

## **Voluntary principles for article sharing on scholarly collaboration networks (Revised 8 June 2015)**

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 the sharing of scholarly articles – the majority of which include multiple authors, often from different institutions and countries. Sharing of articles and supplementary material is thus an important factor in advancing 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 articles and data, but the sharing experience can be inefficient, inconsistent, hindered by legal uncertainty and frustrating for academic researchers, institutions, collaboration networks and publishers.

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

Open Access publication provides one route to enable sharing but does not address sharing of subscription and licensed content. These voluntary principles are intended to address that gap, and be complementary to, not as a substitute for, Open Access publication or self-archiving. They are also not meant to address sharing by and between commercial organizations.

The signatories to these principles believe:

- Publishers have a core commitment to facilitate the dissemination and discovery of their authors' scholarly articles.

- Sharing should be allowed within research collaboration groups, namely groups of scholars or researchers invited to participate in specific research collaborations. Such 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
  - allow article sharing between subscribers and non-subscribers within the group
  - include commercial researchers, subject to publisher policy or appropriate licensing
  - include members of the wider public participating for the purposes of 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 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
  - ensure that usage and activity data is managed in a manner consistent with personal privacy and security laws and requirements
- Public posting of article metadata and open access articles in scholarly collaboration networks should be encouraged.
- Publisher policies on research collaboration group sharing and public posting of articles should be clear and easily discoverable, and we call on publishers to work toward this goal.