

COPYRIGHT AND YOUR SCHOLARLY WORK

What is copyright?

Copyright is not a single right, it is a bundle of exclusive rights, including the rights to:

- Produce copies or reproductions of the work and sell those copies
- Publish the work
- Create derivative works (works that adapt the original work)
- Perform or display the work publicly
- Transmit or display the work by radio or video
- Sell or assign these rights to others

As academic authors, when we transfer our copyright to a publisher, with some exceptions we lose the right to make our work available to students and colleagues for the purposes of teaching and research, to post our work on a personal or institutional web site, and to create derivative works.

So, why am I allowed to post my articles in DigitalCommons@URI?

Publisher Policy

Most publishers will allow you to self-archive a version of your peer-reviewed journal article in an open access repository as long as you provide a citation for the final published version that appeared in the journal. **To check the policies and specifics of a particular journal, search the SHERPA/RoMEO database at <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/>.**

Author Addendum

However, publisher policies can change, and publishers may not allow you all the uses of your research you would like. A stronger option than relying on publisher policy is to attach an author addendum to the publisher's standard copyright agreement. The author addendum will help you retain key rights, such as the rights to reproduce, distribute, publicly perform, and publicly display your article in any medium for noncommercial purposes, as well as the right to prepare derivative works from the article and the right to authorize others to make any non-commercial use of the article so long as the author receives credit as author and the journal in which the article has been published is cited as the source of first publication of the article.

For details, see:

- **Author Rights: Using the SPARC Author Addendum to secure your rights as the author of a journal article at http://www.arl.org/sparc/bm~doc/SPARC_AuthorRights2006.pdf.**
- **The Scholar's Copyright Addendum Engine, which will help you generate a PDF form that you can attach to a journal publisher's copyright agreement to ensure that you retain certain rights, <http://scholars.sciencecommons.org/>.**

Most publishers will accept these addenda with no questions asked. If they refuse, there is no harm in trying. The transfer of copyright happens independently of your article's acceptance; there is no danger that your article will be turned down by negotiating for more favorable publishing terms.

University-wide Policy

Author addenda rely on the initiative of individual faculty, who might feel hesitant about asserting their rights with publishers. A better alternative is a university-wide open access policy, such as the one pioneered at Harvard. Initiated by faculty, these policies grant the university a nonexclusive, irrevocable right to distribute their scholarly articles for any non-commercial purpose. Scholarly articles provided by the author to the university are stored, preserved, and made freely available online through the institutional repository. Waivers of the open access policy for individual articles are provided with no questions asked.

This kind of policy, which is legally sound, changes the default to open access for all future scholarly articles written by university faculty without the need for faculty to individually negotiate with publishers.

A Harvard-style open access policy is currently in development at the University of Rhode Island and should receive your support when it comes before the Faculty Senate.

For more information, see:

- **Harvard's Model Policy Language (annotated with explanations) at http://osc.hul.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/model-policy-annotated_0.pdf**
- **FAQs for proposed URI Open Access Policy at <http://www.uri.edu/library/OAFAQ.pdf>**