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# Author Rights: Using the SPARC Author Addendum to secure your rights as the author of a journal article

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"The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill encourages authors to use the SPARC Author Addendum as it fulfills a pressing need that all researchers and scholars have. The SPARC Author Addendum empowers researchers and authors to advocate for themselves in their relationship with their publisher, and has the potential to revolutionize the scholarly communication system."  
Sarah Michalak, University Librarian and Associate Provost for University Libraries  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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The author is the copyright holder. As the author of a work you are the copyright holder unless and until you transfer the copyright to someone else in a signed agreement.

Assigning your rights matters. Normally, the copyright holder possesses the exclusive rights of reproduction, distribution, public performance, public display, and modification of the original work. An author who has transferred copyright without retaining these rights must ask permission unless the use is one of the statutory exemptions in copyright law.

The copyright holder controls the work. Decisions concerning use of the work, such as distribution, access, pricing, updates, and any use restrictions belong to the copyright holder. Authors who have transferred their copyright without retaining any rights may not be able to place the work on course Web sites, copy it for students or colleagues, deposit the work in a public online archive, or reuse portions in a subsequent work. That's why it is important to retain the rights you need.

Transferring copyright doesn't have to be all or nothing. The law allows you to transfer copyright while holding back rights for yourself and others. This is the compromise that the SPARC Author Addendum helps you to achieve.

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Read the publication agreement with great care. Publishers' agreements (often titled "Copyright Transfer Agreement") have traditionally been used to transfer copyright or key use rights from author to publisher. They are written by publishers and may capture more of your rights than are necessary to publish the work. Ensuring the agreement is balanced and has a clear statement of your rights is up to you.

Publishing agreements are negotiable. Publishers require only your permission to publish an article, not a wholesale transfer of copyright. Hold onto rights to make use of the work in ways that serve your needs and that promote education and research activities.

Value the copyright in your intellectual property. A journal article is often the culmination of years of study, research, and hard work. The more the article is read and cited, the greater its value. But if you give away control in the copyright agreement, you may limit its use. Before transferring ownership of your intellectual output, understand the consequences and options.

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