

Dear signer of the letter to journal editors:

We are writing to you as one of the scholars who signed the letter of November 12, 2015 to 27 journal editors requesting a delay in the implementation of the data access and research transparency principles as instantiated in what is now called the “[Journal Editors Transparency Statement](#)”(JETS, earlier called the “DA-RT Statement”) of October 2014. Today we write to make a major request and provide an update on events since you signed that letter (which we call the “delay” letter).

The request is that you participate in two ways in the deliberative process being initiated by the Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (QMMR) section of the APSR. This process, organized by Tim Büthe and Alan Jacobs, is named “Qualitative Transparency Deliberations” (QTD) and is presented in the proposal attached to this email. It is designed to reach out widely to the membership of the APSA for input on the issue of transparency and the particular vehicles that might or might not be useful in promoting that goal.

We see the QMMR process as taking as its point of departure a consideration of the first principles of transparency in scholarship, not the DA-RT/JET Statement, which was based on a particular and limited interpretation of those principles. Given this starting point, some people who signed our earlier letter are likely to argue that those first principles are already adequately incorporated in present scholarly practices. This position must be represented in the QDR deliberations.

The first way that you can participate is possible only if you are a member of the QMMR. The QMMR section voted at its 2015 business meeting to ask Tim Büthe and Alan Jacobs to develop a proposal for a deliberative process. Having produced such a proposal, they and the officers of the section considered the process they were proposing to be sufficiently time-consuming and weighty to seek the endorsement of the section membership (through a vote) before proceeding toward any implementation of the proposal. If you are a member of the section and have not voted on the process, you might want to search your inbox and junk email box for “QMMR” in the subject heading to find the email from Peter Hall sent on December 23 (full subject line: “QMMR section's deliberative process on qualitative research transparency”) asking you to vote pro or con on the process and giving you a URL that will allow you to vote. Members of the section have until January 15 to respond. This vote, of course, is not as important as the process itself. Nevertheless, we think this deliberative process is very well designed and urge you to vote for it.

Second, our more important request is that, whether or not you are a member of the QMMR section, you participate this coming February in the QTD deliberative process, which we think the members of the QMMR section are likely to support in their online vote. This is where the rubber hits the road. If the vote is positive, the online consultative process will take place between February 1 and 28. Announcements will be made to the entire membership of the APSA through various means, including the organized sections. A dedicated QTD web portal will be set up that will allow any APSA member to submit a comment, which will then be posted on the portal. The process is set up so that it will be open to all kinds of comments, including those that are deeply critical of the QTD process itself and of the idea of making any changes from the present system. At the end of this process, from March 1 through August 15, several QDR

working groups, organized by topic, will go through several consultative stages (as explained in the proposal) to produce draft statements on these different topics by the time of the 2016 annual APSA meeting. At that meeting, there will be several different processes for consulting the attending APSA membership. After the meeting, the working groups will complete their final statements by October 15, 2016.

This process is probably the most participatory and open process of consultation in the history of the APSA. We think it has been well designed to capture the nuances of experience and thought throughout the membership. Having signed the “delay” letter, you know that the topic is of great importance. At this stage, the QTD consultation process is our best tool to demonstrate to other members of the profession and the journal editors the kinds of concerns and insights that APSA members have about these issues.

The quality of the consultation will depend on the thoughtfulness of the comments on the QTD site. The legitimacy of the consultation will depend on the quantity as well as the quality of those comments. Come February, we ask you to visit the QTD site and make a comment, if only to agree or disagree with something that someone else has written. We also hope that you will talk to other members of your department and email people you know in other departments to urge them to participate in the process.

That is our request.

Now for the update. We summarize the most significant events here, but you can find more detail, with links to appropriate sites, at the website we have organized to track the events on this issue and provide a forum for comment: <http://dialogueondart.org/>.

On November 12, 2015, we sent the letter you signed to the journal editors who had signed the JETS statement. (If you do not still have a copy of the letter you signed, you can see it on <http://dialogueondart.org/petition/>.) In the week after we made it open for signatures, the letter was passed around through people’s emails, and without any organized campaign to promote it, gained 1,173 signatures, including those of 10 former presidents of the association. Although the editors refused as a group to endorse a delay, since that time we have learned that several of the journals are reconsidering the implications of the JETS statement they signed on October 6, 2014 and which they had pledged to implement on January 15, 2016. For example, the editors of *Comparative Political Studies* decided to delay implementing DART for articles based on non-statistical research until deliberative processes such as QTD have run their course. Some journals that did not sign the JETS statement have decided definitely not to sign.

(We note that we had also sent an earlier letter, signed simply by fourteen scholars who had attended a meeting before APSA 2015 to discuss transparency and qualitative research, to the editors who had signed the JETS statement. The letter asked that the statement be revised to recognize more explicitly the principle that protecting human subjects superseded any principle of transparency, and that the author, not the editor, should be the one to decide whether such protection in the particular case compelled the non-sharing of data. The editors declined to revise the statement on the grounds that adopting our position would undermine editorial discretion.)

On November 24, the current president of the APSA, Jennifer Hochschild, together with the most recent past president, Rodney Hero, and the president-elect, David Lake, [posted on PSNow a statement](#) that the APSR would begin to implement DA-RT in January 2016, along with a list of

reasons. On the comment section of that PSNow website, we [expressed our disappointment](#) at the decision to issue the statement and some of the reasoning in it, reaffirming the reasons for a delay in implementation.

On November 27, the APSA president, past-president, and president-elect [posted on our dialogueondart site](#) to reiterate their earlier statement saying that they welcomed more deliberation on DA-RT.

Several other scholars have posted important comments on <http://dialogueondart.org/> or are referred to, with links, on that site.

On January 6, 2016, the APSA [posted on PSNow an invitation](#) to an online “deliberation about research transparency and interpretability” in the comments section of PSNow, suggesting several categories for discussion. We see no harm in anyone’s participating in this comment capacity, but we hope it will not distract anyone from the more comprehensive participation organized by the QMMR section that will occur in February.

Bing Powell, president of the APSA 2011-12, is expected to post soon on [PSNow](#) a letter, signed by 20 presidents of the APSA including the current president and president elect, that he has sent to the journal editors. That letter stated the beliefs of the signers that the JETS statement was “(a) alarmingly vague in its declaration that ‘all relevant analytic materials’ should be made available; (b) flawed in neglecting the admonition in the APSA Ethics Guidelines that the creators of new data sets should have first access and a period of personal analytic materials’ should be made available; (c) insufficiently sensitive to the many complexities of non-quantitative data; and (d) regrettably silent on the rights and well-being of human subjects, including confidential informants.”

The door is now open to a process of informed and careful deliberation, guided by the QDR working groups. We cannot emphasize too much how important it is that you participate in that process and urge all of your colleagues to do so.

Thanks very much!

Best wishes for the New Year,

Nancy Hirschmann

Mala Htun

Jane Mansbridge

Kathy Thelen

Lisa Wedeen

Elisabeth Wood