Research Impact: Strengthening the Excellence Framework

Prêt-à-non-portability?

Implications and possible responses to the phasing out of publication portability

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Session Structure

- Some personal irritants in REF discussions
- Summary of non-portability proposals
- Key principles to underpin responses
- Thoughts towards a workable policy beyond REF2021

1) Golberg's First Law of Higher Education Research Policy Change
2) Rule X can be gamed = compelling and sufficient argument against X
3) Not distinguishing between problems caused by the REF v. problems caused by institutional and individual responses

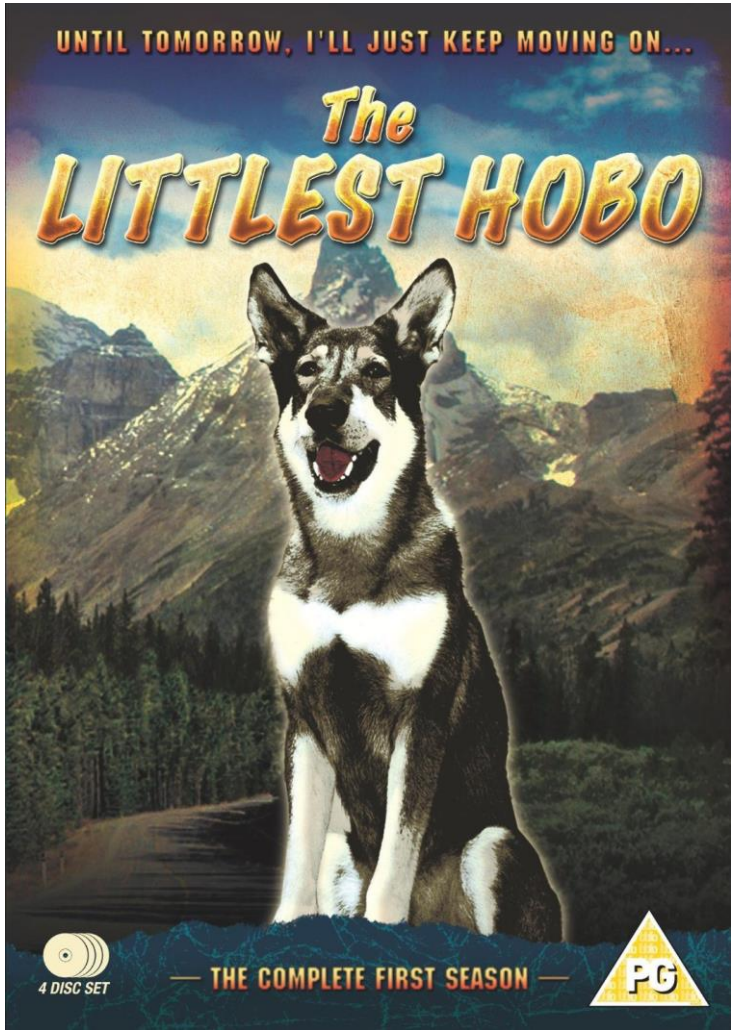
Non-portability and the next REF:

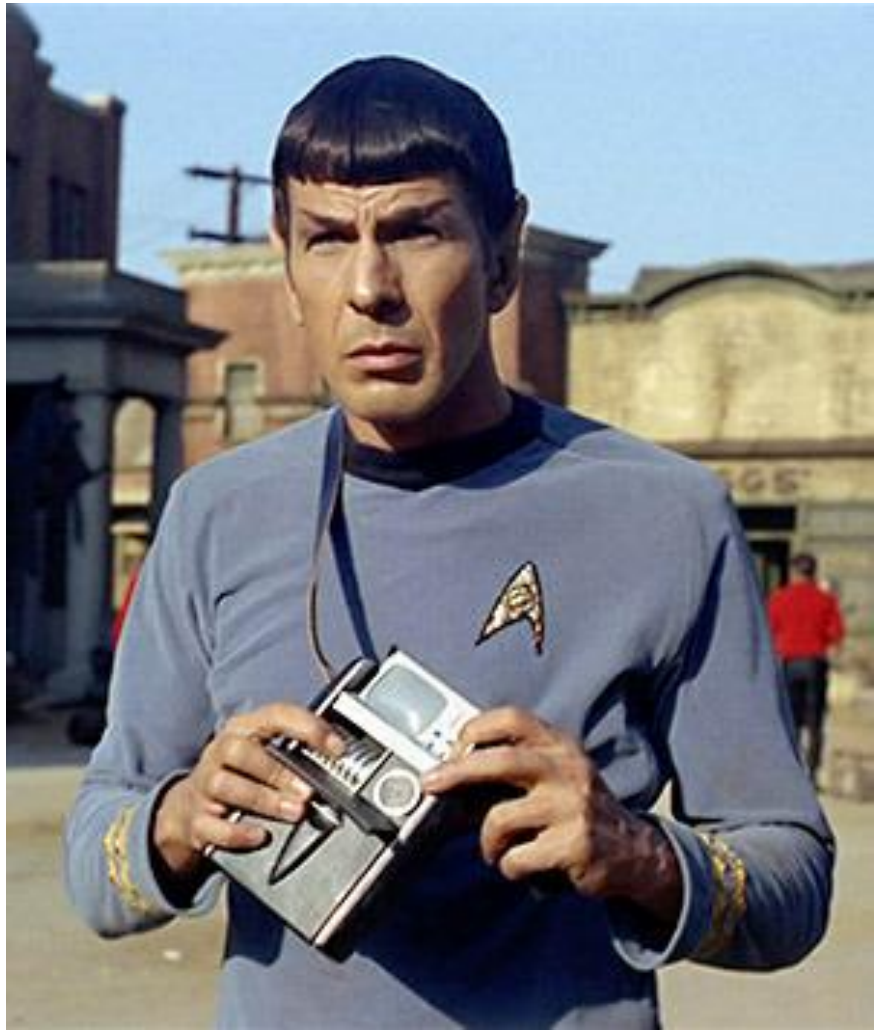
Problems of portability

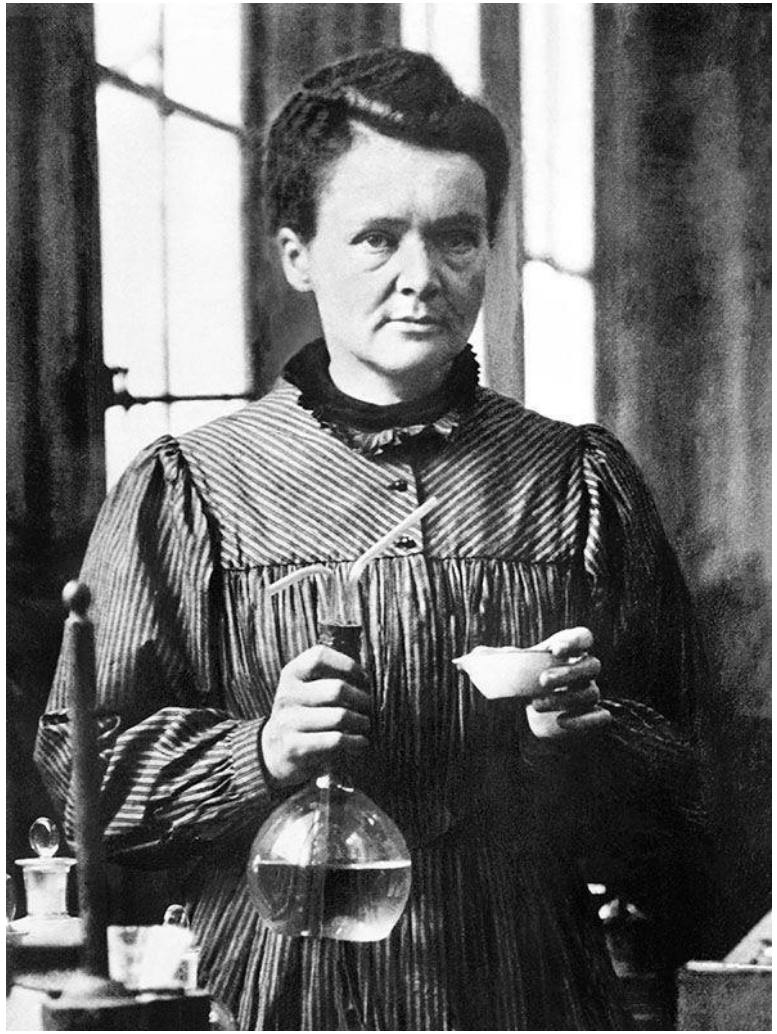
What we *think* we know so far.

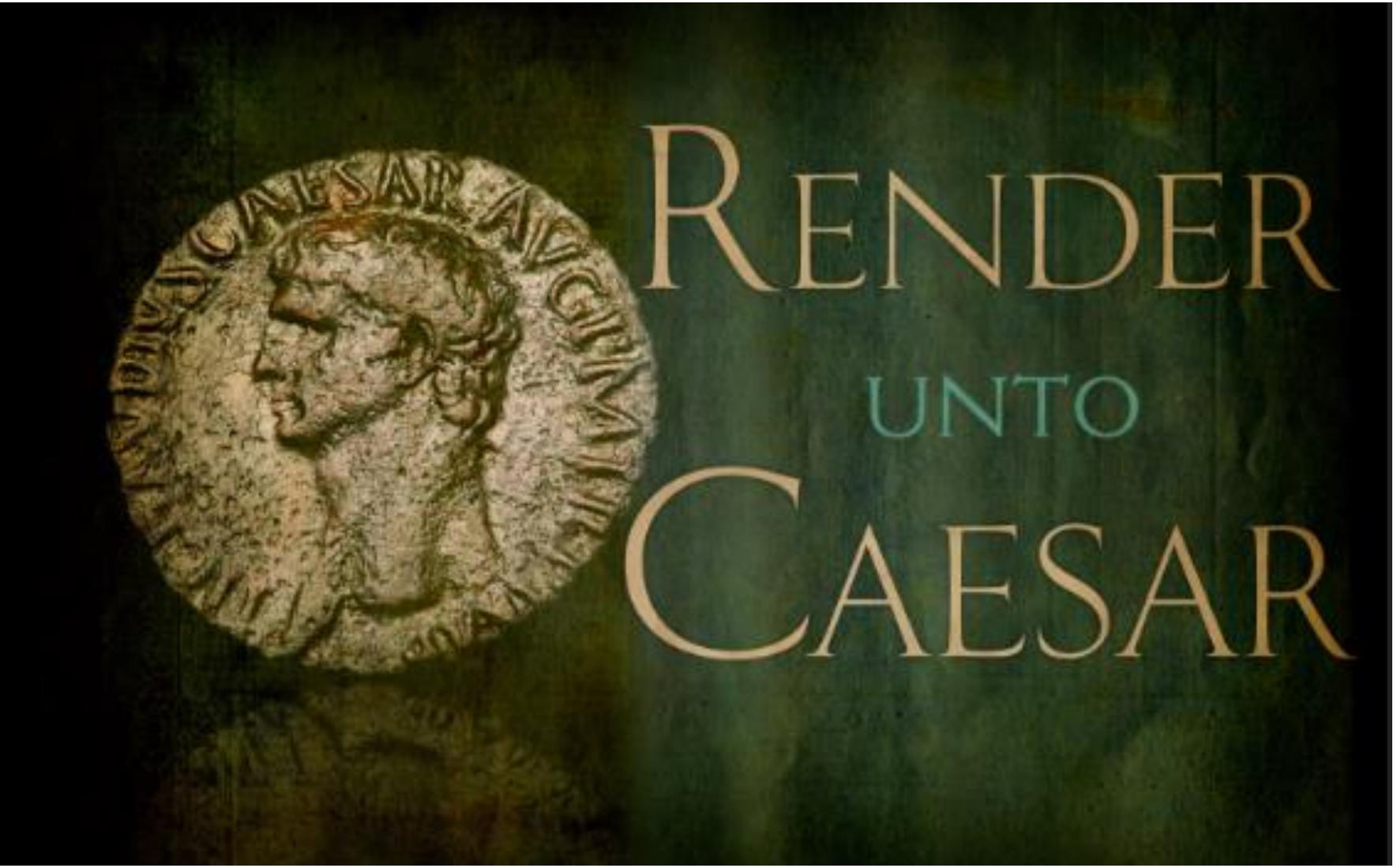
Hybrid/transitional system

Researcher mobility is a good thing





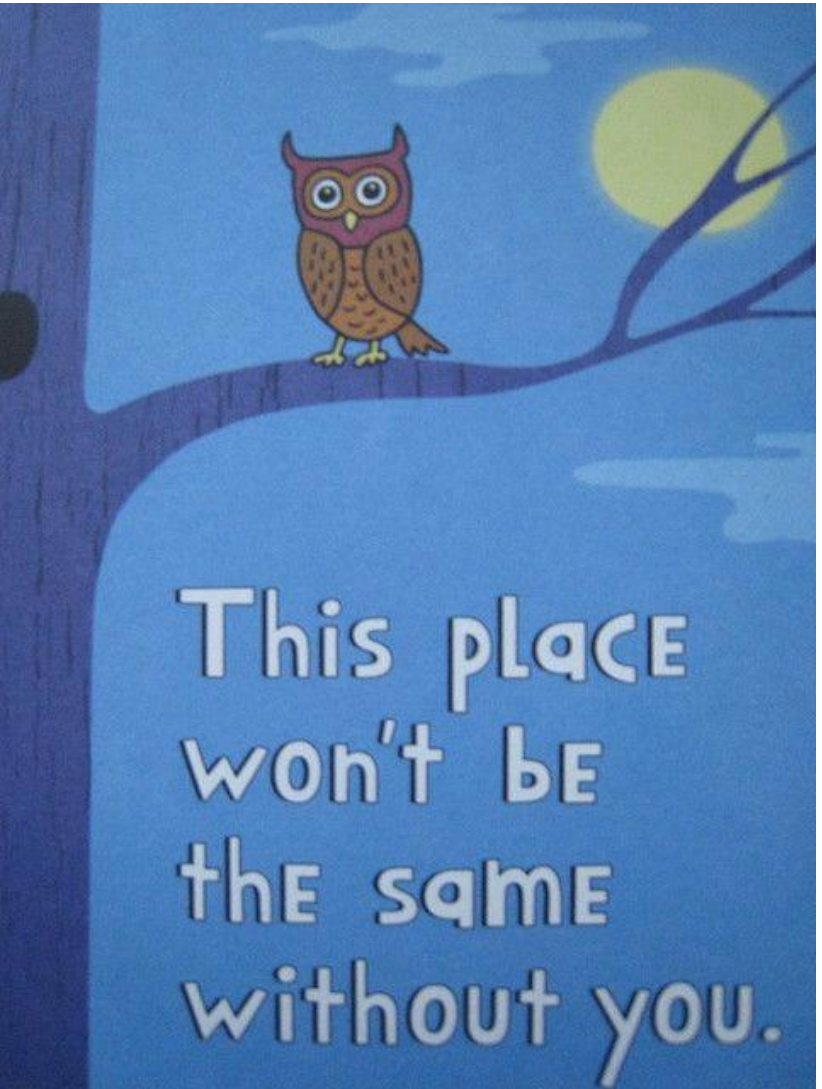




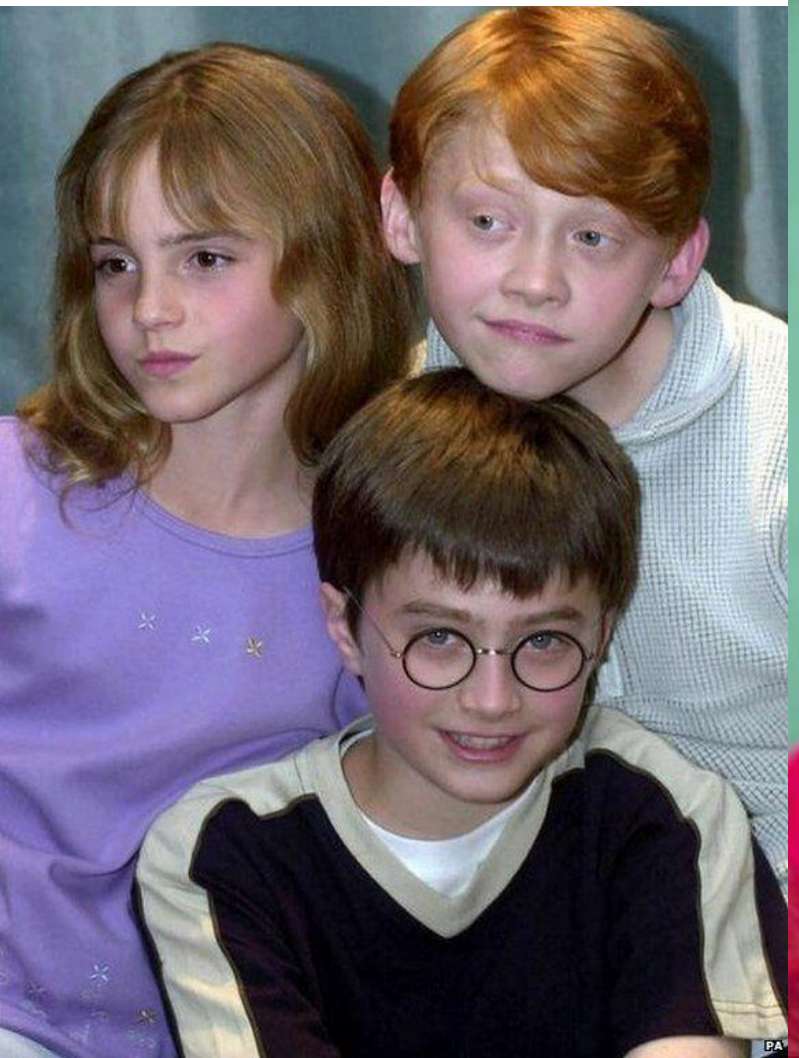
Institutions are entitled to a fair return on investment in research

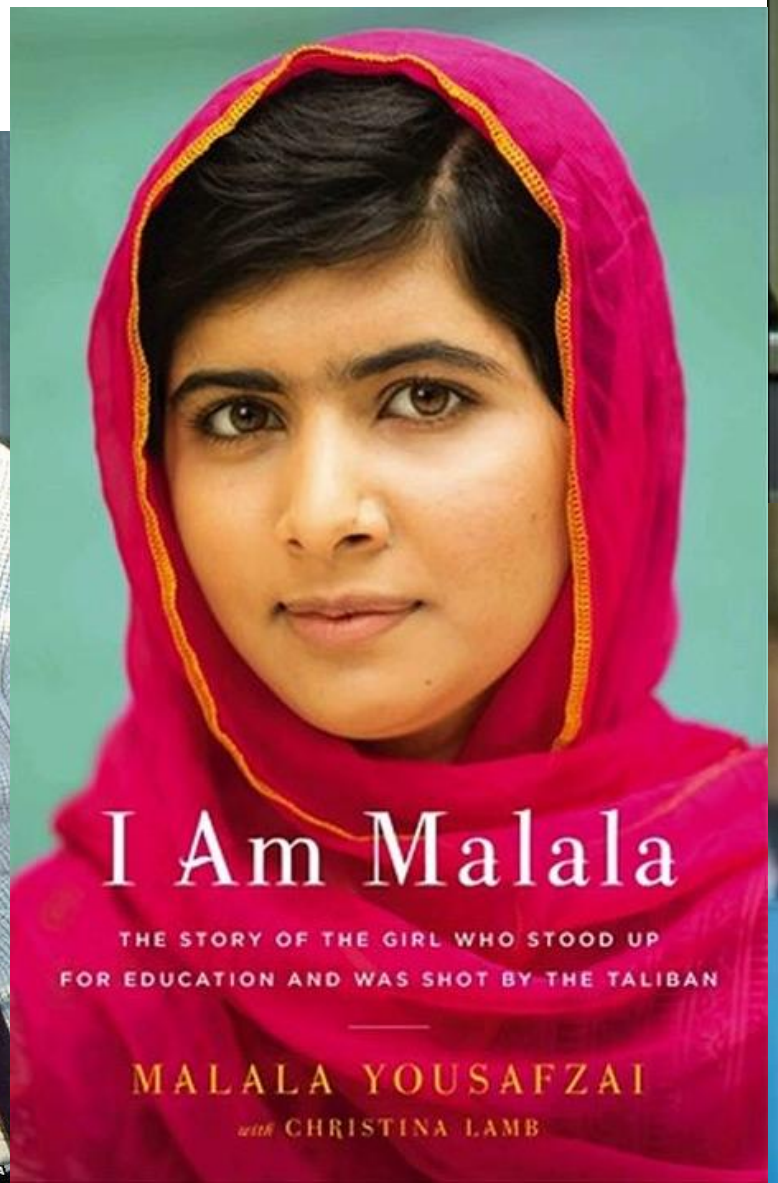
Non-portability is a paradigm shift

REF parity for publications for departed staff



Recasting recruitment – on potential





Career young researchers have genuine concerns about non-portability that need addressing

Looking forward: A settled portability policy

- Portability for the academic ‘precariat’?
  - Fixed term contracts? Both institutions able to return?
  - Teaching only/fractional contracts? No claim for employing institution?
  - Admin burden vs. fairness/precision
  - Skew recruitment decisions?
- Problem of investment / divestment asymmetry
- What about retired staff?
- Unintended consequences
  - Publication filibustering? Affiliation switching?
- Options
  - Rolling publication portability window – backwards and forwards
  - Limited carry forward portability based on transfer date

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