

Please note: A revised version of the voluntary principles is now available at http://www.stm-assoc.org/2015_06_08_Voluntary_principles_for_article_sharing_on_scholarly_collaboration_networks.pdf

Draft voluntary principles for article sharing on scholarly collaboration networks

Scholarly research is by its nature collaborative. Teams of researchers and scientists in the academic and not-for-profit sectors share experience, expertise, and facilities in order to advance human knowledge and understanding. Nowhere is this more evident than in journal articles – the majority of which include multiple authors, often from different institutions and countries. Sharing of journal articles and supplementary material is thus an important factor in advancing scholarly research. As research groups have become more interdisciplinary and international, such sharing has increased, enabled by the rise of internet tools and technologies. Scholarly collaboration networks offer researchers the opportunity to discover and share research but the sharing experience can be inefficient, inconsistent, hindered by legal uncertainty and thus frustrating for academic researchers, institutions, scholarly collaboration networks and publishers.

We would like to make sharing simple and seamless for academic researchers so that it is consistent with access and usage rights associated with journal articles while enhancing scholarly collaboration. We believe publishers and scholarly collaboration networks can work together to provide sharing which benefits researchers, institutions, and society as a whole, with a core set of principles that maximize this experience for all.

The signatories to these principles believe:

- Publishers have a core commitment to their authors to facilitate the dissemination and discovery of the author's journal articles
- Sharing should be allowed within academic groups, namely groups of scholars or researchers who have joined at the invitation of an individual researcher, for the purpose of specific scholarly or academic research or collaboration. Academic groups would:
 - be of the size that is typical for research groups of that discipline
 - only share articles within and for the purposes of the group
 - not be open to participation by the general public
 - allow journal article sharing between subscribers and non-subscribers within the group

- Publishers and libraries should be able to measure the amount and type of sharing, using standards such as COUNTER, to better understand the habits of their readers and quantify the value of the services they provide.
- Initiatives to facilitate sharing should:
 - be based on commonly agreed standards to support the tools and platforms required by researchers
 - be open to all participants supporting these principles
 - integrate access and usage rights and data reporting into research workflows
- Public posting of journal article metadata and open access journal articles in scholarly collaboration networks should be encouraged
- Publisher policies on academic group sharing and public posting of journal articles should be clear and easily discoverable, and we call on publishers to work toward this goal