

# VOICES: The Value of Openness, Inclusion, Communication and Engagement for Science in a Post-Pandemic World

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→ **Open science expanded during the pandemic—but unevenly**

→ While the pandemic accelerated practices like preprinting, data sharing, and broader public engagement, the adoption of open science (OS) varied significantly by country, language, and research field. These differences highlight the importance of designing OS strategies that are adaptable to diverse contexts.

→ **Open science is not one-size-fits-all**

→ The meaning and implementation of OS during the pandemic were highly context-dependent. We found that while OS was widely framed as a public good, conceptions of what counted as “open” varied by country, language, and discipline. Equity and inclusion were often not central to these definitions and appeared more as aspirational values than operational commitments.

- **Openness peaked early—then receded, with real-world consequences**
  - Peer-reviewed research on the coronavirus was highly accessible at the start of the pandemic, particularly through Bronze and Gold OA. But much of this access was temporary, with many articles later paywalled. This rollback is especially concerning in areas like Long Covid, where early findings remain critical but are now harder to access. The retraction of openness underscores the fragility of current OA models and the need for policies that treat access as a long-term public good, not just a crisis response.
- **Preprints offered speed but raised credibility concerns**
  - Journalists relied on preprints early in the pandemic due to their speed and accessibility. However, concerns about credibility and the absence of peer review made them difficult to report on responsibly. As the pandemic progressed, use of preprints in media declined, partly due to a lack of clear guidance or support from institutions. Journalists reported needing tools and frameworks to better evaluate and contextualize open science outputs in fast-paced news environments.

→ **Science communication and OS remain disconnected**

→ Press releases and media reporting often promoted the public benefits of openness, but they rarely addressed equity and inclusion or made research content broadly accessible. Science news agencies played a key role in sharing findings from paywalled journals, yet press materials were frequently written in technical language, limiting their reach to non-expert audiences.

→ **OS worked as a crisis response—but needs strengthening to endure**

→ The pandemic demonstrated that OS can support more responsive, collaborative, and transparent science in moments of crisis. However, without robust infrastructure, thoughtful governance, and explicit attention to equity, the benefits of OS are fragile. Building long-term resilience requires policies and investments that actively embed inclusion into the core of OS systems.

## → **Conceptual Impact**

→ The project challenged assumptions of open science (OS) as inherently equitable by showing that COVID-era openness was often uneven, short-lived, and detached from justice and inclusion goals.

## → **Methodological Impact**

→ It demonstrated the value of cross-country, multilingual analysis using a shared framework across Brazil, Canada, Germany, and the UK to study how OS is practiced and communicated.

## → **Capacity Building**

→ The project supported early-career researchers and interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthening both internal team cohesion and an international network of critical OS scholars.