

# Research Ethics and Open Science

The Finnish Open Science and Research Initiative organised a discussion with researchers from different fields on research ethics and open science in May 2015. Some of the questions that came up in this discussion were:

- The lack of sufficient infrastructure for handling sensitive data (for example systems for anonymization and handling "my data" in research data, de-anonymization and requests for subject's consent for new studies, data preservation, ownership and managing in a longer time perspective - we are working on this on some level ...)
- Researchers may hide behind strict information security rules and endanger replicability unnecessarily to be on the safe side
- Subject consent and interaction are sometimes really tricky questions when working with data from social media in qualitative research: how can you cite and use stuff scientifically and at the same time respectfully, transparently and without compromising people's integrity? This calls for well planned and continuous openness and communication between researcher and subjects.
- The current copyright laws make openness difficult in the humanities, though the researcher would like to be open all the way. They are sometimes not even aloud to archive or publish their data in the EU
- The much praised (at least in Finland) cooperation with commercial companies sometimes leads to less openness. If a company is a major funder they might even forbid publishing negative results
- there is a certain feeling that research ethics and legislation do not always meet, on the other hand it might be that some of the problems are possible to solve though better infrastructure (data archives with extended services)
- It is important to understand that openness does not have to mean that everything is published without restrictions on the web. Open scholarship is something every researcher will have to exercise to some extent, it is not something you can opt out from just because some of your data is confidential. Getting this message through is one of the important tasks of our national initiative.

Ethics and subsequent legislation are among the most compelling factors in the questions of open science. It is therefore important to continue the discussion on openness and research ethics.

Jessica Parland-von Essen, Ph.D.  
Open Science and Research Initiative