. One of these risks is the assumption that because decisions have hitherto been reached through discussion and consensus the same will remain true in the future. As organisations grow, often becoming broader coalitions of interests and views in the process, establishing – and even identifying – a clear consensus may become more difficult. This can lead to disagreement, tension, and ultimately organisational fragmentation and breakdown. Such periods of stress or crisis are often what prompt organisations to revisit their governance mechanisms, but in general they also provide far from ideal conditions for a governance overhaul. Having clear voting procedures in place well before they are needed or used, with clearly defined criteria as to when a vote can be called and by whom, can mitigate such problems, and facilitate continual iterative adjustments to address issues in the functioning of governance as they arise. Revisiting a pre-existing voting system when its flaws begin to show is likely to be easier and less disruptive than implementing voting from scratch. Rather than impinging upon or restricting 'open' organisational cultures of discussion and compromise, proper voting provisions can sustain and undergird them.

Even where a consensus does appear to have been reached through discussion alone there may be good reasons for taking some form of formal vote. A minuted record of a vote can provide an additional safeguard against later disagreements over what exactly was agreed, and a useful (and cathartic) means for dissent to be registered. **Indicative votes**, taken before discussion begins, can also be helpful: they can signal whether there is a clear majority in favour of a particular option, saving time and shaping the conversation, and quickly focus attention on potential issues and discussion points.

Voting (whether indicative or decisive) can also be valuable as a means to allow quieter, more reserved voices to be heard, especially in larger groups. In most decision-making fora a vocal, charismatic minority emerges that tends to dominate discussion.[27] Where this minority is in agreement, an impression of a consensus can develop that does not necessarily reflect opinion in the wider group. This impression may also be shared by dissenting contributors, and make them less likely to articulate potentially important and influential counter-arguments. In such scenarios, there is a risk that decisions may be 'agreed' upon despite a majority opposing them.

Even where a vote confirms an apparent consensus, it can reveal the existence of a larger than expected dissenting minority, sometimes prompting reconsideration and further discussions.

[27] OPERAS-P's 'Report on innovative models of governance', for example, drew attention to the emergence of "stronger" members within OPERAS' own network (Schafer and Wieneke 2021: 9).

These in turn may result in a different, better, more nuanced final decision. Even where the decision remains unchanged, ensuring that the minority view is heard and acknowledged can protect against alienation and disenchantment, and ensure that such views are borne in mind in the future.

Elections

Stagger Elections and Terms of Office

Three years appears to be the most typical term of office for members on the board of trustees (or similar) for open infrastructure projects, commonly renewable for one or two terms.

Where a board of trustees, management committee, or similar is elected, terms of office and elections are best staggered. For instance, the Board of Trustees at UKSG (formerly the United Kingdom Serials Group) is made up of nine elected members, with a term of office of three years. Ordinarily, three members will be elected each year. This minimises the disruption caused, allowing for a relatively smooth transition, and ensures a good mix of experience and fresh blood. It also means that smaller elections are run more often. Both the electors and administrators are thus more familiar with the voting procedure, while the elections themselves are simpler to run, all of which makes errors less likely (and more easily remedied if they do occur).

Where a board is being established for the first time, consider differentiated initial terms of office. For example, the Open Access eBook Usage (OAeBU) Data Trust specifies in its 'Governance Documentation for Initial Board of Trustees' (2022-2025) that the normal term of office will be three years. However, 'the first Board of Trustees will be elected as a single group, but will divide into three cohorts with up to 3 members of each cohort serving 1-year terms, 2-year terms, and 3-year terms so rolling cohorts are established' (Elwell et al., 2021). The purpose of this is to combine a continual refreshing of the board membership with a degree of stability and continuity. This and other similar models have influenced COPIM's discussions around the most appropriate way to establish the OBC's Board of Stewards, the rationale behind which we will outline more in detail in future publications.

Beware Simultaneous Elections

Where an organisation has several elected boards or working groups, it can be tempting to run two or more elections simultaneously, on the assumption that this will minimise the administrative load, time taken, and organisational disruption. We caution against this, especially where different groups of voters and/or voting methods are to be used. The initial 2021 Board of Directors election at Open Source Initiative (OSI) offers a cautionary tale in this regard. Individual and Affiliate elections were run simultaneously and, partly as a result, ballots in the Individual election were incorrectly issued to (and in one case cast by) entities who were not eligible to vote.[28] This ultimately led to two external reports being produced, with recommendations for the future conduct of elections. These included staggering the running of elections to avoid the 'significant human and technical confusion between the two elections' the reports identified.[29]

Document and Address Problems

The manner in which OSI documented and dealt with the problem also offers a model of best practice in acknowledging and addressing issues of governance in a transparent and thorough-going fashion. It shows too how having the courage to openly document moments of breakdown and failure can provide an invaluable service to the wider community of communities, in some cases far more useful than reports recording successes and 'best practice'.

How to Vote: Voting Methods

The forms of voting used by open source, community-led projects vary, and many organisations do not clearly specify in their public-facing governance documentation how votes will be carried out. In smaller organisations or on relatively straightforward matters, a simple 'first-past-the-post' system of voting is likely to be adequate, often administered through a simple show of hands (or electronic equivalent). This has the great virtues of simplicity and clarity. The flaws of this system in more complex scenarios have been extensively documented, however, and it is worth considering whether an alternative method might be appropriate in certain circumstances, such as where a choice between multiple options or candidates needs to be made. The tendency of infrastructure projects towards organisational complexity also means that more sophisticated voting mechanisms may be more likely to be required.

At the very least, the rules by which any formal votes or elections are to be conducted should be documented and clear to all involved well before the necessity of any particular vote becomes apparent. Unless there is good reason for them not to be, these rules should also be made publicly accessible. Ensuring voting rules are clear and put in place in a timely fashion is generally more important to good governance than the choice of one particular voting system over another. That said, organisations should consider in advance whether the system of voting employed may be contentious or unfair. In general, the more a project is likely to be making use of formal votes in electing members and making decisions, and the greater the

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[28] The circumstances that led to the elections having to be re-run were complex, and involved a situation that is 'not uncommon among small nonprofits: technical and process debt accrued over time […] eventually creating an opening for things to go wrong'. The running of simultaneous elections, however, was identified as a particular complicating factor. For further details, see 'OSI Election Update: Investigative Reports and the Next Election', *Open Source Initiative*, 16 July 2021 https://opensource.org/election-update2

[29] OSI Oversight Committee, 'Findings and Recommendations regarding the OSI election of Spring 2021,' *Open Source Initiative*, 2 July 2021: p.4 https://opensource.org/files/OversightCommittee_OCR.pdf

number of candidates and voters there are likely to be, the more seriously the project may need to consider its voting system. Governance documents should also clearly establish under what circumstances and through what procedures any voting system can be changed.

Approval Voting

Approval voting is a simple system in which each voter can vote for as many candidates (or options) on the ballot as they wish. It mitigates many of the shortcomings of the one-vote, first-past-the-post system, and is 'a good choice in most cases' because 'it is simple to explain and to count, and comprehensibility is an important factor when choosing a voting method' (Fogel, 2022). It is also simple to administer either electronically, by post, or in person, and can be used either to elect a single winner, or to elect multiple candidates (often useful when electing board members, for example) from a single ballot.[30]

Apache Voting

In the Apache voting system, votes are represented as numbers between -1 and +1: -1 means no, and +1 means yes.[31] The in-between values indicate how strongly the voting individual feels. Their documentation gives examples of fractional votes and what the voter *might* be communicating with them:

- +0: 'I don't feel strongly about it, but I'm okay with this.'
- -0: 'I won't get in the way, but I'd rather we didn't do this.'
- -0.5: 'I don't like this idea, but I can't find any rational justification for my feelings.'
- ++1: 'Wow! I like this! Let's *do* it!'
- -0.9: 'I *really* don't like this, but I'm not going to stand in the way if everyone else wants to go ahead with it.'
- +0.9: 'This is a cool idea and i like it, but I don't have time/the skills necessary to help out.'

As Apache takes care to note, while 'the community should spell out in its guidelines the tacit implications of voting […] **in no case** may someone's vote be considered invalid if it does not appear to meet the implied commitment: a vote is a formal expression of opinion, not of commitment'. Apache's voting system is in most cases not suitable for making important strategic or legal decisions involving large numbers of votes. It can be extremely useful in

[30] For more on approval voting, see the Election Science and Ballotpedia entries.

[31] 'Apache Voting Process', *Apache Foundation*, n.d. https://www.apache.org/foundation/voting.html [accessed 16 January 2022].

smaller and more informal decision-making environments, however, and might be used for indicative votes and alongside consensus decision-making processes very effectively.

Condorcet Voting Systems

One voting system that has proved particularly popular with open source and community-led projects is the Condorcet method. Technically, this is a family of related methods.[32] The basic principle of the Condorcet method is that voters rank their choices in order of preference, and these rankings are used to elect a candidate or to choose an option that beats all others in a pairwise contest. Elections can be conducted in various ways, but most Condorcet elections employ a single round of preferential voting. Adopted by the Python, Homebrew, and the Debian communities among others, Condorcet is widely regarded as the most fair, representative, and accurate way to tally ranked choice ballots for single winner elections. **Digital and online voting applications** (see, for example, condorcet.vote) make administering a Condorcet vote relatively straightforward. Forms of Condorcet voting are also often employed in Liquid Democracy (see below).[33]

'Further Discussion'

Debian is an open source operating system developed by a democratically structured community spanning more than 60 different countries whose governance methods include the use of a version of Condorcet voting. The ballot for every Debian vote on a decision includes as a default a 'Further discussion' item.[34] This gives the option for voters to choose further discussion over any or all of the other available options. There are several benefits to this. First, if a voter feels one or more options are especially bad, they can express this by ranking these options below 'Further Discussion': if enough voters do so, this will lead to more debate taking place before an option which many have very serious reservations about is chosen. It can also provide a useful indicator of options that the community - or substantial parts of it - is particularly hostile towards.

More often, though, at least at Debian, 'Further Discussion' reportedly loses by a large margin. While such results might appear to suggest that this option is redundant, they give a particular legitimacy to the result of the vote both within and beyond the project: as one commenter put it, the method produces 'a nice number you can quote [...] ("look, not everyone voted for this

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[32] Among the various flavours of Condorcet voting used are Condorcet Beatpath (also known as the Schulze method, used by Debian, Gentoo, OpenStack, Pirate Party political parties, Ubuntu and Wikimedia, among many others) Condorcet IRV, Condorcet Borda, and Condorcet Copeland.

[33] For further information on Condorcet voting methods, see: the entries on Equal Vote, on OpaVote, and the website condorcet.vote. Python's move to a new governance model and its preceding discussion of forms of voting, with a particular focus on condorcet voting, is also well worth a look.

[34] 'Debian Constitution': see especially A1.2 & A1.6 -https://www.debian.org/devel/constitution

option as their first choice, but 95% of dev[eloper]s like it better than continuing to discuss")'.[35] Recognition within the project that this decision was preferred over continued discussion can also increase buy-in and mitigate disillusionment on the part of those who did not vote for the winning item.

Casting Votes

Consider how tied votes will be resolved, and specify this in your bylaws. One way to prevent having tied votes is by having an unequal number of voters. When this isn't a possibility or isn't practical, the standard method to prevent a tie is through the use of a casting vote. In one common model the Chair votes as usual, but also has a second, casting vote in the event of a tie. An arguably fairer alternative sees the Chair initially withhold (or conceal) their vote, only ever voting (or revealing their vote) in the event of a tie. This latter method especially suits scenarios in which it is useful for the Chair to play a more neutral role.

Liquid Democracy

It is particularly common for infrastructure projects to bring together partner organisations from different fields and with different priorities in terms of what they want to gain from the project, and different foci within the project. One issue this can throw up is differing levels of engagement with the governance process: one partner or group of partners may wish to be actively involved in each and every decision, while another may wish to contribute to the project in other ways but see active participation in governance and decision-making as an unnecessary drain on their time and resources, and/or feel ill-equipped and under-informed to make certain decisions. This concern emerged repeatedly in COPIM's governance workshops and discussions with potential community members and stakeholders. As a contributor to one of COPIM's library workshops noted, participation might look different to different members, with potentially different resources: some might only want to stay informed via a governing body (and maybe have a say only in very major decisions), whereas others might want to participate directly and steer things more closely (Morka & Gatti, 2021).

This theoretical issue became more concrete when considering how academic libraries might best be accommodated in COPIM's Open Book Collective. Some libraries are enthusiastic about joining the project as members and helping to shape the overall direction of travel, but as others explained they lack the resources and/or the desire to be engaged actively to its future governance.

For larger infrastructures with many members, a form of liquid democracy may offer a solution in such situations. With origins traceable at least as far back as Lewis Caroll's *Principles of Parliamentary Representation* (Carroll, 1884), liquid democracy combines direct and representative forms of democracy, allowing voters to choose whether to vote directly on an

[35] Nathaniel J. Smith, 'Python Governance Electoral System Forum', 1 Oct 2018: https://discuss.python.org/t/python-governance-electoral-system/290

issue or to delegate their voting power to a trusted party or 'proxy'. For its advocates, liquid democracy has the potential to be a more egalitarian and flexible foundation for decision-making in virtual and open source communities. Through delegation, Dominik Schiener argues,

> people with domain-specific knowledge are able to better influence the outcome of decisions, which in turn leads to an overall better governance of the state. Because of this, Liquid Democracy naturally evolves into a Meritocracy, where decisions are mainly made by those who have the kind of knowledge and experience required to make well-informed decisions on issues (Schiener, 2016).

This is likely to be especially attractive to an open source infrastructure project with heterogenous members who each have particular areas of expertise (and ignorance). The precise mechanisms through which liquid democracy is instigated vary widely, and depend in part on the scale and complexity of the voting and systems involved. It should be noted that liquid democracy is not itself a voting system: liquid democracy can use any voting system, from straightforward first-past-the-post, to some variety of Condorcet or quadratic voting. However, it is often seen as being especially suited to (or enabled by) online voting and communication, and is suitable both for electing candidates and for taking other kinds of decisions.

For most small or medium open source infrastructure organisations, some kind of system that limits when and how a voter can decide to vote directly or to assign their vote to a representative may be needed in order to keep administration manageable and trustworthy. With new, affordable software tailored to such organisations, however (see 'Open Source Liquid Democracy Tools' below), even smaller projects may be able to employ truly liquid decision-making processes. Several of these tools combine online discussion fora (similar to Mattermost) with voting and decision-making procedures, and allow for the expression of preferences, abstentions and the like.

Liquid Democracy Resources

- Liquid Democracy, e-Voting and Blockchain
- P2P Foundation
- Open Source Liquid Democracy Tools
  - Liquid Feedback: an open source tool for running decision making and voting on liquid democracy principles
  - Adhocracy - German language site
  - DemocracyOS - a suite of tools for online governance developed by Democracia en Red, Argentina

– [Association for Interactive Democracy]: links to news stories, blog articles, and academic research on liquid democracy and liquid feedback, and much more.

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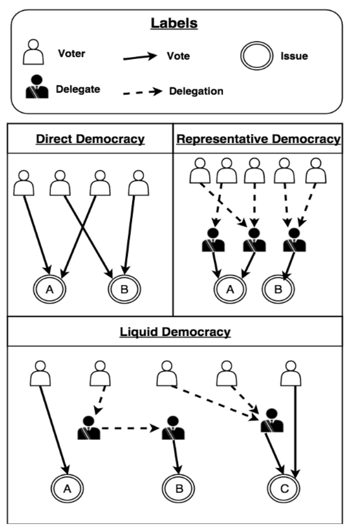

Figure 7: Liquid Democracy schematic. Source: Schiener, 2021.

Establishing a Quorum

The quorum is the minimum number or proportion of voting members that must be present for a meeting to conduct business on behalf of the group (and therefore for a vote to be conducted or considered valid). Setting a quorum too high may make it difficult for important decisions to be taken in a timely fashion, while setting it too low (or not having a quorum at all) risks allowing a small minority to impose its views undemocratically. A simple majority of eligible voters is a common default, but consider whether this is appropriate, and whether there are particular kinds of decision or meeting for which a higher or lower quorum might be appropriate.

For example, for meetings of the UKSG's Board of Trustees, which usually consists of nine members, the quorum is three 'or the number nearest to one-third of the total number of Trustees', while for General Meetings, a quorum is one-twentieth of the membership entitled to vote, who must be present either in person or by proxy.[36]

It is common for all kinds of organisations to require a higher quorum and a greater majority for votes to make changes to a constitution or articles of association. Intelligent scheduling can help ensure a quorum is met. If trustees or directors are also members of an organisation, for example, then holding a members' meeting immediately before or after a board meeting might make it more likely that the quorum for the latter will be met. If your project is international in scope, consider how different timezones might impact upon the ability to reach a quorum, and how all members can be given an equal chance to attend and have their vote count. If physical meetings will play a significant part in decision making, geography should be borne in mind for similar reasons.

If your infrastructure project is–or is planning to become–a legal entity (e.g., incorporating as a charity), check whether there are legal requirements or recommendations regarding quora for certain meetings. The UK's Charity Commission, for example, recommends that the quorum for a trustees' meeting is a minimum of one third of the total number of charity trustees, plus one (so a charity with twelve trustees, for example, will have a quorum of five.)[37]

Defining how a quorum is constituted in online decision-making is particularly important, especially where online discussion platforms such as Mattermost (or commercial alternatives like Slack and MS Teams) are used. Consider how attendance and abstention is to be indicated and recorded. A common form of voting in online fora is with either a +1 (yes/pro) or -1 (no/contra): here a 0 can function as an active abstention that contributes to a quorum being met.[38]

Jeremy Barlow identifies three 'red flags' that indicate requirements for a quorum should be reviewed: when a few members become too powerful; when the needs of the organisation change; when the organisation goes through a period of growth (Barlow, 2016).

Quora: Better Practice Recommendations

- Check any legal requirements and recommendations that apply.

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[36] 'UKSG Articles of Association', 11.2 & 23.2.2 https://www.uksg.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/2020%20Articles%20of%20Association%20FINAL-15.pdf

[37] The Charity Commission, 'Guidance Charity meetings: making decisions and voting' (2013), https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-meetings-making-decisions-and-voting

[38] The Apache Foundation's variation on this method, in which votes are represented as decimal numbers between -1 and +1, allows for two kinds of 'abstention': '+0: "I don't feel strongly about it, but I'm okay with this",' and '-0: "I won't get in the way, but I'd rather we didn't do this".' Apache Voting Process, *Apache Foundation*, n.d. https://www.apache.org/foundation/voting.html [accessed 16 January 2022].

- Which meetings or groups should have a quorum? (We recommend a quorum be set for all formal boards or groups that play a part in the organisation's running and governance.)
- Set a default quorum (one-third of voting members and a simple majority are common defaults).
- Identify and specify any exceptions to the default quorum. Votes to change an organisation's constitution or bylaws commonly require a higher quorum.
- Specify quorum requirements unambiguously in your organisation's bylaws.
- Review quora regularly, looking out especially for Barlow's 'red flags'.

Online Voting and Software for Voting & Decision-making

Online decision-making and open source projects have long been closely associated. The COVID pandemic and the increasing internationalisation of open infrastructure projects have both contributed to making online voting increasingly the norm. (The UK Charity Commission's guidance is interesting reading in this regard, laying out the provisional allowances for online voting and meetings.) For relatively small projects, discussion platforms and chat services like Mattermost can be used for decision-making and voting. As organisations grow, however, more complex and secure platforms may be needed. At the time of writing a developed ecosystem of open source software of this sort appears to be lacking, but this is a fast-moving field. Below are just a few options organisations seeking more sophisticated voting software might wish to consider:

- **ChoiceVoting** - commercial voting and election management software aimed at charities and similar organisations, also used by the Green Party, University of Exeter and others. Pricing variable, from free for up to 20 voters and 2 elections, to £45 for up to 250 voters, and higher for more.
- **Civica CESVotes**: see also here. A more expensive solution perhaps suitable for bigger projects.

Voting and Decision-Making: Questions to Answer

- What kinds of decisions need to be taken?
- Who should take each of these kinds of decisions? All members? a board or working group?
- What mechanisms do you have in place to **ensure all relevant voices and opinions are heard**, especially those liable not to be?
- What mechanisms do you have in place for decision-making when consensus breaks down?

- Who, if anyone, needs **oversight**? Are you introducing unnecessary oversight mechanisms? Can you empower the people doing the work to make their own decisions, even if they are of lower 'rank' (however that may be conceived)?
- What **legal considerations** apply to any decision-making/voting mechanisms you employ?
- What **voting system** will be employed? How will votes be carried out?
- Are there any circumstances under which it should be specified that voters must recuse themselves?

Voting: Guidelines for Better Practice

- **Stagger elections** to boards and working groups, to ensure a mix of experience and new blood and minimise disruption.
- **Three-year terms**, renewable for a single term, are a good default for most permanent or standing boards, but consider carefully if they fit your situation. Are there any decision-making groups within your organisation that should have longer or shorter terms? Be more or less renewable?
- Consider using **approval voting** to elect board and working group members.
- Consider whether some form of **liquid democracy** would (a) serve the needs of your organisation, and (b) be implementable.

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6. Governance Self-Assessment, External Criteria, and Maintenance

By Patrick Hart, Janneke Adema, and COPIM

COPIM's governance workshops and the *Exploring Community Governance Models* report established both the situatedness of governance, and the fact that in any given case that situation is constantly shifting. Taken in tandem, these two factors mean that any project's systems of governance need to be continuously—or at least periodically—self-correcting.

Regular self-assessment of governance structures, models, and practices is the first and most obvious step towards achieving this. In most cases this self-assessment is likely to be informal and ongoing, and any issues identified will be able to be dealt with through governance mechanisms already in place carrying out minor self-adjustments. Establishing a permanent governance working group can facilitate this process.

It is advisable, however, to consider complementing ongoing informal reviews by building into an organisation's governance a more formalised self-assessment exercise, to be conducted at regular intervals (e.g., annually). As Katherine Skinner argues, such a process does not have to be punitive: instead it 'can help us identify what elements in a program or organisation need additional investments and improvements' (Skinner, 2019). A more formalised exercise can provide an opportunity to address more major governance issues, and avoids the risk of perpetually patching up a system that may have become fundamentally dysfunctional, however fitted to task it once was. It can also be a chance for a project to benefit from an external perspective.

External Assessment Criteria

There are several ways to run a governance self-assessment, and as always the specificities of any given project should dictate the forms it takes. These might include anonymised questionnaires circulated to all project members, workshops, and/or the establishment of a dedicated temporary working group consisting of members from across the project (in the absence of a standing governance working group).

In designing a system of self-assessment, one question worth particular attention is that of whether to evaluate a project's performance against externally developed criteria. One recent example of a self-assessment exercise that uses such criteria is that of OA Switchboard, which published its results in October 2021. Like several other organisations, OA Switchboard has publicly committed to the 'Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure' (or 'POSI').[39] These

[39] Designed to offer 'a set of guidelines by which open scholarly infrastructure organisations and initiatives that support the research community can be run and sustained', POSI was first formulated in a 2015 blog post in *Science in the Open*, and later codified by its original authors as a community resource. (Quoted from

sixteen principles are divided into three sections: **Governance** (to which seven of the sixteen principles appertain), **Sustainability**, and **Insurance**. In a blog post OA Switchboard's Executive Director, Yvonne Campfens, explained that they had adopted the principles 'not just because of the guidance POSI gives on areas to address, but because POSI is also a leading example of garnering the trust of the broader scholarly community' (Campfens, 2021).[40]

POSI's 7 Principles of Good Governance

Coverage across the research enterprise – it is increasingly clear that research transcends disciplines, geography, institutions and stakeholders. The infrastructure that supports it needs to do the same.

Stakeholder Governed – a board-governed organisation drawn from the stakeholder community builds more confidence that the organisation will take decisions driven by community consensus and consideration of different interests.

Non-discriminatory membership – we see the best option as an "opt-in" approach with a principle of non-discrimination where any stakeholder group may express an interest and should be welcome. The process of representation in day to day governance must also be inclusive with governance that reflects the demographics of the membership.

Transparent operations – achieving trust in the selection of representatives to governance groups will be best achieved through transparent processes and operations in general (within the constraints of privacy laws).

Cannot lobby – the community, not infrastructure organisations, should collectively drive regulatory change. An infrastructure organisation's role is to provide a base for others to work on and should depend on its community to support the creation of a legislative environment that affects it.

Living will – a powerful way to create trust is to publicly describe a plan addressing the condition under which an organisation would be wound down, how this would happen, and how any ongoing assets could be archived and preserved when passed to a successor organisation. Any such organisation would need to honour this same set of principles.

Formal incentives to fulfil mission & wind-down – infrastructures exist for a specific purpose and that purpose can be radically simplified or even rendered unnecessary by technological or social change. If it is possible the organisation (and staff) should have direct incentives to deliver on the mission and wind down.

Figure 8: POSI's Seven Principles of Good Governance, source: https://openscholarlyinfrastructure.org/

In many ways, OA Switchboard's self-assessment presents an exemplary model to follow. Its report measures progress against POSI's good governance criteria using the well-established traffic-light system (green = good job, but not perfect; amber = making progress; red = failing, or significant work needed).[41] This provides a useful at-a-glance evaluation, which is

https://openscholarlyinfrastructure.org/about/; for POSI itself, see Bilder, Lin, and Neylon 2020. For the original blog post see Bilder, Lin, and Neylon 2015).

[40] Importantly, Campfens noted that in addition OA Switchboard 'also talked with numerous stakeholders, expert legal advisors in various countries, and founders and leaders of other industry initiatives' in order to define their own core principles.

[41] In fact in this first self-assessment OA Switchboard did not find cause to deploy the red light. In two cases, the self-assessment supplemented the traffic-light system with a grey symbol where, given the specific nature of OA Switchboard, it was difficult or impossible to evaluate it against the given principle.

supplemented by a longer self-assessment report, offering a short (2-3 paragraph) discussion of OA Switchboard's progress against each of POSI's principles. Each discussion is prefaced by a short description of the principle, taken directly from the original (2015) POSI paper.[42]

This kind of self-assessment has several virtues. Firstly, in being openly published and foregrounded on the organisation's website, it demonstrates to the broader community as well as to the participants themselves that the project is taking governance seriously, and models a transparency that brings with it a measure of public accountability. The inclusion of a blog post introducing and commenting upon the report also demonstrates (and makes public) a willingness to reflect upon its outcomes and consider the organisation's direction of travel and any measures that might need to be taken to correct this. It also serves to further foreground the self-assessment. While a crude tool in isolation, the traffic-light system gives an immediate snapshot of progress and clearly identifies areas of concern. When deployed alongside a nuanced narrative or commentary, it also functions as a useful reminder that governance can both improve and degrade, as structures that functioned well under a certain set of circumstances become ill-suited to new situations. A self-assessment exercise such as this also serves as an opportunity for introspection for a project and its members, providing twin prompts to reflect upon how governance is working: first as the report is being put together, and secondly upon its publication. Without such a process, such occasions can be hard to manufacture under the everyday pressures of getting and keeping an open source infrastructure project up and running.

There are also obvious advantages to adopting a widely recognised and respected external set of criteria such as POSI. First, it can save a good deal of time, effort and debate, which in turn can make the whole exercise much more likely to happen, especially at organisations with slender resources. But adopting external criteria can also serve as a guard against unconsciously self-serving formulations or omissions. As the Executive Director's blog post made clear, in the case of OA Switchboard's adoption of POSI, the fact that these criteria are widely respected by the community within which OA Switchboard is situated was also important, and helped to lend a broader credibility to the exercise. This is likely to have a wider importance when it comes to attracting partners and reassuring existing or potential funders.

Whether an organisation decides to evaluate its governance structures against its own internally developed criteria or against a more widely recognised collection of principles such as POSI should depend upon the specificities of its own situation. Of course, the choice of criteria matters, and flaws in the principles against which any assessment is carried out will likely lead to shortcomings in the assessment itself.[43] Given the issues discussed in chapter 2,

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[42] Crossref, which signed up to POSI some months before OA Switchboard, published a similar self-assessment upon doing so, using a similar traffic-light and commentary format, which OA Switchboard presumably — and quite sensibly — borrowed. OA Switchboard's report, though, has the virtue for our purposes here of more explicitly presenting itself as a self-assessment, distinct from the process of actually signing up to the principles.

[43] For example, POSI's third principle, that of 'Non-discriminatory membership', which sees the 'best option' as 'an "opt-in" approach', may in some circumstances prove inadequate to address the kinds of issues around equity and

criteria that also draw explicit 'red lines' and set out in clear and concrete terms what 'open' and 'community-led' do *not* mean may be especially important. There may be some signs of a shift in the direction of such an approach already: see, for example, the shift in both tone and content from LIBER's 'Five Principles for Open Access Negotiations' (LIBER, 2017) to its recently published 'Four Urgent Recommendations for Open Access Negotiations with Publishers' (LIBER & Campbell, 2022), with its insistence on 'disallowing non-disclosure clauses', and its call to 'divest from subscription agreements and repurpose funds to support alternatives'.

Paradoxically perhaps, one of the most valuable effects of engaging with external sets of principles is that it helps an organisation identify and articulate the points where it differs or dissents from widely-held values within its broader community of communities. Both OA Switchboard and Crossref stick closely and explicitly to POSI in their self-evaluations, but also identify specific points where it doesn't seem to apply to their own circumstances or values. This highlights what makes each organisation distinctive, original and innovative, both for the organisation itself and for those outside it. It should also make real mutual understanding and the forming of genuine coalitions more likely.

Looking forward, it will be interesting to see whether signatories to POSI such as OA Switchboard and Crossref continue to assess their own performance solely or even principally against its sixteen principles, or move towards a more individuated set of criteria, reflecting the particularities of their own values and circumstances, and their own more established status. It seems probable and desirable that just as the governance of emergent infrastructures will be moulded by their desire to adhere to external principles such as POSI, so pressure from such projects will lead to modifications to those principles, or their ultimate replacement by alternatives. This is one way in which an infrastructural organisation or network can develop a symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationship with the wider open source community.

Community Engagement

One further set of external criteria (which are also highly adaptable) that should be mentioned in this context has been developed by the Next Generation Library Publishing project. They see their *Values and Principles Framework and Assessment Checklist* as an assessment tool that can help scholarly communications funders, organisations, and communities to identify how well their operations align to and 'demonstrate their adherence to and support for agreed-upon academic values and principles'. Their framework consists of six top-level values (diversity, equity, and inclusion; transparency; openness and interoperability; access to knowledge; financial and organizational stability; and representative governance) followed by several principles or ways in which these values might be manifested. Finally, each principle includes several measurable indicators and suggestions for possible evidence that might show adherence to that Indicator. They also include use cases for this framework, for example as

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diversity that have troubled many open source communities and projects, for reasons that have already been discussed in chapter 3.

part of *self-assessments*, *reviews by trained peers*, and *ongoing reviews*. One of their further takeaways is that 'those that demonstrate high alignment with academic values and principles tend to seek out a close engagement with a community of practice to whom they intentionally offer both control and responsibility' (Skinner & Lippincott, 2020). This is an important point to make and once again highlights the importance of community outreach to ensure they are able to engage with both governance and its ongoing assessment and have a say into how this assessment happens and what it is based upon.

Asura Enkhbayar from *Invest in Open Infrastructure* similarly highlights how their assessment criteria are designed to centre community (alongside reliability, and transformative influence). For them this is reflected in two principles. First of all they argue for the importance of prioritising stakeholders (and their interests and needs) over shareholders, which in community-governed organisations would be reflected in a focus on *community responsiveness,* which in the context of governance assessment would include not only ensuring the community is involved in governance, but that an organisation's operations are also transparent and have clear mechanisms of accountability (which for them includes a community-driven mission). Ensuring that the community is involved in these kinds of governance assessments exercises (and hence that they do not just function as something that needs doing because of funder requirements, for example) is something that we would therefore recommend, for example by making sure that there are clear community oversight mechanisms built into your governance. Finally, as Enkhabayar highlights, in particular also in the context of DEI and ensuring equitable access to infrastructures (and in this context we would add to the design of governance structures), '*community engagement* should not be a one-way street of knowledge extraction but instead constitute an exchange of knowledge and power' (Enkhbayar, 2021). In this respect a focus on the labour involved in community governance as put in by its community and stakeholders, and a focus on good governance as an essential aspect of the maintenance of open infrastructures, seems pertinent in this context.

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COPIM's Governance: Lessons Learned and Co-Development

By Janneke Adema and COPIM

The methodology of co-design and co-development that we devised when designing the community governance models for COPIM and for the OBC, can be seen as a kind of self-assessment exercise, of 'workshopping governance,' and it is our intention to continue with this process in this way during the remainder of the project. In this report we are focusing on the development of our governance structures up until 2021, and what we will describe here next is some of the lessons we learned from these exercises about what we are as an organisation and what we want to become. This also relates back to the narrative or history that we formulate around ourselves as a project or community, and the future that we see at this point of time for the project. Underneath, as in the previous chapters, we will share our documentation of these processes again, a documentation that we as a project and community can also come back to at a later point to assess how much of this still stands or whether we want to take a different direction.

Key Points

From the discussions we had during the first three internal workshops we conducted with COPIM project members, several key points emerged that continue to structure our governance research and methodology, including the fact that we wanted these governance elements themselves to be a form of intervention into what they commonly are seen to be (by using different less-formal or legal language for example, but also by not resolving all the friction that came up in our discussions into uniform and consensus-based elements, but showcasing this friction). These points included:

- A focus on intervention/friction
- On processual and situated co-design/co-development
- Recognising that there will always be hierarchical horizontal and cooperative element within the governance models we are designing
- Creating a model that is flexible and can develop further once the project grows and the community further develops.
- Community-led and inclusive (involving the HC Governance Working Group and future governance communities)
- Knowledge exchange with likeminded projects (e.g. the NGLP project, OPERAS, the Continental Platform)

Future of COPIM

We also discussed in groups what we thought the future of COPIM as a project could be and what we would like to do in the near future. The underneath forms a reflection of that discussion and of the various suggestions that were brought forward of what COPIM could become (and note that there might be some contradictions or frictions between the suggestions underneath, as they were brought forward by different groups), also in the process of transitioning to 'something else', a topic we also discussed in our first external stakeholder workshop, how to transition from a project to an organisation? Although we liked elements of each model, in the end we felt the 'incubator' model fits COPIM best at the current point in time. One clear outcome of this process was also that within the project we set up a 'Future of COPIM' working group, which would continue to discuss some of the ideas offered below, would look at further connections to like-minded projects and communities, and would explore options for future funding.

As an overarching organisation

The question of what we want COPIM to be is essential and governance structure might depend on how we answer this question. If the various projects developed within COPIM remain within the organisational structure of COPIM – in other words, if COPIM is going to be the governing structure for the various outputs (OBC, Thoth, OtF) that spin out of COPIM – then it might become a very large and diverse and eventually watered-down administrative structure. This could be advantageous if COPIM can hold all these things together, as there is also a real power in that. Do we want COPIM then to be a large institutional structure that sits alongside something like OPERAS and works across a huge array of different entities and organisations to fit in within some sort of funding agenda? Do we want to be a big infrastructural entity?

As an incubator

The alternative is that COPIM is more focused on becoming a bit more radical, similar to where it started, in the form of an edgy incubator-type body. In this scenario, COPIM could spin things off that create separate identities, like an incubator for new projects that come out of it. And some of these projects might have their own aims and objectives and ultimate 'products' and have looser connections with COPIM (or not). This asks a fundamental question of what this COPIM structure is going to be that is separate from the outputs that are being developed within COPIM. Do we want to be a small group that builds up a reputation for developing projects and creating things with the types of values and objectives we have identified, creating communities around projects, knitting them together, and then moving on? This is similar to what, for example UKSG, has done in the past, creating COUNTER, Transfer and a number of other projects which are now completely separate, and nobody actually knows that they came from UKSG.

As an umbrella name

Instead of focusing on COPIM's governance should we start by focusing on the governance systems needed by the different outputs that COPIM is creating? These are concrete outputs that need concrete governance. Can we then think of those specific products with their own governance structures as being some kind of satellites or franchise of COPIM so that we can then *reconstitute* COPIM on the basis of its outputs? This circumvents the problem of defining what COPIM is now by simply saying 'COPIM is the umbrella name for whatever the outputs would be of the current project'. But this then needs to be made explicit. COPIM is the place where these outputs are together and in communication with each other and that group/layer, again in the direction of an incubator, could think about redeveloping other aspects of the book production value chain that need to be made open-source or community-owned, for example.

As a lab

COPIM could also function as a laboratory, or as a series of labs or incubators in which different projects or pilots are being made, generated, and launched. Again, it could be polycentric with very specific tasks and objectives being taken on by each group which should be left to themselves for the most part. These don't have to have the most elaborate governance, but they would have to have a system for apportioning tasks, for deciding what each member of the group is responsible for, and they should have shared aims and objectives and sets of deliverables and a schedule to deliver these. These would all be aspects that that the lab itself determines and on top of that there is a very light managerial level to make sure the labs are keeping to their own tasks and schedules. This level also serves as an information sharing hub, for sharing and exchanging information and collectively troubleshooting issues as a mechanism for when a lab gets stuck, or has a personnel conflict for example, so there needs to be ways to arbitrate conflict. And the labs could multiply, e.g., if COPIM were to continue, there might be other things that COPIM members would like to see being made or other groups of people that would like to gravitate to COPIM could do so under our umbrella. The managerial level could also be there to ensure we are sticking to our key values and to determine what are the procedures and criteria for others to join. The question here is, does COPIM have resources to share with others or is it just working on very specific things and once those things are made, COPIM ends, and each individual group will have to figure out how to extend its work in the absence of COPIM as an umbrella group?

Further discussions

Beyond these clear visions for the future of COPIM, we also discussed some further points of interest:

Contingency of Formation

As the group of institutions that formed COPIM is contingent, does it need any (formal) governance system at all if it just ends when the current grant period ends? If we manage to get a follow-up grant, would the governance structure of COPIM not then be contingent on what the grant application would be for and who the partners or consortium are who are involved in this? How much do grants or funders determine our governance as a project and who we are as a project?

Brand Recognition

COPIM has some brand awareness already, which might be useful to draw upon. If we were to become some bigger structure, we need to think through whether that is useful for the objectives that we are wanting to achieve. Is COPIM a group of people that have been putting new initiatives and ideas together and do we want to use COPIM as a vehicle to achieve that? Would that be a good use of the COPIM name? What is the most productive role that COPIM could have in the future, which could build connections with funding agencies and other players? Also, looking at the original objectives of COPIM, to overcome barriers to the dissemination of OA monographs, there is still more work to do there.

Guarantor of values

Could it be an option that COPIM has a light overarching meta-structure, which might also function as the guarantor of the value-based system that we want to implement, to keep an eye on the set of values that we want to subscribe ourselves to? This could even be a purpose of this overarching structure. It could also be a vehicle to bring the 'scaling small' principle into action by thinking through how we can align better with other similar like-minded organisations.

Business models

What is important for us to keep an eye on is how the business models we are developing for the various infrastructural outputs coming out of COPIM might really define for a very large part what our governance will look like. This also connects to the idea that we want to be community-owned; otherwise, what COPIM does might not be so different from what you see with very small start-ups which then are bought up by Wiley, Clarivate or Elsevier. COPIM could also in the future potentially be taken on by groups like OPERAS or Lyrasis, as long as their governance is a right fit, and everything stays open. Those kinds of decisions will have a massive impact on what the governance of COPIM and its various outputs will look like.

7. Conclusion

By Patrick Hart, Janneke Adema, and COPIM

Governance is not only or even primarily a procedural or administrative matter. Like infrastructure, it is always situated in relation to prevailing power structures, always political, as its name suggests. This makes any attempt to lay down overarching rules, guidelines, or best practice difficult and perhaps inadvisable. In this report we have nevertheless attempted to set out some recommendations that any open infrastructure organisation may find useful to consider when planning or revisiting its governance structures and procedures. The first among these, as discussed in the introduction and at greater length in chapter 1, is recognising the character and scale of the risks and challenges that confront any attempt to establish genuinely open infrastructures that would bring about some kind of systemic change, as well as the forms of backlash and attempts at co-optation that are likely to follow any kind of success. This report's position, however, has been that rather than seek to build open alternatives that are wholly independent of existing hegemonic, largely corporate-capitalistic infrastructures (something almost impossible to do), open infrastructure projects need to employ a form of constructive complicity, operating within the 'pockets of contradiction and possibility' that exist within and between them (Joseph-Salisbury & Connelly, 2021). It is in this context that governance does much of its most important work, and within which the role of governance in such projects needs above all to be situated.

This in turn involves a more thorough-going thinking through of what we might mean by any given open infrastructure project's 'community of communities'. As we explore in chapter 2, open infrastructure projects are likely not only to bring together different professions (librarians, publishers, authors, and infrastructure providers, for example, within COPIM's field of scholarly communications) but also participants sitting in a wide range of personal and structural positions in relation to that gap between the hegemonic and the open, between the more reformist and the more revolutionary. How any given project's governance structures and mechanisms address the tensions and opportunities these alliances bring about must, ultimately, be a matter for the individual project and its members to determine. Best practice will depend upon its particular situation, and the particular character of the pockets of contradiction and possibility it can exploit. But an acknowledgement that any project or organisation is constructed through alliances and coalitions is crucial to good governance, and any governance model needs to find ways not only of accommodating difference and disagreement but of turning these into strengths. COPIM's model of 'scaling small', we suggest, offers one way of doing this.

Dwelling on questions of community also pushes to the forefront the relationship between openness and inclusion, diversity and equity, still surprisingly often underplayed. Projects in the global North in particular are struggling (in both positive and negative senses) to address gaps between their stated values and their governance practices: chapter 3 has highlighted some of these gaps, and pointed to a number of ways of addressing them, drawing on a range of pre-existing literature and guidance and pointing to existing models and resources that can help organisations establish better practices. This is an area in which COPIM too is acutely aware that it too has urgent progress to make and lessons to learn.

Incorporating Sam Moore's COPIM report *Exploring Models for Community Governance*, published last year, chapter 4 surveyed some of the basic governance and organisational structures employed not only by open infrastructure projects but by a wide range of community-led groups. Here too the situated nature of governance makes clear 'best practice' is difficult or impossible to establish. Instead, by documenting the challenges and quandaries that COPIM has encountered in establishing its own governance and that of its offspring projects, we hope to have offered the benefit of this experience to other organisations as they build and develop their own models.

Whatever structure is adopted, decisions will need to be taken and conflicts and creative tensions resolved. Community-driven projects commonly look to promote consensus-based decision-making, but as we saw in chapter 5, what this means in any given case needs to be clearly defined. The search for consensus brings its own risks in terms of both inclusion and equity and effective decision-making (risks that are also, of course, intertwined). If in preceding chapters it has been difficult to give concrete, specific best practice recommendations, here we hope to have come closer to doing so, proposing that consensus decision-making and voting be seen as complementary rather than as alternatives. We have also both suggested particular principles that should govern the selection and implementation of consensus decision-making and voting practices, and presented a number of models that we believe are likely to be especially well suited to open infrastructure organisations. Here too, though, there remains a need for us to perhaps be more adventurous in our search for solutions that will embed our values in our governance, and make claims to be community-led or -driven more meaningful: combining direct and representative forms of democratic process, liquid democracy is one promising option that we think especially merits further exploration.

One of the central purposes in compiling this report has been to take stock of our own governance: to take in the lessons we have learned from our successes, our mistakes, and our failures, and to make these lessons available to our wider community of communities. Revisiting, assessing, maintaining, and revising governance structures and procedures is key to the enduring success of any project, and we have therefore closed by discussing some of the tools available for doing this, noting in particular the worth but also the dangers of employing external assessment criteria in carrying out such evaluations.

Looking Forward

As described earlier in this report, COPIM as a project will continue to develop its governance structures, both for the project as a whole, for the Open Book Collective, and for the other infrastructures, tools, and platforms the project is and will be developing. We have further documented (and will continue to do so once it is up and running) the development of a governance model and community for the Open Book Collective, which will be made openly available as part of future working papers, reports, and blog posts. But looking forward we also wanted to reflect back on the underlying principle of 'scaling small' that we developed to highlight what we do as a project (Adema & Moore, 2021). Scaling small in many ways already implies a form of community governance, where the various organisations and projects that scale together by collaborating and sharing expertise and knowledge on a non-competitive basis, also need to be fairly represented in any governance model. But where we have tried to reflect this principle in COPIM's governance models, we are also eager to explore in the future how this could be reflected in our collaborations with other like-minded projects invested in creating and maintaining infrastructures for open access books and for the open scholarly commons. Referring back to Anna Tsing's work is important here, especially to how we need to pay particular attention to articulations between the scalable and the nonscalable (Tsing, 2017). Many of us are already involved in each others' governance structures as (advisory) board members or advisory committees, but it would be interesting to explore in the future how community oversight over this developing open scholarly commons (often localised and situated) and the connections between it can be managed, but maybe most importantly of all, how new forms of collaboration in this context can be *imagined* (Schneider, 2010). As such we would want to put forward a challenge to those of us involved in developing community-governance for our organisations and projects, and that is to think through how these forms of community governance can be extended (or not) to the scholarly commons as a whole, or to the developing ecosystem of not-for-profit open infrastructures developed to support scholarly communication. What would be our answer to the 'vertical integration' and consolidation of key infrastructures that the commercial behemoths are orchestrating?

A significant part of this challenge will involve difficult questions about what we mean by community, as this report has already highlighted. Many open infrastructure organisations are already closely engaged with the 'para-academic' and 'alt-ac' communities: several emerged from those communities themselves. But the 'short term uptick' in open research practices brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, however cynically motivated for the most part, brought home to many with little knowledge of open access the potential of open infrastructures to radically extend scholarly communities. (Moore, 2020) For a more detailed discussion of the impact of Covid-19, and in particular of the likelihood of its furthering the corporate control of scholarly communications without stronger investments in community-led infrastructure governance, see Moore, 2020, and Van Gerven Oei, 2020. Many of those previously shut out by exclusionary, proprietorial infrastructures from scholarly resources, activities and engagement, usually as a result of geography, class, wealth or educational background, suddenly found themselves able to listen to and join in with a new range of academic and scholarly discussions. These new members of the scholarly community (in truth always already there) often include not only those outside the academic establishment, but people in quite different circumstances and from quite different backgrounds to those we typically associate with the para-academic and alt-ac.

There are obvious practical obstacles to incorporating these much wider, more disparate communities into the governance of open scholarly infrastructure projects, but greater efforts could and should be made. But this also ties into the need, given the corporate threats to open infrastructure, to think more carefully about governance as *politically* situated, as engaged and committed. Those looking to open up scholarly communication in the face of openwashing (Waugh & Carlisle-Johnston, 2022) and buyouts by the big publishing conglomerates, for example, may need to define their positions, ambitions, and governance procedures in more explicit relation to the values of what Remi Joseph-Salisbury and Laura Connelly define as anti-racist scholar-activism. Ultimately, 'open access only makes sense as part of a project to imagine a world beyond capitalism' (Moore, 2020). Scholarly open infrastructure projects and anti-racist scholar-activism share a common 'repudiation of the locking of knowledge into the university and the simultaneous mechanisms of exclusion that function to lock communities out' (Joseph-Salisbury, Remi & Connelly, 2021); but as we saw in chapter 3 many open access ventures have failed to make connections between openness and broader issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (Hudson-Ward, 2021; Bourg & Levy, 2021); or to build such concerns into their governance structures and procedures in meaningful ways. We have offered some guidance for those looking to do so in this report, but further work remains to be done here.

This work is likely to entail thinking more adventurously and critically still about what we mean by governance. Much of the focus on governance within the field of open scholarly infrastructure to date has understandably been upon the procedural and administrative, given the urgency of putting in place functioning processes and structures for new projects. For reasons discussed in part in chapter 2, this has been largely concentrated in turn upon possibilities framed by the legal requirements of processes such as charitable incorporation. But we need to remain open to the possibilities of other, radically different ways in which infrastructure organisations' governance might be structured and enacted, learning from a wide range of groups and projects, looking beyond the academic world (in the case of scholarly infrastructures) and the Global North.

Ultimately, this might also mean giving serious consideration to some of the more radical criticisms of the whole notion and language of 'governance', such as those made in Harney and Moten's essay 'Blackness and Governance' (Moten & Harney, 2011). This seems especially urgent given the sometimes impressive but equally often somewhat patchy commitments of open infrastructure organisations to racial equity, to addressing imbalances between the global South and North, and to overcoming economic segregation in the scholarly and intellectual realms. This is a discussion that lies beyond the limits of this report, but one that needs to take place. Its implications for how we think about 'governance' might prove as fundamental and far-reaching as the idea of 'open access' has been for how we think about not only scholarly publishing and communication but the whole infrastructure of scholarly endeavour.

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