

Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT): A Joint Statement by Political Science Journal Editors

From the “Workshop on Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT) in Political Science.” Convened by the American Political Science Association (APSA) and hosted by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), with support from Syracuse University’s Center for Qualitative and Multi-Method Inquiry (CQMI), and the University of Michigan’s Center for Political Studies (CPS).

September 18-19, 2014, Ann Arbor, MI

October 6, 2014

In this joint statement, journal editors commit their respective journals to the principles of data access and research transparency, and to implementing policies requiring authors to make as accessible as possible the empirical foundation and logic of inquiry of evidence-based research.

Background

In 2012, the American Political Science Association (APSA) Council adopted new policies guiding data access and research transparency in political science. The policies appear as a revision to APSA’s *Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science*. The revisions were the product of an extended and broad consultation with many APSA committees and the association’s membership.

To instantiate these revisions into practice, APSA (with assistance from ICPSR, CQMI, and CPS) convened a meeting of political science journal editors and related stakeholders on September 18-19, 2014 in Ann Arbor, MI.

The meeting focused on the unique role academic journals play in promoting data access and research transparency. This joint statement by journal editors grew out of conversations at the meeting, and signals a strong and shared commitment to develop and support improved best practices for academic publishing.

Meeting participants hailed from many different research traditions. Participants agreed that while data access and research transparency pose different challenges for their traditions, the pursuit of greater access and transparency benefits the discipline as a whole and should extend to all evidence-based research in political science. The editors recognized that although the obligation to provide data access and research transparency rests on all authors equally, data and analysis take diverse forms in different traditions of social inquiry. The means for satisfying the obligations will vary correspondingly. The editors desired that this joint statement be relevant to journals which publish all types of evidence-based research. Accordingly, the statement uses general terms which are intended to be inclusive of specific instantiations of those categories. The materials that an author might provide to show her analytic procedures, for example, could include program code, pre-analysis plans, activated citations, and so on.ⁱ

A Commitment to Data Access and Research Transparency

Transparency requires making visible both the empirical foundation and the logic of inquiry of research. We agree that by January 15, 2016 we will:ⁱⁱ

1. Require authors to ensure that cited data are available at the time of publication through a trusted digital repository.ⁱⁱⁱ Journals may specify which trusted digital repository shall be used (for example if they have their own dataverse).
 - If cited data are restricted (e.g., classified, require confidentiality protections, were obtained under a non-disclosure agreement, or have inherent logistical constraints), authors must notify the editor at the time of submission. The editor shall have full discretion to follow their journal's policy on restricted data, including declining to review the manuscript or granting an exemption with or without conditions. The editor shall inform the author of that decision prior to review.
2. Require authors to delineate clearly the analytic procedures upon which their published claims rely, and where possible to provide access to all relevant analytic materials. If such materials are not published with the article, they must be shared to the greatest extent possible through a trusted digital repository.
3. Maintain a consistent data citation policy to increase the credit that data creators and suppliers receive for their work. These policies include using data citation practices that identify a dataset's author(s), title, date, version, and a persistent identifier. In sum, we will require authors who base their claims on data created by others to reference and cite those data as an intellectual product of value.
4. Ensure that journal style guides, codes of ethics, publication manuals, and other forms of guidance are updated and expanded to include improved data access and research transparency requirements.

ⁱ On "active citation," see Andrew Moravcsik, Active Citation: A Precondition for Replicable Qualitative Research, *PS: Political Science* (January 2010) 43(1): 29-35.

ⁱⁱ Part of this list draws on language used in "Research Transparency, Data Access, and Data Citation: A Call to Action for Scholarly Publications," Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, March 16, 2014.

ⁱⁱⁱ See <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/datamanagement/preservation/trust.html>.
<http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/activities/trustedrep/repositories.pdf>
<http://public.ccsds.org/publications/archive/652x0m1.pdf> and
<http://public.ccsds.org/publications/archive/652x0m1.pdf>.