

Openness as area of action for the ZBW

Key issues paper 2020 – 2025

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Preface

This key issues paper sets the framework in which the ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics actively pursues the principles of openness, thus fostering a culture of open access to results and findings and of open collaboration. It bundles objectives and areas of action in order to establish basic principles and methodological standards for openness in the largest possible number of working areas at the ZBW. The possibilities of digitisation are used consistently in order to render the achieved results and findings, if possible, openly accessible, verifiable and reusable. In addition, openness and transparency should improve knowledge transfer into society, business and politics.

Initially, two themes address the cultural change concomitant with openness in collaboration within the ZBW as well as with the ZBW’s partners. These are in detail:

Open collaborative working means that working within the ZBW and together with the ZBW shall meet – wherever possible – the highest possible requirement for openness.

Knowledge transfer and culture of openness means that internal resp. external formats and communication channels are used to transfer different contents to various target groups. A culture of openness at the ZBW means an identification with and positive attitude towards the corresponding principles and their application in daily work routines.

In order to reduce complexity, in the following this key issues paper is oriented at the “Open Science Pillars” as published by the Open Science Center of the LMU Munich¹. From among the six themes named therein, the following four themes are taken up because of their close relation to the working areas of the ZBW:

Open Access, i.e. the free access to scholarly publications in the sense of the Berlin Declaration², but also going beyond in the concession of further rights.

Open Data / FAIR Data, in particular the manifold self-generated data and metadata that represent valuable resources for numerous reuse scenarios.

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1 <https://osf.io/mcjnq/>, slide 8

2 <https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration>

Open Source Software, i.e. software which is available or made available in generally accessible form and without charging licence fees.

Open Educational Resources, i.e. a wide variety of open educational resources either in the public domain or available under a free CC licence.

In order to include as many perspectives as possible and to represent at the same time the largest possible number of working areas of the ZBW, more than 30 persons from all working areas of the ZBW participated in the drafting of this key issues paper.

1. Open collaborative working

Preamble

The ZBW follows the Leibniz Research Alliance “Open Science” and defines “openness” as “practices and processes [...] that foster participation and collaboration, accessibility and reuse, transparency and verifiability [...]”³. In this sense, collaborative working within the ZBW and with the ZBW takes place openly, wherever possible. Open collaborative working is primarily supported by such digital tools that enable openness during production as well as during the provision of products and results.

Goals

1. ZBW employees are aware of openness in collaborative work processes. Employees whose work is primarily collaborative in nature are able to assess supporting tools and apply them for openness.
2. In collaboration with external partners and the general public the ZBW proactively encourages open forms of collaborative working.
3. The ZBW assumes a leading role in the opening of collaborative working by aiming for open practices and results as standard. Existing work practices are questioned regularly and assessed for possible opening.
4. Openness ensures and raises the quality and the reusability of practices and results of collaborative working at the ZBW.

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3 <https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/en/research/leibniz-research-alliances/science-20.html>

2. Knowledge transfer and culture of openness

Preamble

In principle, knowledge transfer constitutes a transmission by which a sender transmits knowledge to a receiver. There is always a message being transmitted plus a format or channel through which content is transmitted. Dialogue between senders and receivers can ensure the quality of the transfer. The ZBW has various internal and external formats and communication channels at its disposal to enable the transfer of different contents to various target groups.

In the context of knowledge transfer, openness can apply either to the content (openness as content) or to the format (openness of the format or the channel). For instance, Open Access or Open Data can be the content and Open Educational Resources the format.

A culture of openness at the ZBW means an identification with and positive attitude towards the corresponding principles and their application in daily work routines.

Goals

1. The transmission of themes about openness in the formats and communication channels of the ZBW is content-coordinated.
2. The transfer formats and communication channels of the ZBW are uniformly aligned according to the principle of openness.
3. The ZBW practises knowledge transfer into the institution in order to foster openness as culture among ZBW employees.

3. Open Access

Preamble

The ZBW defines Open Access as the free access to scholarly publications in the sense of the Berlin Declaration⁴. In addition to access this also encompasses the concession of further rights (e.g. options to disseminate and to rework), e.g. by using suitable licences, as long as copyright is stated correctly. The ZBW also views the long-term accessibility of publications via publicly operated archives or repositories as an essential issue.

The goals and action areas framed in the topic area in this key issues paper are based on, resp. complement, the already existing guidelines of the “ZBW Open Access Policy”⁵ and the “Open-Access-Policy of the Leibniz Association 2016-2020”.

Goals

1. Active use of options for Open Access for all publications edited by the ZBW.
2. Encouragement of ZBW authors regarding Open Access also in their functions as editors or reviewers for journals, conferences or similar publishing formats.
3. Expansion of the active engagement regarding Open Access in science policy.

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4 <https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration>

5 <https://www.zbw.eu/fileadmin/pdf/publizieren/e-open-access-policy.pdf>

4. Open Data / FAIR Data

Preamble

In its definition of “data” the ZBW follows the definition of the term as used by the German Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures⁶ and uses the term mostly in the sense of “digital data”. The ZBW also follows established definitions for the terms Open Data and FAIR Data⁷.

The ZBW produces manifold self-generated data that represent valuable resources for numerous reuse scenarios, for instance in research or for the development of services. These include data generated in the contexts of librarianship, administration or research, in particular descriptive data, i.e. metadata.

The ZBW affirms its mission for information provision in economics by continually raising the share of data it provides as Open Data and by documenting their quality, processing their content and linking them with internal and external resources. In order to ensure the accessibility and reusability of its data, the ZBW observes the FAIR principles for data.

Goals

1. Systematic compilation of (meta)data held at the ZBW.
2. Identification and documentation of target groups for open data from the ZBW.
3. The provision of data observes the principle of “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”.
4. In the implementation of the FAIR principles, the ZBW initially concentrates on the principles of Findable and Accessible.

In addition to providing metadata from EconBiz in standardised formats, the ZBW will assign uniform and persistent identifiers (URIs) to these metadata. The verifiability of origin and genesis of datasets requires not only information about the institution that created them, but increasingly also informati-

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⁶ Term definitions – Report of the redaction committee “Terms” to the GCSII (in German): <https://d-nb.info/1106391853/34>

⁷ <https://opendefinition.org/od/2.1/de/bzw>. <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles>

on about the automated generation of data, such as the procedures used and their confidence values in order to assess their quality. Both areas of action require engagement in the field of standardisation. The ZBW will be represented in relevant standardisation bodies, for instance for the enlargement of metadata schemata, in order to enable a FAIR deposit of data.

The ZBW will increase its activities for implementing other aspects of the FAIR principles, in particular the aspect of interoperability, by increasing crosslinkings of internal and external databases in the sense of Linked Open Data.

For research, the ZBW will publish research-relevant fields of its database Econis and – as far as legally possible – other EconBiz holdings under an open licence. In particular for abstracts clarification is needed how far they can be made available as part of a dataset.

5. Open Source Software

Preamble

The ZBW defines as Open Source Software (OSS) software that is available or made available as open source code (not simply as binary data) in a generally accessible form and without charging licence fees. Its licence terms enable the unrestricted use, transfer and alteration of source code while safeguarding copyright⁸. OSS contributes to openness with its general transparency, reusability and community-orientation.

Goals

1. Software resulting from third-party-funded development projects are managed and published by default as OSS , if necessary in accordance with the OSS principles of project partners.
2. The ZBW fosters transparency in the approach, reproducibility in the results, and reusability of methods in its research projects and thus complies with the principle of openness.
3. The ZBW develops an explicit licence policy and will also recommend concrete software licences for employees.
4. The ZBW resp. its employees make their own developments available in the most robust and tested form. Regarding the reuse of existing OSS, the ZBW ensures that the software meets functional and other requirements.

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8 <https://opensource.org/docs/osd>

6. Open Educational Resources

Preamble

The ZBW defines Open Educational Resources, following the definition of the UNESCO⁹, as educational materials of various kinds that are in the public domain or under a free CC licence. The ZBW counts as OER both materials for end users and materials that support other libraries and information infrastructure institutions in the implementation of their educational mission. Materials produced and provided by the ZBW are designed from the beginning as OER and distributed as such. This supports lifelong learning in the occupational context within the ZBW, but also externally, e.g. in other libraries.

Goals

1. The ZBW transmits the OER idea to different target groups, such as libraries and teachers..
2. The ZBW develops materials about OER for its target groups while taking free licences into consideration.
3. Handouts will be produced in the ZBW to support employees in the creation of OER.
4. The ZBW produces educational materials as OER.

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9 <https://www.unesco.de/bildung/open-educational-resources>

